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| Subject: | Consultation on the Draft Northern Ireland Nature Recovery Strategy (new Biodiversity Strategy) |
| Date: | 4 th March 2026 |
| Reporting Officer: | David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services |
| Contact Officer: | Stephen Leonard, Director of Resources and Fleet and OSS Orla Maguire, Biodiversity Officer |

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| Restricted Reports | |
| Is this report restricted? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted? | |
| After Committee Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| After Council Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Some time in the future | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Never | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| Call-in | |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-in? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues |
| 1.1 | The purpose of the report is for Members to consider a consultation response to the draft Nature Recovery Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2032. |
| 2.0 | Recommendations |
| 2.1 | The deadline for submission of the final response is the 18 th of March 2026. As this is after the full Council meeting it is proposed that the attached consultation response, subject to |

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| | any amendments proposed by this Committee, is submitted to DAERA with the caveat that it has not yet been ratified by Council and may be subject to further amendment. |
| 3.0 | Main report |
| | <u>Key Issues</u> |
| 3.1 | The previous Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 has elapsed, and the Executive has developed a new Strategy to 2032 to meet the challenges faced by the natural environment. |
| 3.2 | The scientific evidence points to an on-going decline in global biodiversity; with that trend mirrored in Northern Ireland. Internationally the United Nations, through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is refocusing its intention on reducing the loss of biodiversity through a Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). |
| 3.3 | Northern Ireland, as part of the UK, has committed to the GBF which was agreed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December 2022. |
| 3.4 | The Framework sets out, in 23 targets and 4 goals, the urgent actions required to “bend the curve” of biodiversity loss by 2030 and move towards the 2050 vision. That is, by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people. |
| 3.5 | The framework goals and targets are presented in Appendix 1. The targets address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reducing threats to biodiversity; 2. meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing; and 3. tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. |
| 3.6 | The Draft NI Nature Recovery Strategy 2032 Mission is: “To take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet by conserving, restoring and sustainably using biodiversity.” |
| 3.7 | The Vision is “Biodiversity across NI is substantially restored and regenerated. Our rich and diverse natural environment is thriving, resilient, and adapting to climate change as well as contributing to climate change mitigation. Everyone understands the benefits and importance of biodiversity and is playing their role in the stewardship of nature in Northern Ireland for future generations.” |

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| 3.8 | <p>To deliver this Mission and Vision, the draft Strategy sets out five strategic objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Well Protected Nature and Accelerated Restoration 2) Reduction of the Pressures on Biodiversity 3) Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Nature-Friendly Policies and Practice 4) Nature Valued and Mainstreamed across All of Government and Society 5) Building Strong, Integrated Evidence and Knowledge to Enable Action and Reporting for Nature |
| 3.9 | <p>In 2021 BCC submitted a pre-consultation response to assist in the development of a new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, which identified requirements including the need for; robust legislation and policies, baseline data, adequate resourcing and cessation of incentives which are damaging the natural environment.</p> |
| 3.10 | <p>The draft Nature Recovery Strategy in it's current form lacks a framework, targets, lead delivery agents and identified funding sources. As such, the draft Strategy will not achieve the Mission or Vision outlined. BCC reiterates the previous recommendations and suggestion to adopt the 4 goals and 23 targets identified in the Global Biodiversity Framework at the Northern Ireland level.</p> |
| 3.11 | <p>Following consideration by relevant officers across the Council, a response has been completed in draft form for approval by Members. The draft consultation response is presented in Appendix 2.</p> |
| 3.12 | <p>The deadline for submission is the 18th of March 2026. As this is after the full Council meeting it is proposed that the attached consultation response, subject to any amendments proposed by this Committee, is submitted to DAERA with the caveat that it has not yet been ratified by Council and may be subject to further amendment</p> |
| 3.13 | <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are currently no financial implications.</p> |
| 3.14 | <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are currently no equality or good relations implications.</p> |
| 4.0 | Appendices |

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| | <p>Appendix 1: Global Biodiversity Framework – Goals and Targets.</p> |
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| | <p>Appendix 2: Draft BCC Consultation Response to the Draft Nature Recovery Strategy (new NI Biodiversity Strategy)</p> |
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