

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Cabinet

### Date: 13th February 2012

ITEM 6 (i)

Title: Newcastle and North  
Tyneside Joint Biodiversity  
Action Plan

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Portfolio(s): Engagement and the  
Environment

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Pam McIntyre

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Report from Directorate: Community Services

Report Author: Phil Scott, Head of Environmental Services      Tel: 0191 643 7295

Wards affected: All

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## PART 1

### 1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for and adoption of the Newcastle and North Tyneside Joint Biodiversity Action Plan.

### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approve for adoption the Newcastle and North Tyneside Joint Biodiversity Action Plan, to enable the Council to manage its natural environment more effectively, to protect these natural resources and to leave a legacy that will benefit present and future generations.

### 1.3 Forward Plan:

This report has been included on the Forward Plan for the period 1 January 2012 – 30 April 2012.

### 1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The recommendation is in support of the Council Strategic Plan Priority 4: Our Environment: How the environment looks. It specifically addresses the 2011/15 Council Strategic Plan actions to deliver high standards in environmental maintenance.

### 1.5 Information:

#### 1.5.1 Background

Biodiversity is the rich variety of life on earth. This encompasses all plants and animals and their habitats, even micro-organisms such as bacteria. It is not just about rare or endangered species, it also includes wildlife that is familiar to all of us in the places where we live and work. Therefore biodiversity is all life on the planet, from the smallest of sea creatures to the birds we see in our parks and gardens.

The UK government produced 'Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan' in 1994 with the aim of conserving and enhancing biological diversity in the UK. To achieve these aims it was recommended by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group, that Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) were produced to translate national wildlife targets in the UK Action Plan, into local action.

### **1.5.2 Joint Biodiversity Action Plan**

The Newcastle Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was published in 2001 and the North Tyneside Plan was published in 2005. These documents took the objectives and targets of the 'UK Biodiversity Action Plan' and translated and amplified them into a local context.

Both BAPs have a joint steering group partnership and in 2008 it was agreed by the Newcastle and North Tyneside BAP Steering Group to merge the two BAPs into a more strategic joint Action Plan covering both local authority areas. The steering group comprises of individuals from the main organisations contributing towards the delivery of targets and actions in the BAP. The steering group includes:

- North Tyneside Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Natural England
- Northumbrian Water
- Environment Agency
- Northumberland Wildlife Trust
- Natural History Society of Northumbria
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Northumbria Mammal Group
- Northumbria and Tyne Bird Club
- Environmental Records Information Centre
- Red Squirrels Northern England
- North-East Reptile & Amphibian Group

The Partnership oversees the ongoing development and implementation of the BAP. Priority habitats and species have been chosen by the steering group to reflect the current concerns of wildlife organisations and the community.

The BAP is a framework for the next ten years, and will inform relevant decision making but without obligation on either authority to deliver on the targets.

We will refer to the BAP when considering relevant planning proposals; many BAP targets will be met through the planning process. External organisations such as Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Newcastle University, and Northumbria Water are also achieving targets. Community groups and local schools also contribute to the achievement of targets through work in their local area. For example we are currently working with several community groups, 'Friends Of' groups, Scouts and allotment holders to encourage wildlife and to work to 'habitat and species' targets as outlined within the BAP.

The intention is not to produce a printed copy of the Plan but for it to be available on the website of both councils, or on request.

### **1.5.3 Current Position**

This new Joint Action Plan is a ten year vision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in North Tyneside and Newcastle. The aim of the BAP is to ensure that we manage our natural environment more effectively to protect these natural resources and to leave a legacy that will benefit present and future generations.

Everyone can play a role in helping to deliver this plan. By taking action at the local level, either by forming a local community group, planting trees or simply putting up a bird box in a garden, everyone can contribute to local, regional and national targets and make a real difference to biodiversity in North Tyneside and Newcastle.

### **1.6 Decision options:**

#### **Option 1:**

Approve the Newcastle and North Tyneside Joint Biodiversity Action Plan.

