

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2024** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

Contact Officer:

- 1. MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December, 2023.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01480) 388169

- 2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - (01480) 388169

- 3. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE** (Pages 11 - 20)

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made on the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement within Huntingdonshire.

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Street Scene

Contact Officer:

- 4. BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIC SITES** (Pages 21 - 42)

The purpose of this report is to outline process for enhancing biodiversity on Council owned Strategic Parks and Open Spaces and endorse the short, medium, and long-term goals for continued improvement in Biodiversity habitat on those sites in readiness for future funding opportunities.

Executive Portfolio holders:

Executive Councillor for Climate/Environment; and
Executive Councillor Leisure, Waste and Street Scene.

Contact Officer: N Massey/ H Lack - nick.massey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk / (01480) 388658

31 day of January 2024

Michelle Sacks

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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Please contact Democratic Services, Tel No: (01480) 388169 / e-mail: Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 12 December 2023

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson,
B A Mickelburgh, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, S L Taylor and
S Wakeford.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor M A Hassall.

51 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

52 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor B M Pitt declared a registerable interest under Minute Nos 56 and 59 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Town Council. He abstained from voting on both items.

53 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2023/24

The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) that required agreement on the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2022/2023 and the update on the infrastructure delivery during this time (to 31 March 2023) and statement required in relation to projects that will or may be, wholly or partly, funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The main points of the discussions on the report may be summarised as follows:

The Cabinet noted that the District Council has been a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority since May 2012. Under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), a CIL contribution receiving authority such as the District Council is required to publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) by no later than 31st December including a statement on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the Council intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by the CIL, report about CIL on matters specified in the regulations and report about planning obligations specified in the regulations

The IFS in this report covers the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 and provides detail on how the Council is delivering the Corporate Plan to Do: Enable; Influence and the Local Plan with particular regard to infrastructure to enable growth. In noting the contents of the IFS detailed at Appendix 1,

commented on the infrastructure delivery in the reporting year and noted the statement on future projects that may be supported by CIL, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the statement on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the Council intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL stated at para 2.5 of the report now submitted in the Infrastructure Funding Statement be approved; and
- (b) that the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning, be authorised to make any final amendments to the IFS, if necessary, prior to publication.

54 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPDATE

The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presented by the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning that invited the Cabinet to consider recommendations relating to infrastructure projects seeking extensions of time for their funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies received to date.

The Cabinet noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area. The Council must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area. This helps to deliver across the Council's Corporate Plan priorities through the creation of a better Huntingdonshire for future generations by maintaining the level of new housing delivery, that meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing) and forward-thinking economic growth to influence the delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies.

In October 2020 approval had been given to a revised approach to the governance arrangements for allocating the funds held by the District Council as the 'Strategic Proportion'. Under these arrangements the Cabinet considers those applications received seeking over £50,000. Of the projects approved to date, it was noted that there are three current projects that have applied for an extension of time which included:

- Warboys Village Hall;
- W heatsheaf Road/Somersham Road junction improvements; and
- Ramsey Skate Park.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) at its meeting held on Wednesday, 6 December 2023 had discussed the Community Infrastructure Levy Update Report and commented that it was positive to observe that works would be beginning with particular reference to the W heatsheaf junction project.

As a result of discussions on the report, it was

RESOLVED

that an extension of time be approved for their funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy for the following –

- (a) the Warboys Village Hall project until 30th March 2025;
- (b) Ramsey Skate Park project to 31st December 2025; and
- (c) B1040 Wheatsheaf Rd/Somersham Rd and the St Ives Accident Reduction Scheme project until 30th September 2025.

55 NON-DOMESTIC RATES RURAL SETTLEMENTS LIST

Councillors S J Conboy, M A Hassall and B A Mickelburgh abstained from voting on this item.

The Cabinet considered a report by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the updated Rural Settlement List comprising settlements with a population of less than 3,000. The report sets out why changes were being proposed to certain parishes and shows that the impact of the changes would not be detrimental in any way to businesses trading in the rural areas of Huntingdonshire.

The Council's statutory responsibility is to compile and maintain a Rural Settlement List under the provisions of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. The intention of the List was to allow the Council to grant business rates relief to qualifying businesses to support rural businesses and communities. It is a legal requirement that boundaries are set and published by 31st December each year.

Following a review of the latest population data estimates available from Cambridgeshire County Council, no changes are proposed to the Rural Settlement List.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) at its meeting on Thursday, 7 December 2023 had discussed the Rural Settlement List for non-domestic rates and the Panel heard that there were no changes to the list from last year. It was also clarified that the map areas highlighted in blue were parts of urban areas which had been designated as defined rural settlements in order to support local businesses and observed that due to there having been no change from the previous year, it might be prudent to pursue an alternative method of publishing. In response the Executive Councillor had confirmed to the Panel that there was an option to do this via a delegated responsibility and that this would be investigated.

As a result of discussions on the report, it was

RESOLVED

that the changes to Huntingdonshire District Council's Rural Settlement List for publication by 31st December 2023 to facilitate the award of Rural Business Rates Relief for the financial year effective from 1st April 2024 be approved.

