

**Bracknell Forest Council
Record of Decision**

Work Programme Reference	1077532
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1. **TITLE:** Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2023

2. **SERVICE AREA:** Environment, Culture & Communities

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

To seek approval for the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2018 to 2023 for Bracknell Forest Borough.

4. **IS KEY DECISION** Yes

5. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive

6. **DECISION:**

RESOLVED that:

- i) the new Biodiversity Action Plan 2018 to 2023 be approved and be adopted as a Council strategy.
- ii) minor changes to the new Biodiversity Action Plan 2018 to 2023 prior to adoption in (3.1 of the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities) above be agreed with the Chief Officer: Planning, Transport and Countryside in consultation with the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public protection.

7. **REASON FOR DECISION**

- i) As a unitary authority, Bracknell Forest Council is responsible for protecting and enhancing biodiversity as set out in policy documents including the community strategy, core strategy (Local Development Framework), climate change action plan and cultural strategy. Successful delivery will involve cross service co-operation; with key roles for the Council as Planning Authority, Highway Authority, Access Authority and as a land manager.
- ii) Approval and publication of BAP will support Council Strategic themes:-
'A clean, green, growing and sustainable place'
'Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities' with particular reference to 'Levels of volunteering and community action in the borough are increased.'
- iii) At a National level there have been many recent publications from central government which reflect a rapidly changing approach to biodiversity. The most relevant of these is 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' published in August 2011 which sets broad priorities for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Bracknell Forest BAP aims to contribute towards this wider strategy by reporting to higher levels via the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (now called the Berkshire

Biodiversity Strategy 2014-2020) through the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP).

- iv) The current legislation identified for UK Priority Habitats includes that provided by the NPPF paragraph 117: 'Planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan.'
- v) As a public authority in England, Bracknell Forest has a duty under the NERC Act 2006 to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of its policy or decision making. Conserving biodiversity can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat. Having an approved, current BAP provides an essential evidence base, objectives and targets that are specific to Bracknell Forest. The BAP provides added weight to internal planning consultation responses and a valuable reference for officers, members, stakeholders and residents alike.
- vi) The BAP seeks to contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity by: (1) addressing habitat connectivity, (2) developing a system for biodiversity accounting, (3) adopting a green infrastructure and (4) secure biodiversity enhancement projects through s106 funding which will help developers meet their planning obligation. These are all consideration in the planning process.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- i) If a new Biodiversity Action Plan is not adopted, this will reduce the effectiveness of and capacity for positive measures to protect and enhance wildlife, including in relation to partnership working to achieve nature conservation objectives. In the absence of a valid BAP which identifies priorities, plans and projects, the local development industry would find it more challenging to meet their environmental obligations required under national and local planning standards.

BAPs play an important role in translating national and regional strategies, priorities and targets into direct local action on the ground, and in identifying which UK priority species and habitats are found in that local area. The UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats remain important and valuable reference sources. Notably, they have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England, as required under: Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

- ii) The Council will also be unable to effectively demonstrate compliance with the statutory duty to conserve biodiversity in accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

9. **PRINCIPAL GROUPS CONSULTED:** Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership
Town and Parish Councils
Volunteer Groups
General Public

10. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:** Report of the Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

11. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

Date Decision Made	Final Day of Call-in Period
17 July 2018	24 July 2018