#### **Option 2:**

Reject the Joint Newcastle and North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan

### **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is the recommended option, to enable the Council to manage its natural environment more effectively, to protect these natural resources and to leave a legacy that will benefit present and future generations. Adoption of a Biodiversity Action Plan is seen a good practice.

### **1.8 Appendices:**

Draft Newcastle and North Tyneside Joint Biodiversity Action Plan (final web version to include relevant photographs from both North Tyneside and Newcastle).

### **1.9 Contact officers:**

Catherine Lyons, Senior Manager: Waste and Environmental Sustainability, 0191 643 7780

Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager, 0191 643 7038

Derek Hilton-Brown, Ecology Officer, 643 7301

Rachel Flannery, Biodiversity Assistant, 643 7301

### **1.10 Background information:**

The following background information has been used in the compilation of this report and is available at the office of the author:

- North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan (2005)
- 'Your Wildlife' The Newcastle Biodiversity Action Plan (2001)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (NERC)
- Planning Policy Guidance (PPG9) - regarding nature conservation
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended England and Wales (2010)
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) (1994)
- Birds of Conservation Concern 3: The Population Status of Birds in the UK, 2009.

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where possible, actions will be undertaken either from existing budgets, sourced externally, or provided through work with the community and assisting with external funding. We are currently working with several community 'Friends Of' groups, Scouts and allotment holders to encourage wildlife and to work to 'habitat and species' targets as outlined within the BAP. We will refer to the BAP when considering relevant planning proposals. The BAP is a framework for the next ten years, and will inform relevant decision making but without obligation on either authority to deliver on the targets.

Any action which has financial implications for North Tyneside Council which cannot be met from existing budgets will be reported back to Cabinet for a decision.

### **2.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. The Joint Plan is produced within the context of the government's 1994 "Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan" and pursuant to the recommendation of the UK Biodiversity Steering Group that Local Biodiversity Action Plans be produced to translate national wildlife targets into local action.

### **2.3 Consultation**

The Cabinet Member for Engagement and Environment has been fully briefed in relation to the Joint Action Plan. The Newcastle and North Tyneside BAP Steering Group consist of a number of statutory and local organisations who have all been consulted during the production of the Action Plan, as outlined below.

The BAP has gone out to a large variety of organisations who represent the community and who have membership within the local community, for example:

- Northumberland Wildlife Trust
- Northumberland Bat Group
- Butterfly Conservation
- Natural History Society of Northumbria
- Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club.

These organisations all have large memberships within Newcastle and North Tyneside and their officers represent these members.

The Newcastle and North Tyneside BAP Steering Group has been instrumental in the content of the new Newcastle and North Tyneside Joint BAP. The BAP Steering Group is made up of members of the above organisations. Meetings have been held 3 – 4 times a year since 2008 to discuss in detail the future direction of the BAP. Priority habitats and species were chosen carefully by the steering group to reflect the current concerns of their members and the appropriate wildlife organisations and government policy.

Other BAP steering group members are listed below, as well as other groups who have provided input:

- North Tyneside Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Natural England
- Environment Agency

- Northumbria Water
- Other groups:
- Newcastle University
  - The Bat Conservation Trust
  - RSPB
  - North East BAP Partnership
  - North East Environmental Records Centre

The majority of species and targets are similar to the previous Newcastle BAP 2001 and North Tyneside BAP 2005 which both underwent thorough consultation. This new BAP is effectively an update of the previous outdated Newcastle BAP and a review of the North Tyneside BAP. The main difference is the merging of the two BAPs to make a more strategic plan, which has been welcomed by all who have been consulted.

## 2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

## 2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications relating to individuals directly arising from this report.

## 2.6 Risk management

There are no identified risks directly arising from this report.

## 2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

## 2.8 Environment and sustainability

This implementation of the Action Plan will contribute to local, regional and national targets for biodiversity and make a real difference to biodiversity in North Tyneside.

## PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Director with responsibility for Community Engagement