Norfolk County Council

Cabinet

Date: **Wednesday 8 May 2024**

Time: **10 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH**

SUPPLEMENTARY
A g e n d a

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

It will be live streamed on YouTube and members of the public may watch remotely by clicking on the following link: Norfolk County Council YouTube

We also welcome attendance in person, but public seating is limited, so if you wish to attend, please indicate in advance by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Current practice for respiratory infections requests that we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

Please stay at home if you are unwell, have tested positive for COVID 19, have symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case. This will help make the event safe for attendees and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

11 Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain and Pollinator Action Plan: UPDATED version of report. **(Page A3)**

Report by the Lead Director of Communities and Environment

Tom McCabe
Chief Executive

County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Supplementary Agenda Published: 30 April

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Cabinet

Item No: 11

Report Title: Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain and Pollinator Action Plan

Date of Meeting: 08 May 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Eric Vardy (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste**)**

Responsible Director: Steve Miller, Lead Director for Communities and Environment

Is this a Key Decision? No

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

The Environment Act 2021 sets out new legislation to require the production of new spatial strategies for nature recovery called Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Norfolk County Council is the 'Responsible Authority' for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Act also requires new development to mitigate any loss of biodiversity by creating a net increase of biodiversity created either within the development site or elsewhere, this is called Biodiversity Net Gain.

We are working in partnership with Suffolk County Council by virtue of shared designated areas of natural environment and landscape such as the Broads, Breckland and Coast, as well as shared stakeholders, to produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategies by Summer 2025.

The Strategy will set out the current state of key nature in the county as well as prioritise areas that have potential for nature recovery. The Strategy will be used to guide developers or providers of Biodiversity Net Gain to those priority places. Together the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the statutory delivery tool of Biodiversity Net Gain, along with other tools will create Norfolk's contribution to a National Nature Recovery Network. Our Pollinator Action Plan is one way in which the County Council can support and promote biodiversity in the county contributing to nature recovery.

The proposals in this report today will help us to achieve key outcomes for the Council's Climate Strategy and the County Council's key priorities by increasing

biodiversity and helping the environment be more resilient to climate change for the benefit of wildlife, people, and the economy.

Recommendations:

1. **Agree with the timescale to produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
2. **Agree the role of Norfolk County Council in providing new habitat which can be counted as biodiversity net gain**
3. **Approve the production of an environment strategy in 2024 that will outline potential for biodiversity net gain uplift as a matter of policy beyond the statutory minimum**
4. **Agree the adoption of the Pollinator Action Plan by the Council**

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 The Environment Act 2021 sets out new legislation to require the production of new spatial strategies for nature recovery called Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Norfolk County Council is the 'Responsible Authority' for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Act also requires new development to mitigate any loss of biodiversity by creating a net increase of biodiversity created either within the development site or elsewhere, this is called Biodiversity Net Gain.

We are working in partnership with Suffolk County Council by virtue of shared designated areas of natural environment and landscape such as the Broads, Breckland and Coast, as well as shared stakeholders, to produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategies by Summer 2025.

The Strategy will set out the current state of key nature in the county as well as prioritise areas that have potential for nature recovery. The Strategy will be used to guide developers or providers of Biodiversity Net Gain to those priority places. Together the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the statutory delivery tool of Biodiversity Net Gain, along with other financial tools will create Norfolk's contribution to a National Nature Recovery Network. Whilst Government is aiming for Local Nature Recovery Strategies to be completed by March 2025, due to two local elections and a general election we have factored in the pre-election periods which mean that our engagement activity would have to temporarily stopped. We have factored in this risk and have appropriate mitigation in place but as a result our Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be completed by late Summer 2025.

1.2 Biodiversity Net Gain is now required for major development and from April 2024 for minor developments and Nationally Significant Infrastructure from 2025. It requires any loss of biodiversity interest because of development, that

cannot be avoided, be replaced including a statutory minimum of 10% increase. The intent is to see an overall increase in biodiversity because of development. Developers are responsible for creating the new biodiversity habitat(s) within the development site or if that isn't feasible, located elsewhere. Developers must ensure the new habitat is secured and managed for 30 years. If they need to create habitat off site, and cannot provide it themselves, they can buy Biodiversity Net Gain 'credits' that will pay a provider. Government has created habitat calculators to guide developers as to what is required. There are landowners and managers in Norfolk that are currently creating new habitats on their land e.g., Wendling Beck, which they will sell as Biodiversity Net Gain Credits. As a developer and planning authority, Norfolk County Council will need to consider Biodiversity Net Gain in our decision making and provide it for our own developments e.g., for roads, minerals, waste, schools.

1.3 Biodiversity Net Gain offers two opportunities for the County Council. Firstly, we could use our own property to sell Biodiversity Net Gain through the creation of new habitats. Given the cost of buying Biodiversity Net Gain credits this could be done at a profit. The credit prices range from £42,000 for lower tiered habitats, such as 'heathland and shrub', to £650,000 per hectare at the upper end for top tier peat lakes.

1.4 The second opportunity is to apply for 'responsible body status', which would allow the County Council to enter into conservation covenant agreements with landowners. These are a new type of legal agreement which are one means by which developers will be able to show they have met their Biodiversity Net Gain obligations. To apply, an organisation must be either a local authority, a public body or charity, "where at least some of its main purposes or functions relate to conservation", or a body other than a public body or charity, "where at least some of its main activities relate to conservation". Whether the County Council should apply to become a 'responsible body' is currently being considered but not being taken forward at this point.