56 MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - WINTER UPDATE

The Cabinet received a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the Market Towns Programme (MTP). The Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing then reported upon progress with the MTP. With particular reference to the start of work on the Town Centre Improvements (St Neots), the progress towards the refurbishment of the Priory Centre (St Neots) and delivery of the wider Market Town Programme focusing on activities across Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives, and Ramsey.

The Cabinet noted that whilst there will unfortunately be disruption as part of the improvement programme, it was stressed that this was intended to be a seamless process with businesses still being able to trade. Accordingly, the MTP governance and reporting lines will be continually monitored to ensure that the key programme milestones are managed and achieved.

Members noted that a key element of the MTP is having in place a well-planned communications strategy that is both monitored weekly and designed to be initiative-taking, looking ahead several months for any likely challenges and situations for which communications and publicity are vital tools in facilitation any successful resolution.

The Cabinet were advised that good planning and effective regeneration can renew and reshape local town centres and high streets in a way that promotes growth, improves experiences and ensures sustainability in the future.

As a result of discussions on the report, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that progress regarding the projects (part of the Market Towns Programme) over the last quarter be noted; and
- (b) that discussion was noted on feedback concerning the potential extension of the Shop Front Grant scheme to St Neots and Ramsey town centres.

57 HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP

The Cabinet has received and noted the Minutes of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group held on 17th November 2023.

58 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contained exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

59 MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME WINTER UPDATE - PART II

See Minute No. 52 – Members’ Interests.

The Cabinet gave consideration to an exempt report (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) which provided a Winter update on the Market Town Programme.

Having received an update from the Executive Councillor for Jobs, Housing and Economy who responded to a number of questions raised and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to endorse the recommendations contained within the exempt report now submitted.

(Councillor B M Pitt abstained from voting on this item).

60 SENIOR OFFICER COMMITTEE - CABINET NOTIFICATION: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLACE)

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained within the Council’s Constitution, the Executive Leader reported upon the outcome of the Senior Officers Committee held on 12th December 2023. No objections were made on the proposed appointment to the post of Corporate Director Place.

Chair

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Public
Key Decision Yes*

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Civil Parking Enforcement Update

Meeting/Date: 16th January 2024: Cabinet

Executive Portfolio: Cllr Simone Taylor Executive District Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Street Scene

Report by: Operations Manager (GM)
Assistant Director Strategic Insight & Delivery (NS)

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Civil Parking Enforcement is a legislative change which enables enforcement of number of on-street parking offences by the Highways Authority. In Huntingdonshire, the enforcement of these offences will be delegated by way of an Agency Agreement between the District and County.

This report provides an update the progress made on the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement within Huntingdonshire.

This report seeks endorsement for the recommendations below and presents the reason for these recommended approaches.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet/Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the work undertaken to date and the preparedness of HDC and CCC to apply for Decriminalisation of Parking in Huntingdonshire against the previously approved timescales.
- b) Note the new expected go live date as determined by the Department for Transport's capacity constraints outside of the control of both CCC and HDC.
- c) Endorse the proposal set out in Section 4.4 for 'Go Live & Warning Notice Approach'.
- d) Endorse the proposal set out in Section 4.5 for 'CPE Stakeholder Briefing & Update Approach'.
- e) Endorse the signing of the PATROL agreement as set out in Section 4.6 by the Assistant Director (Strategic Insight & Delivery).

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made on the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement within Huntingdonshire. This report provides an update in relation to the delivery timescales and makes a recommendation for the approach to 'go live' and 'Stakeholder briefing & updates'.

2. BACKGROUND TO CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1. Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is the outcome of a process that decriminalises a number of on-street parking offences enabling them to be enforced as a civil matter by a Local Authority. This represents a significant change to the current position whereby these offences may only be enforced by the Police.
- 2.2. Until the transition to Civil Parking Enforcement takes effect, the enforcement of on-street parking matters remains a function of the Police. HDC are not able to support enforcement due to legislative restrictions.
- 2.3. The process being undertaken (often referred to as decriminalisation of parking) will see the establishment of a Civil Enforcement Area (CEA) in Huntingdonshire. This is a statutory process that will see the Highways Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) make an application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the CEA. Following a DfT review, the application will be laid before Parliament for approval.
- 2.4. Ordinarily the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement would be pursued by the Highways Authority, however previous independent assessments concluded that whilst CPE could be implemented, it was not financially viable to do so.
- 2.5. A report brought before Cabinet (11th Feb 2021) saw approval given to pursue 'Civil Parking Enforcement' in Huntingdonshire. This would utilise a HDC budget provision made towards the implementation and ongoing associated revenue implications.
- 2.6. Officers of Cambridgeshire County Council & Huntingdonshire District Council are working collaboratively to deliver this outcome for Huntingdonshire.