1.4 Our Pollinator Action Plan is one way in which the County Council can support and promote biodiversity in the county contributing to nature recovery. Healthy pollinators are critical to us both for food production and nature. One in every three mouths of food we eat needs pollination. Since then, our action plan has been peer reviewed by experts from across Europe and the UK to ensure it represents the best practice based on scientific evidence. The Pollinator Action Plan has six simple actions that we can take as the County Council and encourage others to take. We have a nature recovery working group from across the key services of the County Council to embed the action plan and its actions into what we do.

2. Proposal

2.1 Jointly produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategy with Suffolk County Council aiming to publish in Summer 2025.

2.2 Consider the role of Norfolk County Council in providing new habitat on our property which can be counted as Biodiversity Net Gain.

2.3 Approve the adoption of the Pollinator Action Plan by the County Council.

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 The proposal will have a positive impact on the quantity and quality of biodiversity within Norfolk.

3.2 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will guide off site Biodiversity Net Gain provision to strategic locations.

3.3 The Pollinator Action Plan will result in increased number and diversity of pollinators throughout the county.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 Both the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain are statutory requirements upon the County Council.

4.2 The Pollinator Action Plan has been developed using the best available scientific evidence and has been subject to further scrutiny from European experts. The Action Plan is based on sound science and can be implemented by the County Council on our own property holdings and other landowners and land managers.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 There is no alternative option for producing Local Nature Recovery Strategy or Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.2 There is no alternative for the Pollinator Action Plan that would result in the same outcomes.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Both the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain provisions are support by Government through new burdens money. For Local Nature Recovery Strategy, it is £177,643 for 2023/24 and £155,000 (subject to receiving our

grant letter confirmation from Defra) for 2024/25. For Biodiversity Net Gain it is £26,807 for 2023/24 and 2024/25. This will pay to produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and enable us to establish new ways of working in the County Council to consider Biodiversity Net Gain provisions from developers and secure any onsite or off-site Biodiversity Net Gain to support our own developments. Through a co-operation agreement we will be recovering half our costs from Suffolk County Council to produce the joint work on developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

6.2 The Pollinator Action Plan will be implemented through the advice of existing staff in the Environment Service, through suggested changes to current land management practices that may have a cost saving e.g., changing mowing regimes, or through seeking additional grants or agri-environment grant support.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff: Within the Environment Service we have already recruited a team to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including a shared Local Nature Recovery Strategy Manager with Suffolk County Council. We will be recruiting a Biodiversity Net Gain Officer for two years withing the Specialist Advice Service to develop new ways of working and deliver advice to developers and our own Planning team.

7.2 Property: None

7.3 IT: None

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications: There will be legal implications of not delivering our statutory duties on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain.

8.2 Human Rights Implications: None

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included): We will prepare an Equality Impact Assessment on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy once drafted in 2024.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): We will complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy once we are clear on the type of personal information, we may need to hold to manage the engagement we need to carry out.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): None

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): None

8.7 Any Other Implications: None

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 There are legal implications of not delivering against our statutory duties.

9.2 There are reputation implications if we do not comply with the Environment Act and any secondary legislation.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 Having reviewed and commented on the report, and in particular Norfolk County Council's role as a Responsible Authority for Biodiversity Net Gain and their role in providing new habitats which could be counted as biodiversity net gain, the Select Committee RESOLVED to:

1. Note the timescale to produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
2. Note that an environment strategy will be produced in 2024 that may outline potential for biodiversity net gain uplift as a matter of policy beyond the statutory minimum
3. Support the adoption of the Pollinator Action Plan by the Council

11. Recommendations

1. Agree with the timescale to produce the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
2. Agree the role of Norfolk County Council in providing new habitat which can be counted as biodiversity net gain
3. Approve the production of an environment strategy in 2024 that will outline potential for biodiversity net gain uplift as a matter of policy beyond the statutory minimum
4. Agree the adoption of the Pollinator Action Plan by the Council

12. Background Papers

12.1 Infrastructure and Development Select Committee minutes PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT, WASTE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PANEL (cmis.uk.com)