3. BACKGROUND TO CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1. Huntingdonshire District Council will undertake the ongoing on-street enforcement of Civil Parking including charge notice progression. The annual anticipated budget deficit (~60k p/a) created by the operation of Civil Parking is within the Council MTFS. This takes into consideration a number of changes including an increased number of enforcement staff (recruitment to be undertaken ahead of 'go live').
- 3.2. Huntingdonshire District Council will contribute towards the on-street remedial works costs required to uplift the current standard of 'signs & lines' associated with on-street parking restrictions. Budget is allowed for within the MTFS.

3.3. Cambridgeshire County Council will retain all other responsibilities as the Highways Authority. As such, responsibility for new on-street parking restrictions and scheme implementations will remain with CCC. More information on improvement schemes including the process of application can be found at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-the-local-highway>

3.4. Cambridgeshire County Council will retain responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of 'sign & lines' when the operation of Civil Parking Enforcement commences.

3.5. The Councils will work jointly to delegate other associated elements as appropriate to facilitate the delivery and ongoing enforcement of Civil Parking.

3.6. It should be noted that the Police will still retain enforcement powers for:

- Dangerous and obstructive parking
- Vehicles parked on pedestrian crossings and zig zag lines.
- Moving traffic offences e.g., speeding and passing through 'no entry' zones

The above is the current position in other LA areas and may change subject to decisions to be made by CCC on county wide policy and legislative changes.

4. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT – WORKS COMPLETED

4.1.1. The delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement in Huntingdonshire requires significant undertaking of works to enable delivery. Key areas of work include:

- Traffic Regulation Order Review
- Sign & Line remedials
- Back-office enforcement systems preparation
- Department for Transport Application
- Development of an Agency Agreement

4.1.2. Traffic Regulation Order Review Works:

- Onsite review and mapping of all on-street restrictions district wide has been completed.
- Mapping will be used for the preparation of CPE Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's)
- Review/mapping has been used to identify currently non-compliant sign & line elements.
- A review of off-street parking orders has been undertaken to prepare a CPE ready order.

4.1.3. Sign & Line remedials:

- A design works package is being created for all identified non-compliant sign & line elements. This works package provides detailed information required for the completion of remedial works.

- Once complete, the works packages will be used for the procurement of the works.

4.1.4. Back-office enforcement systems preparation:

- We are reviewing the available systems for enforcement of parking and associated functions. We have spoken with other LA's who have recently adopted civil parking to understand any system shortfalls they may have identified. This will be used to inform our system specification.
- We submitted our application to Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC) and received our charge notice prefix. This step is required for all authorities undertaking civil parking enforcement. TEC is effectively a registration point for unpaid parking tickets/ penalty charge notices, which enables the LA to enforce as if a County Court Order for debt recovery.

4.1.5. Department for Transport Application:

- CCC have undertaken the required consultation steps to date ahead of application submissions.
- Both authorities have provided information required for the application process.
- The application will be submitted by CCC.

4.1.6. Development of an Agency Agreement

- The agency agreement between CCC & HDC details the relationship and delegated responsibility. A draft is being progressed to reflect the processes required to be in place, the funding sources and any other required information.
- The final draft will be brought to Cabinet via O&S for comment.

4.2. **IMPLEMENTATION – SIGNS & LINES**

4.2.1. The implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement will require significant work to address highways sign & lines issues to ensure that they are compliant with the required standards. The review and mapping of all signs/lines within the district boundaries has enabled the development of a remedial works list in collaboration with CCC.

4.2.2. Having reviewed the CCC framework contract, the estimated total value of these works would exceed the budget allocated towards the delivery of Civil Parking.

4.2.3. We have taken a proactive step to control the budget by undertaking soft market testing with an alternate provider which brings estimate back in line with the allocated funds.

4.2.4. Whilst the original project did plan to utilise the CCC contract, the project will now include a competitive market tender. This has been discussed and has the support of CCC officers.

4.2.5. We are currently undertaking further on-site surveys of items on the remedial works list compiled to look to remove items where CCC works have already been undertaken since the onsite surveys completed 2022.

4.3. IMPLEMENTATION – CHANGE TO DELIVERY TIMELINE

4.3.1. The process being undertaken to achieve the establishment of a Civil Enforcement Area (CEA) in Huntingdonshire is ‘decriminalisation’ which is a statutory process leading up to the application to the Department for Transport (DfT). Following DfT review, the application must be laid before parliament for parliamentary approval (DfT to Parliament).

4.3.2. The CPE project currently has a ‘go live’ date for enforcement of October 2024 based on the application to the Department for Transport (DfT) being made by CCC in April 2024 (the window provided by DfT).

4.3.3. CCC received information from DfT on 09/10/2023 during the SCDC application process that the timescales from submission to ‘go live’ have increased due to parliamentary delays. We will now likely receive the approval from DfT in January 2025. No date has been provided for within January 2025. HDC has no influence over this approval timeline.

4.3.4. This change is reflected in our recommendation in Section 4.4

4.4. GO LIVE & WARNING NOTICE APPROACH

4.4.1. It is normal practice for a Local Authority to have a period of ‘warning notice’ issued at the commencement of Civil Parking Enforcement.

4.4.2. A warning notice is issued in place of change notice. It advises that the circumstances observed would normally be an offence, however no further action will be taken on this occasion which will be made clear on the notice.