12.2 Norfolk Pollinator Action Plan (Annex A)

Officer Contact
If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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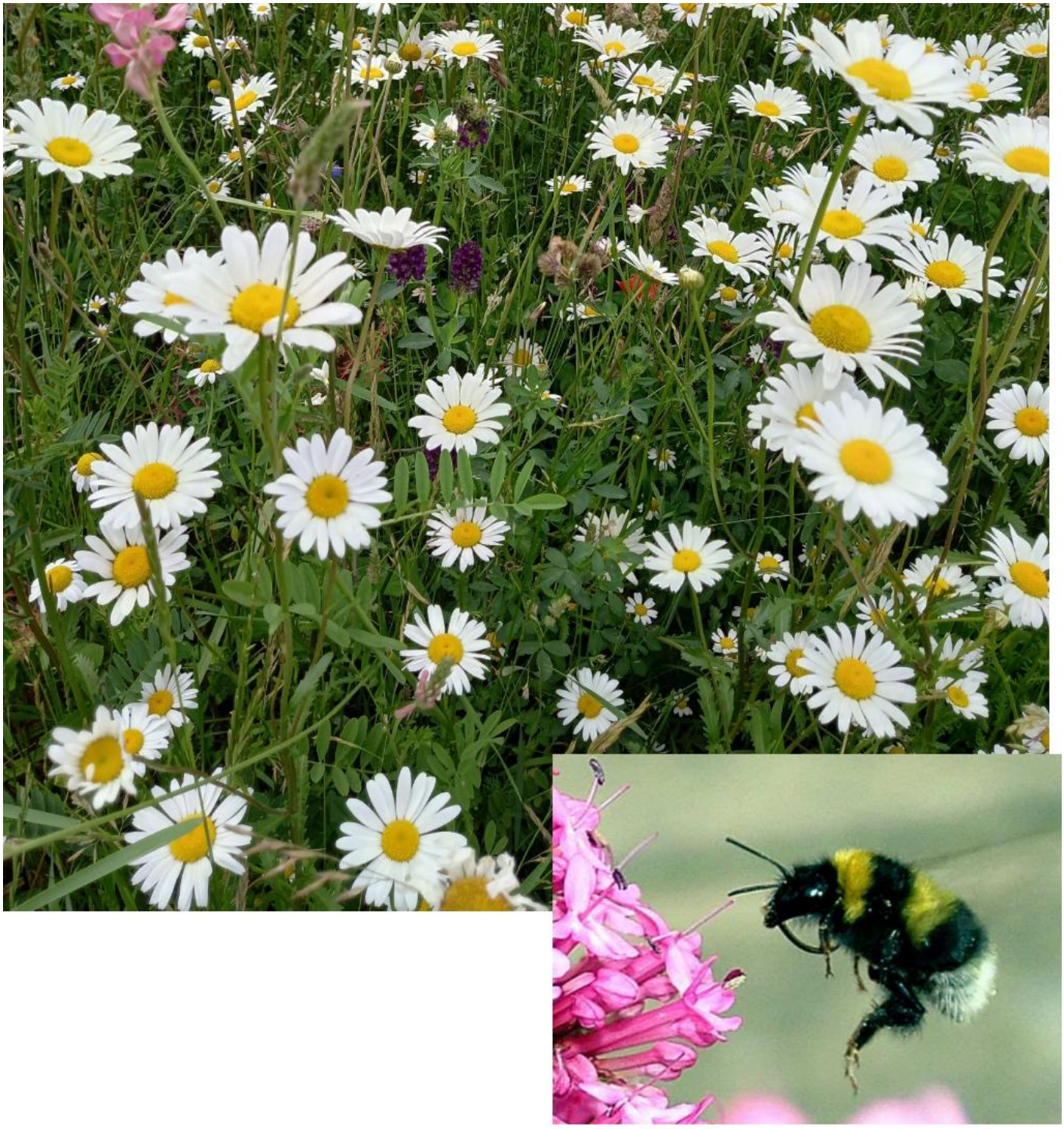

Norfolk's Pollinator Action Plan

Protecting Norfolk's wildlife, economy and human health

2024

Norfolk County Council

CONTENTS

Norfolk's Pollinator Action Plan

Protecting Norfolk's wildlife, economy and human health

Foreword

Our wildlife is very much a part of our historic and cultural heritage, for instance names such as shepherd's purse, lady's smock, and Jack-by-the-hedge (plants), the red admiral, and the painted lady (butterflies), have been passed down the generations, and names familiar to our grandparents will most likely be just as familiar to our grandchildren.

Norfolk is a county blessed with an abundance of beautiful countryside and a long agricultural history, shaping the place as we know it today, and sustaining the county's rich heritage, economic success, and its natural environment. Our countryside is facing significant challenges with increasing demands on the land, climate change, and biodiversity loss including pollinating insects.

Norfolk County Council has committed to develop a Norfolk Pollinator Action Plan as a key element of its adopted Environmental Policy and in response to the National Pollinator Strategy. This will address and deliver the five key areas highlighted in the National Strategy, to ensure the protection and enhancement of pollinators on our County Farms and roadside verges, two areas which are under direct control of the Council. The Plan also makes recommendations to inspire wider action for pollinators across Norfolk and we hope it will encourage landowners, farmers, parish councils, community groups, businesses and individuals to help bring benefits for pollinators and their habitats at a variety of scales.

Councillor Eric Vardy, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Norfolk County Council
Date adopted: to be confirmed

Top row: comma butterfly, bee, hoverfly (Leucozona), flowery ley. Bottom row: urban wildspace, bumblebee and beetles on flag iris, peacock butterfly, arable margin,)

This document has two parts;

Part 1 introduces the background to the Norfolk Pollinator Action Plan and what it will achieve,

Part 2 lists the actions that Norfolk County Council (NCC) will take across its various functions and services, and actions that will inspire others to do more for pollinators across Norfolk.

Wildflower meadow (Sarah Chittenden)

Part 1: Background

1. Introduction and overview

The purpose of this Pollinator Action Plan is to highlight the issues facing our pollinators, and to provide key objectives and actions for their long-term protection and enhancement, in line with the National Pollinator Strategy, Pollinator Action Plan 2021 to 2024 (May 2022), and to help underpin the environmental, social, and economic welfare of Norfolk.

The Plan emerged out of the County Council's Climate Change motion in 2019 which led to the identification of a cabinet member responsible for the environment who will help drive the Pollinator Action Plan forward.

Climate change, habitat loss and intensive agricultural practices pose real and significant challenges for pollinators, and our own well-being. Our action plan seeks to address these challenges, and to implement effective and sustainable solutions.

2. What is a pollinator?

A pollinator is an animal that transports pollen from the male part of a flowering plant to the female part of a flowering plant so that it can be fertilised and go on to produce new plants, seeds, nuts, and fruit. The most common types of pollinators in England are insects, such as bees, butterflies, and wasps. These little creatures play an essential role in the reproduction of many plants. In fact, more than 80% of the UK's wildflowers need animals to pollinate.

3. Why are pollinators so important?

As well as being important for their own sake, pollinators are essential for the maintenance of healthy functioning ecosystems. They are also vital in underpinning human health and well-being, and the economy. For example, they play a key role in maintaining the yields of a number of our economically important crops (Jackson, 2019) and one in every three mouthfuls of our food eaten in Europe depends on pollination taking place (Juniper, 2015). And in the UK, it is estimated that pollinators contribute £960 million each year to the economy (Zulian et al., 2013). In addition, Oil Seed Rape has a 25% dependency on pollination (Vanbergen et al., 2014) and the economic value of insect-pollinated production of Oil Seed Rape in the East of England is £88M or 17 .2% of total crop production (Breeze et al., 2012). The cost of replacing UK bee pollination services each year has been calculated as £1.8 billion (Juniper, 2015).

Without these insect pollinators we wouldn't have many of our common fruit and vegetables like apples, strawberries, and tomatoes. Our diet would also be missing chocolate, coffee, and peanuts! And we wouldn't be wearing clothes made from cotton. Our world would also be a lot less colourful if we didn't have flowers in our countryside and urban areas, and in our gardens.

4. What do pollinators need?

When it comes to pollinators, one size does not always fit all. They need a variety of different habitat types for food, nesting, egg-laying, and hibernation (Senapathi et al., 2017). For example, patches of long grass make great nesting sites for bumblebees, and dead wood can make ideal hibernation sites for certain types of butterfly (read more in Buglife's introduction to pollinator habitats).

Timing is also important, as many pollinator species are active between March and October, so having flowering plants during these months is important. Night scented plants such as honeysuckle and white campion will help to attract moths (read more in this RSPB guide).

In addition, habitat connectivity enables species including pollinating species to move more easily through the landscape in search of key resources such as food and nesting sites.

The charity Buglife has championed 'B-Lines', or "*insect super-highways*", which are made up of a series of flower-rich habitats that provide important stepping stones between key local sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and County Wildlife Sites (CWS) throughout the landscape (Buglife 2023). *"…B-Lines can help to identify where important wildflower networks exist within the landscape"* (Buglife 2023). These so-called B-Lines can provide local authorities with an easy way of mapping such linear landscape features within its administrative boundary, as well as helping to meet national objectives including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as set out in the Environment Act 2021, and the National Pollinator Strategy (Buglife 2023). They can also help in the delivery of locally important objectives and projects, such as Local Nature Recovery Networks (LNRS), and Green Infrastructure as part of new development (Buglife 2023).

5. Why do we need a Pollinator Action Plan for Norfolk?

Our pollinators need our help. Research shows that many of our pollinators are in trouble. For instance, here in Norfolk 23 bee species are now believed extinct (Owens, 2017) and in East Anglia as a whole, a further 25 bee species are considered 'threatened' and 31 species listed as being of 'conservation concern' (Jackson, 2019). And a similar picture can be seen in our butterflies. In Norfolk, the iconic swallowtail butterfly has declined in 56% of the areas monitored between 1976 and 2014 (Butterfly Conservation, 2015). Nationally, over 76% of the UK's butterflies have declined over the last four decades (Butterfly Conservation, 2015).

Evidence suggests that a number of factors have contributed to the decline in pollinator species, including:

- Common farming practices, such as intensive agriculture
- Herbicides and pesticides
- Habitat loss – land transformation into agricultural use
- Loss of native plant species
- Intensively farmed bees out-competing native wild bee species
- Climate change
- Extreme weather events – wildfires, floods, and droughts.

This has resulted in big losses of natural and semi-natural habitats rich in wildflowers. Hedges, traditional orchards and meadows have been lost, and habitats suitable for pollinators have become fragmented and isolated. These factors, particularly when combined can have a negative knock-on effect for other species that rely on pollinators, most notably plants, due to their symbiotic relationships, as insects pollinate our wild and garden flowers, which provide a crucial food source for a host of other wildlife such as birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, thus affecting the wider biodiversity of habitats and ecosystems.

But together we can prevent further declines of our pollinators through the implementation of the Pollinator Action Plan.

6. What does the Plan seek to achieve?

The Action Plan includes actions that will be taken by Norfolk County Council across our various functions and services. It requires commitment and support across the Council, from members, officers, and our contractors. This Action Plan will allow us to:

- Manage County Council assets and operations to ensure that they are more pollinator friendly
- Ensure that the needs of pollinators are recognised and are taken into account across the County Council's functions, services, and responsibilities
- Manage the County Farm estate in a way that brings pollinator improvements and provides a model that can be replicated by other landowners across Norfolk.

The Action Plan also includes actions to inspire others (outside NCC) to do more for pollinators across Norfolk. This includes increasing awareness of the needs of pollinators and the collection of data to support actions to benefit pollinators and their habitats. It will be used to support landowners, farmers, parish councils, community groups, businesses and individuals to help bring benefits to pollinators and their habitats at a variety of scales.