4.4.3. These warning facilitate the public’s adjustment in adhering to highways restrictions in place that may not have been enforced for a number of years. The warning notice period serves an additional purpose in providing a live test phase before the ‘chargeable notice’ enforcement commences.

4.4.4. Whilst it is permissible for no warning notice period, this period is ordinarily for a minimum period of 4 weeks.

4.4.5. We have been advised of the expected delays (section 4.3.3) and that we will likely receive approval in January 2025. No date has been provided for within January.

4.4.6. We therefore recommend that the following approach is adopted:

- Commencement of enforcement with payable notices is 3rd March 2025.

- Warning notice period will be issued at least throughout February 2025. We will be flexible in this period overall duration commencing in January from the point authorised by DfT and Parliament.

4.4.7. This flexible warning notice approach allows us to specify the go live date in advance which:

- supports the ability to communicate to the public the date of enforcement change, and;
- reduces the risk of impact upon this date impacted should approval from DfT and parliament not be received until late January 2025.

4.5. STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING & UPDATE APPROACH

4.5.1. Civil Parking Enforcement represents a legislative charge impacting all wards within the District. We therefore feel it is appropriate to ensure that clear information is made available that:

- Confirms to Parish and Town Councils the extents of Civil Parking Enforceable offences and what remains within the Police remit.
- Recognises the interest of Parish and Town Councils and provides updates on progress made towards the delivery.

In addition to the above we feel it is important to provide our own Cllrs the opportunity to ask questions around the scope of Civil Parking prior to 'Go Live' regarding HDC's remit.

4.5.2. To achieve these objectives, we recommend the following approach is adopted:

- **HDC Cllrs:**
 - *To host an afternoon drop-in session consisting of a repeated presentation and opportunity for questions to be asked of officers. This will include information on the charge notice process and member involvement.*
- **Parish Councils:**
 - *To host an afternoon drop-in session consisting of a repeated presentation and opportunity for questions to be asked of officers. We will suggest that a Parish nominate 2 persons to attend the session on their behalf.*
- **Town Councils:**
 - *To host a session per Councils consisting of a presentation and opportunity for questions to be asked of officers. We suggest this invitation is extended to the Mayor and Clerk with the opportunity to bring up to 5 persons in total.*
 - In addition to the above, in the drop-in sessions we will encourage HDC Cllrs, Parish and Town Councils to refer to our website for updates on Civil Parking Enforcement. We will ensure that the HDC website on Civil Parking Enforcement is kept up to date with any significant changes and advise HDC Cllrs when updates are made via the weekly member email.

4.6. PATROL/TPT Delegated Authority for Signing

- 4.6.1. The Council currently operates its car parks under Parking Orders made under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984. Charge notice appeals received are reviewed by officers of the Council. Should the charge notice remain unpaid, the matter is progressed to the Magistrates Court.
- 4.6.2. Following the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement, the Magistrates Court is no longer involved in the progression of charge notices. CPE Matters are referred to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) to provide independent adjudication.
- 4.6.3. TPT is a function of PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London). PATROL has a statutory duty to make provision for the independent adjudication of parking and traffic penalties issued under the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 4.6.4. To facilitate the operation of CPE, the Council must enter into an operational arrangement with PATROL. It is recommended that members endorse the Assistant Director (Strategic Insight & Delivery) to sign this agreement to enable our future use of the statutory services when required for the progression of parking matters.

4.7. FUTURE REPORTING

- 4.7.1. As the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement is progressed, officers will bring forward reports relating to the Agency Agreement & HDC Parking Enforcement Principles.
- 4.7.2. Agency Agreement: Development of the Agency Agreement and a summary of its content can be found in Section 4.1.6. There are elements of the AA that are still under discussion. We anticipate this report will be available in April 2024.
- 4.7.3. HDC Parking Enforcement Principles: This will look at the 'Principles & Priorities of Enforcement' for HDC with recognising our priorities and aims with enforcement resource available. We anticipate this report will be available in summer 2024.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. HDC have allocated capital to the value of £364,500 towards the implementation of civil parking enforcement.
- 5.2. CCC have allocated £150,000 per District pursuing Civil Parking Enforcement. This allows for an allocation of £50k to be retained by CCC for Traffic Regulation Order review/advertising and officer time allocated towards civil parking implementation. The remaining £100k was to be allocated by towards 'remedial design works'. As agreed with CCC, an alternate provider may be appointed by HDC from HDC budget to undertake this work. The remaining £100k of CCC funding has been agreed to be reallocated to be combined with HDC's funding to support the on-street sign and line works.

5.3. This provides a total budget of £464,500. Within this, expenditure will be made for HDC Enforcement hardware; HDC off-street signage updates and remedials; on-street remedial works (signs & lines).