7. The key objectives of the Pollinator Action Plan

There are a number of key objectives within the Plan, which seek to:

- Raise the awareness and importance of pollinators throughout Norfolk
- Promote, support and encourage pollinator-friendly farming
- Promote, support and encourage pollinator-friendly management of the county's highway verges, and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
- Manage other county council assets for the benefit of pollinators
- Encourage the protection and enhancement of the Norfolk's pollinators through the planning system
- Establish baseline data for Norfolk's pollinators and their habitats
- Monitor action for pollinators

8. The wider environmental context

In addition, this Action Plan will not only help our pollinators, but will also help to deliver other important environmental objectives both locally and nationally, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

BNG can enable pollinating insects to restore and increase their populations through the creation of new habitats, and the connectivity of existing ones (Natural England 2022). Linear landscape features such as hedgerows and roadside verges can help to connect habitats, thus reducing habitat connectivity and enabling insects greater access to resources such as food, which in turn enables plant pollination (Mueller 2021).

9. Who is the Plan for?

The Pollinator Action Plan for Norfolk is for:

- County Farms;
- Highways (roadside verges and Public Rights of Way);
- Other Norfolk County Council assets and services (e.g. schools and waste facilities).

Additionally, the Plan sets out actions that will inspire others outside NCC to do more for pollinators across Norfolk.

10. Building on success

We want to continue our success throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan by:

- Maximising the pollinating potential of the County Council's own land and property, such as county farms, Highways, and schools.
- Ensuring more, bigger, better, joined-up, diverse and high-quality flower-rich habitats (including nesting places and shelter), supporting our pollinators across the country.
- Ensuring that pollinator populations are healthy and more resilient to climate change and severe weather events, and which can support our agriculture and tourist economies.
- Preventing further extinctions of known threatened pollinating species.
- Enhanced awareness across a wide range of businesses, other organisations and the public of the essential needs of pollinators
- Monitoring actions taken to support pollinators

11. Partnership-working for Pollinators

- Internal NCC partners; links will be key with Highways, NCC Property Services, County Farms.
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) including links with the 'Living Landscapes' initiative, ecological networks and Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs) project
- RSPB – potential links with the 'Futurescapes' project
- Buglife B-Lines project
- Academic links: e.g. UEA research group on pollinators; Research group at John Innes Centre; Agri-ecology group.
- Large estates in Norfolk
- 'Re-wilding' projects in Norfolk
- Local Planning Authorities
- Potential links with Defra
- Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).

12. How we can all help our pollinators?

We can create opportunities for pollinators in urban as well as rural areas. With increasingly high urban population levels, adequate provision for access to natural and semi-natural green spaces becomes increasingly important for people and pollinators alike. In Harley Sherlock's 1991 book entitled *Cities are good for us*, the author argued that *"every city needs some wilderness"* (Sherlock 1991, p156). Plants and insects can help to achieve this aim, which of course can be extended to our towns, villages, and our countryside.

“The wildlife that thrives in [urban areas] is recognized as playing a vital role in the quality of life of the people who live in [them]” (Mabey 1999). Parks, gardens, (public and private), squares, churchyards and cemeteries can all help to sustain a diversity of plant and insect life (Goode 2014). In addition, nature reserves in urban areas have become more common, and are often created through the passion and dedication of local communities (Goode 2014). Brownfield sites are particularly beneficial for nectar-rich plants, which in turn attract invertebrates, due to the lack of management of these types of sites, some of which have been left undisturbed for years, enabling pioneer habitats to take root, quite literally! Such places provide opportunities for access to nature for urban residents, as well as contributing to a network of greenspaces for pollinating insects and associated plants.
Wildlife, and wild plants can help to remove the barrier both real and imagined, between our towns and countryside. Moreover, wildflowers wherever you may chance upon them form part of the rich and varied landscapes of the built and natural environment (Mabey 1999).
Frequently disturbed ground in our towns and cities that is used and re-used for different purposes, provides ideal conditions and opportunities for flowers to germinate. (Mabey 1999). For example, sites that have been left un-used for some time, such as brownfield sites, can be colonised relatively quickly by wild plants and insects, some of which can be particularly rare (Goode 2014).

13. Top tips for helping pollinators

Here are five top tips for helping pollinators:

i. Create homes for pollinators:

Without safe places to rest, nest, and over-winter, pollinators cannot survive. Undisturbed log piles, leaf litter, twig bundles and compost heaps make great homes for pollinators. You could try making a bug hotel.

ii. Plant for pollinators:

Try to provide flowers throughout the year from early spring to early winter. Plant native species like foxgloves, ivy, and local wildflower mixes. Many wildflowers are naturally drought-tolerant and require less watering than other plants. Some cultivated garden plants that have been demonstrated to be particularly visited by foraging include buddleja, borage, common marigold, lavender, ox-eye daisy, comfrey (Baldock et al, 2019) and sunflowers.

iii. Be less tidy:

“…weeds are the very stuff of life for insects”. (Mabey 2012, p192).
Naturally messy places with nettles, brambles and undisturbed rough grasses are vital for both food and shelter for pollinators and other invertebrates. Instead of 'tidying up', leave seed heads and fallen leaves *in situ*.

iv. Mow less:

Reduce the frequency of mowing and leave areas of grass uncut. This will allow wild plants such as dandelion, hawk-bits and clovers to flower, providing another source of nectar.

v. Ditch the chemicals:

Avoid using weed killers, aphid killers, slug pellets or other pesticides. These products reduce the amount of food and homes available for pollinators and other useful invertebrates and can harm the environment in other ways. Instead go for natural alternatives, which are free! For example, use crushed eggshells, or better still, encourage hedgehogs, as slugs are one of their favourite foods!