6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.1. The Panel received the Civil Parking Enforcement Update Report at its meeting on 4th January 2024.
- 6.2. Following a question from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that due to the geographic nature of the district, there is an increase in costs to enforce parking in rural areas, however a balance would be found to maintain compliance and enforcement. The Panel also heard that an ongoing relationship with members flagging areas of concern would be critical to the maintenance of this balance. In response to a further question from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that due to the geographical reach of Cambridgeshire it is not viable for teams from Cambridge City to travel into the rural areas to enforce parking, therefore HDC were working with and supporting their rural neighbours, in particular Fenland.
- 6.3. The Panel heard that a communications plan would be implemented as part of the project to ensure awareness in both members and residents. Councillor Bywater commented that the timing of these communications would be key and observed that seasonal timings, such as school holidays, be taken into consideration as part of the plan.
- 6.4. The Panel were advised, in response to questions from Councillors Burke and Shaw, that modelling had been informed by professional associates and that HDC had benchmarked against similar rural districts for anticipated costs incurred and anticipated compliance. The Panel were further advised that by law, Civil Parking Enforcement could not make a surplus and that any surplus achieved must be ringfenced to transport projects. A balance would be struck between enforcement and compliance, and also that no targets would be set as ideally there should not be a need to issue enforcements. The Panel were also assured that the limit on generating a surplus income would not limit the quantity of notices issued.
- 6.5. Councillor Hunt enquired whether the anticipated General Election posed a threat to the timeline of the project, whereupon, the Panel were assured that the risk had been noted however, the application would be classed as regular business therefore not anticipated to be an issue.
- 6.6. Further to a question from Councillor Alban regarding information on other authorities and what surplus others encountered, the Panel were assured that this was not a money generating exercise and that the model was comparable to similar rural authorities. The Panel were further advised that this was publicly available information and would be shared with the Panel following the meeting.
- 6.7. The Panel praised an excellent report and were advised that an annual report on progress would be fed through the democratic cycle in due course.

- 6.8. Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1. The Council remains committed to delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement as evidenced by the progression made towards implementation through the works delivered so far in pursuit.
- 7.2. We are recommending a go live approach that supports a warning notice period as this is normal practice. The approach we have recommended also recognises local circumstances relating to a non-fixed DfT notification date.
- 7.3. We recognise the importance of CPE and member interest. The approach set out recognises this level of interest and aims to provide both updates and details of what this significant change will represent to enforcement.
- 7.4. PATROL has a statutory duty to make provision for the independent adjudication. CPE requires providing the opportunity for independent adjudication. No alternate option for this function is available to the Council.

8. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 8.1. Implementation Date: We will receive the approval from DfT in January 2025. A parliamentary election must be held before the end of January 2025. This has the potential for further impact on parliamentary approval and is not currently included within the Jan 25 position. If an election is announced this could lead to a congestion of Parliamentary time. An update will be provided to Cabinet to note any impact on delivery timescales.
- 8.2. Agency Agreement: HDC need to have in place an Agency Agreement with CCC in order to have powers delegated to enable the ability to enforce Civil Parking. Should the Councils not reach a position of agreeable terms; or it is considered the terms of the agreement then CPE may either not progress, or the application to the DfT will be delayed.
- 8.3. The soft market testing undertaken for the remedial works required represented a significant reduction in costs vs utilisation of CCC's appointed highways contractor. It should be noted that this returned figure was an estimate and is unconfirmed until the completion of the procurement exercise.
- 8.4. The delays to the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement will mean a longer dependency on the Police to undertake on-street enforcement.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet 11 Feb 2021 – Decriminalised Parking

<https://democracy.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s114049/Item%206%20-%20Civil%20Parking%20Enforcement%20Report.pdf>

Overview and Scrutiny (Customers and Partnerships) – 4 Feb 2021

<https://democracy.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s114030/OS%20Covering%20Report.pdf>

Cabinet 18 Oct 2018 - Off Street Parking Strategy

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=256&MId=7393>

Overview and Scrutiny (Economy and Growth) 16 Jan 2018 - Decriminalised Parking Presentation

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=10212&MId=7285>

10. CONTACT OFFICERS

Operations Manager (GM)

Assistant Director Strategic Insight & Delivery (NS)

Public

Key Decision - Yes

* Delete as applicable

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Biodiversity for All – Strategic Open Spaces
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet – 16/01/2024
Executive Portfolio:	Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray - LDR Cllr Simone Taylor - ST
Report by:	Nicholas Massey – Open Spaces Project Manager - NM
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

This report outlines the proposed plan to deliver biodiversity enhancement works on Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) strategic sites through the Biodiversity for All project.

This work plan is essential to meet the Council's obligation to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain under the [Environment Act 2021](#). This project directly links to the action in the [Corporate Plan](#), which commits to delivering the Plan for Nature and contributing to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to guide greater biodiversity and nature restoration in the district.

The project also directly links to the Council's [Climate Strategy](#), through the delivery of good quality and accessible open spaces and play facilities has a direct impact on:

- **Improving the quality of life for local people specifically improving happiness and wellbeing of residents**
- **Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations specifically lower carbon emissions**

The Corporate Plan recognises the importance of **enabling residents** and businesses to thrive by **listening and working with them**, opportunities to **collaborate in the effective and efficient delivery** of open spaces and nature-based activities a priority **to best meet the needs and wants** of our communities.