14. References

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Part 2: The Actions

- Internal actions for the County Council are themes 1- 4 (highlighted in orange)
- Wider actions are Themes 5-7 (highlighted in green)
- Timescale to establish: Short (in 2024); Medium (by 2025); Long (after 2025)

Theme 1. Raising awareness of the needs of pollinators within the Council (internal action for NCC)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
1.1	Work with elected members and colleagues to develop, support and promote pollinator friendly practices.	Messaging for Councillors / officers, to enable them to promote NCC actions for pollinators. NCC pollinator events and awareness-raising.	Track messaging / updates created and events supported	Officer time required	CES Environment Team	Members and officers from relevant departments. Media Team	Short
1.2	Establish a mechanism to ensure cross-directorate delivery of the action plan.	Internal officer group on nature recovery. Identify the most effective ways to influence pollinator-friendly practices at NCC.	Production of corporate protocols for considering pollinators	Officer time required, Member time.	CES Environment Team, NCC ecologists	Members and officers from relevant departments. Media Team	Short (with 4 meetings held each year)
1.3	Ensure the needs of pollinators are embedded within all NCC strategic and partnership plans, policies, projects and operations, such as the NCC Biodiversity Net Gain Policy; the Ash Die-back project, the Highway Verges project, the NCC Climate Change Policy and infrastructure projects such as road schemes.	Internal review of policies and management operations	Set up review programme. Progress monitored	Officer time required	CES Environment Team, NCC ecologists	Members Academics, infrastructure teams, other NCC teams as appropriate	Medium

Theme 2. Managing County Farms in a more pollinator-friendly way (internal action for NCC)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
2.1	Identify and promote pollinator-friendly measures/ schemes/ training to County Farms Service and tenants	Develop County Farm champions / stakeholder group and social learning to develop interaction on pollinators and identify training needs. Set up meetings with County Farm tenants to identify groups with similar needs or outlook to enable tailored approaches (co-creation) Develop and roll-out a list of positive actions to benefit pollinators for farmers, and encourage self-monitoring. General awareness programme.	Track meetings established and training identified. Track NCC support of pollinator events and projects.	Officer time required Funding for training and events required. All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan	Corporate Property Team (County Farms) CES Environment Team	County Farm tenants, NCC land agents, Norfolk FWAG, NCC ecologists	Medium
2.2	Encourage all tenants to commit to pollinator-friendly farming.	Develop specific pollinator clauses within new County Farm tenancy agreements. Include a requirement to commit to farming in a pollinator-friendly in the selection process for prospective tenants. Provide financial incentives such as concessionary rents, lease extension for organic tenancies, grant incentives. Provide bespoke advice.	Track development of new tenancy agreement and incentives.	County Farm tenancy agreement. Resourcing for incentives would be required.	Corporate Property Team (County Farms) CES Environment Team		Medium

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
2.3	Establish a pilot/testing of pollinator-friendly measures on County Farms that could be adopted by others across Norfolk.	Working with academic partners to produce scientifically-robust experiments to test a number of pollinator measures. These practices, once tested could be adopted by others. Local adoption of the monitoring measures used in the National Pollinator Monitoring Strategy (POMS). Establish a baseline for percentage of County Farm assets currently managed for pollinators or in management that benefit pollinators.	Local monitoring using a national standard to establish trends. Monitor change in the % of County Farm assets managed for pollinators	Officer time. External funding support may be required for trials/ analysis of samples. Academic literature such as Potts et al., 2016	NCC ecologists.	UEA researchers, County Farm tenants, NCC Land agents, Norfolk FWAG.	Medium

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
2.4	Phase out pesticide use on County Farms over the longer term.	Work with external land agents and farming estates to share methods to reduce pesticide use across the county. Follow the principles of the adopted NCC Glyphosate Policy to protect pollinators and other biodiversity. Access resources that identify the impacts of pesticides on pollinator species, and how these could be phased out over the longer term. Incentivise voluntary reporting of annual pesticide use on County Farms to produce pesticide inventory. Provide information and training to encourage targeted pesticide use, and integrated pest management. Establish Pollinator Champions amongst County Farm tenants.	Monitor uptake of voluntary recording of pesticide use. Monitor glyphosate usage.	Integrated Weed Management approach (NCC Glyphosate Policy) to minimise glyphosate use Working with external land agents and farming estates to share specifications and reduce pesticide use	Corporate Property Team (County Farms) / CES Environment Team	NCC Land Agents, County Farm tenants, Norfolk FWAG	Short/ Medium

Theme 3. Managing Highways verges and Public Right of Ways in a pollinator-friendly way (internal action for NCC)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
3.1	Maintenance of the road verges to deliver their potential for pollinators with appropriate consideration of safety issues	Task and finish group of NCC Highways with CES Environment Team to review/revise current maintenance programmes. Promote the benefits of new approaches to manage highway verges better for pollinators. Take advantage of opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Encourage district and parish councils with delegated authority for the management of verges to adopt pollinator friendly measures.	Monitor miles of verge managed more sympathetically for pollinators (from an agreed baseline) Include advice to support pollinators in the Highways Corridor document	Officer time Buglife report on road verges and their potential for pollinators All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan https://pollinators.ie/	NCC Highways with Community and Environmental Services (CES) Environment Team	CES Environment, Highways contractor, NCC media team, district and parish councils	Short/ medium
3.2	Maintenance of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to deliver their potential for pollinators	Task and finish group of Countryside Access Officers and County Ecologist to review current maintenance programmes. Take advantage of opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Consider projects for pollinators to be included in the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan or by Pathmakers.	Monitor pollinators projects included in the NAIP and/ or brought forward by Pathmakers. Consider recording all new positive outcomes to favour pollinators on the ProW over targets.	Officer time. Input from NLAF. All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan Norfolk Access Improvement Plan NCC TAMP	Highways Countryside Access Officers	CES Environment Team, contractors, Norfolk Local Access Forum	Short/ medium

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
3.3	Maintenance of Norfolk Trails and Norfolk Greenways to deliver their potential for pollinators	Task and finish group of NCC officers and ecologists. Develop a *Management for Pollinators* section in the Trails Management Handbook Use a variety of communication techniques to engage with people to explain new approaches to favour pollinators.	Inclusion of a *Management for Pollinators* section in the Norfolk Trails Management handbook	Officer time. Input from NLAF. All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan Norfolk Access Improvement Plan NCC TAMP	Norfolk Trails Team, Norfolk Greenways Team	CES Environment Team, contractors Norfolk Local Access Forum	Short/ medium
3.4	Working with Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) to manage, promote and extend the Roadside Nature Reserve (RNR) scheme, designating the most important verges for Norfolk's special biodiversity	Secure budget to manage and promote existing RNRs. Establish a condition monitoring programme for RNRs. Identify new potential RNRs, surveying and marking with standard RNR posts/signs. Ensure important verges are designated as RNRs. Take advantage of opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Use a variety of communication techniques to engage with people as new approaches are taken to manage highway verges) better for pollinators	Secure funds to manage and extend the RNR network. Increase the number of RNRs created. Monitor condition of RNRs.	Officer time NWT officer time. Funding required to manage and expand the network NWT Roadside Nature Reserve Scheme	CES Environment Team	Norfolk Wildlife Trust, NCC Highways, Corporate Media Team	Short/ medium

Theme 4. Managing other NCC assets in a pollinator-friendly way (internal action for NCC)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
4.1	Manage NCC assets such as the County Hall estate, school grounds, closed landfill sites to maximise opportunities for pollinators.	Develop and deliver training / seminars and online guidance for Highways Designers, Closed Landfill Team and contractors working for NCC to promote pollinator best practice. Minimise use of pesticides as required by the NCC Glyphosate Policy. Include actions for pollinators in the County Hall estate management plan. Take advantage of opportunities to create habitat for pollinators through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Take advantage of opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).	Track attendance of officers at events / seminars. Track adoption of pollinator friendly management actions on the County Hall Estate	Officer time. Funding to produce guidance. NCC Glyphosate Policy Biodiversity Net Gain regulations Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy	NCC ecologists Corporate Property Team	Highway designers, Close Landfill Team, Corporate property Team, Contractors	Short

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
4.2	Ensure pollinator friendly practices are embedded into maintenance works, training, lease agreements and contracts.	Develop criteria for impacts on pollinators against which to assess policies, projects, operations and schemes. All non-routine works to be assessed for their potential impact on pollinators/ habitats prior to work commencing to ensure no net loss. Include pollinators on the Environmental check lists for small highways schemes. Corporate Property Team, NCC Waste and Children's Services Team and Highways to review / revise current practices. Adopt an Integrated Weed Management Approach to minimise use of pesticides.	Track policies, projects and operations where criteria are used. Track number of Highways environmental checklists where specific actions are taken for pollinators	Officer time. NCC Glyphosate Policy Highways Environmental checklists (green forms)	NCC ecologists	Highways design officers. Highways, NORSE	Short

Theme 5: Establishing the baseline data of pollinators and their habitats within Norfolk (wider actions in partnership)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
5.1	Mapping Important Pollinator Areas (IPAs) in Norfolk.	Working with Buglife to devise concept and scope of IPAs, supported by a stakeholder group including species specialists, such as county records of bees, hoverflies and butterflies. The mapping will be undertaken by Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) incorporating Buglife's important invertebrate areas and updated, full-resolution B-lines. Deliver presentations about IPAs at conferences and seminars. Include data in commercial data searches requested by consultants and researchers. .	Track number of data searches where IPA data is included Track number of ecological reports which refer to Norfolk's IPAs and Norfolk B-lines	Officer time Volunteer Time Funding needed.	Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS)	County Recorders, Buglife Specialist recording groups such as the Norfolk Flora Group and Norfolk branch of Butterfly conservation. Academics, Natural England	Medium/ Long
5.2	Identifying and promoting increased connectivity for pollinators across Norfolk	Develop and promote the ecological network mapping, incorporating the IPAs and B-Lines. Include information in local Biodiversity Net Gain strategies. Work with Natural England and Norfolk FWAG to influence Agri-Environment schemes. Work with NWT on Living Landscapes, County Wildlife Sites and landowners on re-wildling projects. Link to implementation of LNRS	Track projects and ecological reports which refer to Norfolk's IPA and B-Lines. Record number of presentations given.	Officer time, Volunteer specialists and NGOs	NBIS	Landowners, NWT, Norfolk FWAG, Natural England, Nature Reserve Managers.	Medium/ Long

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
5.3	Establish a baseline of pollinator abundance for Norfolk. .	Develop a network of pollinator monitoring stations to establish a baseline of pollinator abundance using the methodology from the National Pollinator Monitoring Strategy (POMS), adding to Norfolk's Species Surveillance Network. Train volunteers and wardens of reserves to undertake monitoring.	Track number of POMs recording stations established in Norfolk. Track number of volunteer hours monitoring pollinators through POMS in Norfolk	Officer time Volunteer time Funding needed UEA pollinator research group	NBIS	Volunteers, Nature Reserve managers and staff	Medium/ Long