The corporate plan also highlights the importance of **influencing partner organisations and stakeholders** by creating a **shared vision** benefiting Huntingdonshire. By providing **evidence and sharing opportunity** we can influence the provision of the **right open spaces and play facilities** for our communities.

The Strategic Sites work plan is part of the broader Biodiversity for All programme and focuses on the sites we own or lease. This work plan, as set out in this report, is entirely separate to the Biodiversity for All Community Grant Scheme. The Community Grant Scheme is a different aspect of the overall project and will be accessible to external landowners.

This report is seeking approval from the Cabinet for the schedule of biodiversity improvement, leading to March 2025 and beyond, on HDC strategic sites. This report is also seeking endorsement of the commissioning of a delivery partner to progress works on the strategic sites.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

- 1) To approve of the following delivery schedule for planned biodiversity enhancement work for HDC strategic sites:

Short-term (Tranche 1) – 1 - 2 Years

- Hill Rise Park, St Ives
- Priors Park, St Neots
- Spring Common, Huntingdon

Medium-term (Tranche 2) – 3 – 5 Years

- Barford Road Pocket Park, St Neots
- Stukeley Meadows Nature Reserve, Huntingdon
- Sapley Playing Fields, Huntingdon

Long-term (Tranche 3) – 5 – 10 Years

- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Huntingdon
- Riverside Park, St Neots
- Oxmoor Urban Park, Huntingdon
- Berman Park, St Ives
- Paxton Pits, Little Paxton
- The Thicket, St Ives
- Holt Island, St Ives

- 2) To endorse the decision to commission a delivery partner to lead on the design, consultation and delivery of the work.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the process for enhancing biodiversity on Council owned Strategic Parks and Open Spaces and endorse the short, medium and long-term goals for continued improvement in Biodiversity habitat on those sites in readiness for future funding opportunities.
- 1.2 As part of the Climate Strategy, adopted in February 2023, the Council has also committed to delivering a biodiversity programme across the District to include community and Council-owned Open Spaces.
- 1.3 This report seeks endorsement to plan to improve nature across the District and secure physical and mental health co-benefits for our residents.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In February 2022, the Council successfully secured a multi-year £1.3million bid from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to accelerate the delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain in Huntingdonshire.
- 2.2 83% of respondents in a survey supporting the development of the Climate Strategy agreed that the Council should restore Nature and plant trees. Nature benefits health, as well as being a haven of biodiversity and important natural processes. Huntingdonshire has a wealth of green spaces and natural assets, rich in biodiversity, providing a home for many native species and a link to the natural environment for our residents.
- 2.3 The bid enabled the launch of the Biodiversity for All project and lays the foundations for a cleaner, greener, healthier Huntingdonshire. The specific elements of the Biodiversity for All project can be found in Appendix A.
- 2.4 The Biodiversity for All project supports the Council's priority in 'Creating a better Huntingdonshire for Future generations' by enabling community action and supporting the development of green skills. The project also supports the delivery of the Plan for Nature and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to guide greater biodiversity and nature restoration in the District.
- 2.5 The delivery of good quality and accessible open spaces and play facilities has a direct impact on:
 - Improving the quality of life for local people, specifically improving the happiness and well-being of residents
 - Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations, specifically lower carbon emissions
- 2.6 The Biodiversity for All project builds opportunities to enable and influence our partners by leading by example and delivering measurable biodiversity improvements in the District. It is hoped that by delivering other thematic projects in the programme, including the Community Grant process, the

Council can make demonstrable changes to biodiversity beyond just the areas we are directly responsible for.

- 2.7 The project will respond to the significant impact on nature of the changing climate by calculating biodiversity and then working through options to enhance it through changes which are supported by our communities. The project includes our own land and supporting others to do the same.
- 2.8 The Vision for the **Biodiversity For All** project aims to 'accelerate the delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain in Huntingdonshire, delivering the aspiration of Doubling Nature through:
- faster and more direct action on our land, engaging the community.
 - pilot projects with parish councils and other landowners to roll out similar projects.
 - pilot projects with community organisations and groups to develop skills and community delivery models to enable the delivery of more biodiversity in the future.