Theme 6: Raise awareness to support pollinator-friendly practices throughout Norfolk (wider actions in partnership)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
6.1	Create a Pledge for Pollinators' web page and other non-financial incentives.	This would take the form of a form of a webpage for organisations, individuals, business, schools, community groups parish councils, farmers, and conservation bodies who would pledge to manage land for pollinators. Other incentives could involve awards and recognition, equipment, gifts of seeds, shrubs and trees.	Track number of organisations and individual making a pledge for pollinators. Track area of land that has been pledged. Track success of other incentives	Officer time. Funding to develop web page. Funding for a pledge pack and promotional materials, posters, social media, videos etc. The All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan provides good examples	NBIS	NCC Ecologist, community groups, parish councils	Medium/ Long
6.2	A schools / young people scheme potentially in partnership with other organisations to promote better understanding of our pollinators	Schools / young people projects to be worked up, promoting a better understanding of pollinators. Competitions for best projects for example.	Develop targets to monitor success.	The All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan includes examples	Officer time Potential need for funding.	CES Environment Team, county ecologists	Medium/ Long

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
6.3	Promote a better understanding of our pollinators with the general public.	Promoting the value of pollinators and their needs to a variety of audiences and across a range of media including: Highlighting the importance of pollinators in Norfolk; advice on how the public can help; promotion of activities as part of National Bee Needs Week. Delivery of natural history workshops on identifying important pollinators including a potential 'Bioblitz' event on a County Farm. Delivery of seminars on actions that can be undertaken to important areas for pollinators aimed at individuals, community groups. Messaging around the importance of preventing habitat degradation and around pollinators' needs, including nesting and hibernation habitat as well as nectar/ pollen sources.	Track number of articles and social media posts Track number of people attending seminars and training events. Track number of people attending natural history workshops	Officer time, Volunteers. CEH's Pollinator Monitoring Scheme Flower-Insect timed counts (FIT counts) or 1km squares. UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme	NCC ecologists, NBIS.	Corporate Media Team; County Recorders, NWT, Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society	Medium/ long
6.4	Promoting and advising landowners and farmers about pollinator-friendly practices	Expert-led farm walks and seminars for landowners; seminar(s); production of web-based guidance and/or leaflets; working with academic partners and landowners to identify ways to improve the farmed landscape for pollinators in a Norfolk-specific context and produce/commission guidance.	Develop and monitor targets such as changes in land management to favour pollinators, and guidance produced.	Funding required The All Ireland Pollinator Action Plan includes examples	Norfolk FWAG. Developed with others such as , UEA, NWT, Broads Authority, district councils.	NCC ecologists	Short/ Medium

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
		Opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).		Advice from B-lines (Buglife)			
6.5	Develop actions for areas such as churchyards, village greens, community-owned land, amenity land e.g. as managed by parish/town councils and the borough/district authorities.	Produce / promote web-based guidance and/or leaflets with Local groups, e.g. Friends' groups around Norfolk	Develop and monitor targets such as changes in land management to favour pollinators, and guidance produced.	NWT Churchyard conservation scheme Caring for God's Acre	NWT	NCC ecologists	Medium/ long

Theme 7: Pollinators and the planning system in Norfolk (wider actions in partnership)

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
7.1	Review existing local plans and planning policy to assess if they provide suitable measures for pollinators	Identify if current and emerging site allocations that contain habitats which support pollinators or could do so, such as brownfield sites are recognised. Highlight allocations where action for pollinators would be necessary. Take advantage of opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).	Record allocations where advice on action for pollinators has been provided	Officer time. National Planning Policy Framework National Pollinator Strategy	NCC ecologists.	NCC and District and Borough planning authorities	Medium
7.2	Encourage and work with district/borough authorities to include specific actions for pollinators in their local plans.	Promote the needs of pollinators, ecology network mapping and B-Lines for use in site allocations for emerging local plans. Encourage each district/borough to nominate a planning officer as an eco advocate to support their colleagues. Take advantage of opportunities arising through the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).	Track referencing in new and emerging local plans to pollinators and the Biodiversity Net Gain strategy for Norfolk.	Officer time Duties under the National Planning Policy Framework National Pollinator Strategy	NCC ecologists	District and Borough planning authorities	Medium
7.3	Ensure that pollinators are given a high priority in the emerging *Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy for Norfolk* and other strategic plans relating to the Natural Environment such as the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).	Through advocacy, ensure that pollinators are given a high priority in the emerging BNG strategy for Norfolk and the Norfolk LNRS. Include detailed, relevant actions for pollinators.	Track biodiversity (including pollinators) loss-gain over time	Norfolk and Suffolk Compendium of Natural Assets. Greater Norwich	NCC ecologists	NBIS, NCC and District and Borough planning authorities	Medium/ Long

	Description	How this will be achieved?	Measures of progress	Resources available/ required	Lead	Partners	Timescale
				Green Infrastructure Strategy			
7.4	Provide training for planning officers on the need for and benefits of actions for pollinators and encourage each district/borough to nominate a planning officer as an 'eco-advocate' to support their colleagues.	Promote the Norfolk Pollinator Action Plan at the annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar (held annually). Provide training on BNG and Defra metric to planning officers. Where NCC has a Service Level Agreement with district authorities, include a section on pollinators in ecology training for planners. Include a section on pollinators in ecology training for the NCC Planning Committee	Track number of events and training on pollinators	Officer time Online guidance and resources for local authorities e.g. Buglife	NCC ecologists	NBIS, SBIS, and local planning authorities	Medium/ Long