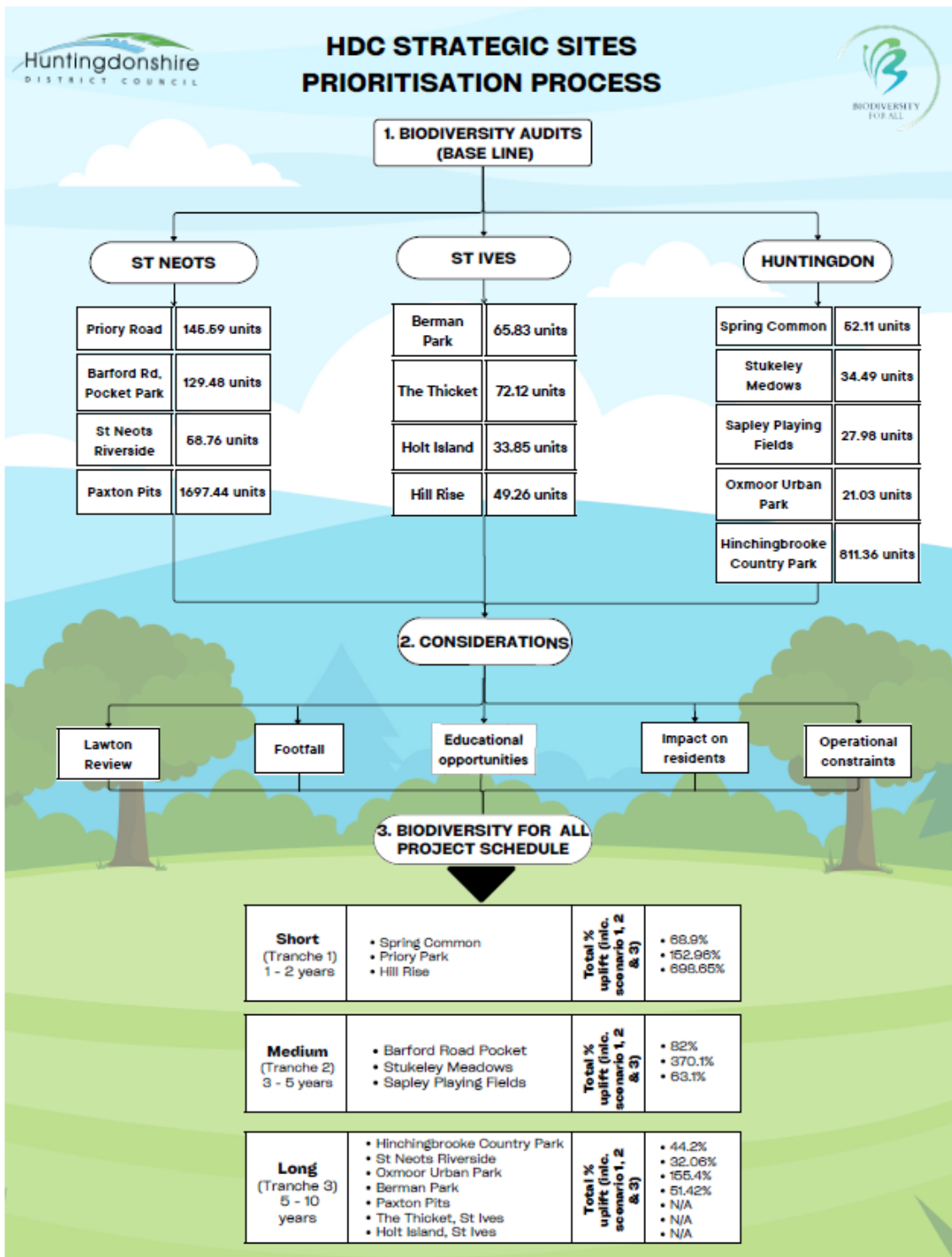
3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT - Part of the Biodiversity for All project focuses on increasing biodiversity on council-owned and maintained strategic open space sites. Our strategic sites are defined as large areas of publicly accessible open spaces that are owned or leased by HDC, usually used by the community for events and recreation.
- 3.2 An independent ecology consultant has completed the initial baseline and auditing of the biodiversity and habitats on each strategic site. These audits have set out evidence-based recommendations for the development of habitats and biodiversity on each site (Appendix B). In the future, it is anticipated that an in-house Ecology resource will be able to perform this function and evaluate the ecological work that has been delivered.
- 3.3 Funding from the project has been allocated to the delivery of biodiversity enhancement works on the sites and will be monitored by Major Change Board. A project health check is being completed by the project team and Sponsor during Nov/Dec 2023 to ensure that project governance and delivery are on track.
- 3.4 All strategic sites have a comprehensive biodiversity assessment. However, due to the time limitations of the grant, it is anticipated that the project will deliver Biodiversity improvements across approximately three Priority strategic sites that will deliver the most qualitative ecological improvements, with completion expected in March 2025.
- 3.5 The priority sites have been identified through statistical analysis of the potential Biodiversity Net Gain improvements through short-term on-site actions.

- 3.6 For each of the priority strategic sites, a plan for the biodiversity improvements will be shaped by both the recommendations in the Biodiversity Audits and a comprehensive community engagement, which an appointed contractor will conduct. From this plan, the Council will commit to delivering biodiversity improvements that are practicable from the allocated project finances. For an example of what type of work can be delivered, see Appendix C.
- 3.7 **PROJECT DELIVERY** - The project will deliver short-term actions for Biodiversity improvements at the priority sites. In terms of the delivery of the medium- and long-term actions at these and the remaining strategic sites, the project will need to be scoped out and feasibility identified following completion of this project.
- 3.8 To complement the short-term action delivery, the Council has also partnered with GroundWork UK to deliver the Green Skills project across our Strategic Sites. Green Skills is a motivational project to support employability and develop construction and landscaping skills. Each Green Skills activity will deliver measurable biodiversity improvement and provide opportunities for local residents to connect and make a difference in our parks and open spaces.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The table at Appendix D summarises the outcomes from ecological audits of the strategic sites and formed part of the evidence base used to decide priority actions. It shows the current habitat status for biodiversity and the baseline units for the site. It also shows the potential increase in biodiversity units if scenario 1, 2 or 3 was delivered individually (please see Appendix E and F for the accumulative percentage uplift of units).
- 4.2 The project team has analysed each independently conducted biodiversity audit to prioritise the identified actions to secure the greatest potential for biodiversity unit increases for each site. Principles such as the Lawton Review¹, alongside footfall, opportunities for education and impact on residents, were considered in finalising the priority Strategic sites to be earmarked for delivery by the Biodiversity for All project.
- 4.3 The diagram below demonstrates the prioritisation process that has been undertaken and can also be found in Appendix G. The BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) units are used by Natural England and assist the project by providing a unit of measurement to aid practical options, inform the co-design element and to assess the impact of the project.



4.4 As a result of the prioritisation of strategic sites listed below were identified as priority sites to deliver work on in the short term (2-3 years).

Priority Strategic Sites (Short Term)

- 1 Spring Common (Huntingdon),
- 2 Priory Park (St Neots), and
- 3 Hill Rise (St Ives)

- 4.5 In the medium term (3-5 year) the Council should deliver biodiversity enhancement work at Stukeley Meadows (Huntingdon), Sapley Playing fields (Huntingdon) and Barford Road Pocket Park (St Neots).
- 4.6 The remaining strategic sites include locations that already have delivered ecological development work, such as Oxmoor Urban Park and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, which will be earmarked for long-term (5-10 year) actions. These actions include informing the management plans of the sites, so that there is a sustainable legacy to the Biodiversity for All project for HDC to manage.

5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 5.1 The Panel discussed the Biodiversity for All – Strategic Open Spaces Report at its meeting on 4th January 2024.
- 5.2 Following questions from Councillor Alban, it was confirmed to the Panel that MKA was the name of the ecology consultancy who undertook the audit in the report. It was also confirmed that Units were defined by Natural England and were broken down by habitats. The Panel heard that this was a complex field and that different habitat types had different units attached. It was suggested that a separate briefing be arranged to discuss this in more detail.
- 5.3 Following a question from Councillor Hunt on community involvement, the Panel heard that the team envisaged community engagement to allow for conversations regarding this.
- 5.4 Councillor Bywater enquired about the anticipated budget for the planned work and expressed concerns on clarity of costings, following which, the Panel were assured that external funding had been secured via the Combined Authority and would form the budget for the planned works. It was further highlighted that Appendix E illustrated the potential uplift in biodiversity to be achieved by this. It was further assured that the team want to achieve as much as possible with the funding available but also that national funding was expected, the works done to date would allow the team to be in a good position once this became available to further develop projects.
- 5.5 Councillor Burke enquired about community engagement with groups who are known users of the districts Open Spaces, the Panel were assured that a communications plan would be implemented to ensure this.
- 5.6 It was clarified to the Panel, following a question from Councillor Shaw, that Appendix A demonstrated the breakdown of all aspects of the project and its costs. It was further clarified, further to a question from Councillor Hunt, that the audits would be published on the HDC website in due course.
- 5.7 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

6. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 6.1 Our Strategic Open Spaces are often well-loved and have protective and engaged stakeholders. In order to ensure that the actions that are taken forward on our Priority Sites, a robust engagement programme will be executed to ensure co-design for biodiversity improvement measures.

7. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 It is envisaged that the project for the development of biodiversity on the three priority sites will follow the below broad timeline.

1. Evidence Gathering & Interpretation –Jan 2024
2. Community Engagement & Education – Feb/Mar 2024
3. Co-Design with the community – Apr/May - 2024
4. Delivery & Integration - June to December 2024
5. Review – January to March 2025

- 7.2 In initial procurement, competition has been carried out to scope out delivery partners. This tender exercise closed in October 2023 with one delivery partner identified.

- 7.3 The delivery partner will manage the community engagement and the onsite delivery of biodiversity improvements and will begin in January 2024.

- 7.4 Further funding will continue to be sought and applied for to support the enhancements for the site identified in the medium and long-term priority lists.

8. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 8.1 Priority 1 - Improving quality of life for local people - This project will improve the happiness and well-being of the resident, as it is well-documented that access to nature has a positive effect on an individual's mental health². List out the benefits – nature and people.

- **Do** – We will increase the levels of biodiversity in HDC strategic sites, resulting in residents having access to a greater level of nature.
- **Enable** – We will enable residents to improve their quality of life by creating and maintaining areas for them to experience nature.
- **Influence** – We will influence others to create and maintain biodiverse areas by leading by example and educating the public of the benefits.

- 8.2 Priority 2 - Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations - Lowering carbon emissions.

- **Do** – We will increase the levels of biodiversity in HDC strategic sites. This will be by enhancing areas such as wood and shrubland and

creating new habitats. These will have added carbon sequestration benefits³.

- **Enable** – We are enabling communities to have a say on what and how the levels of biodiversity will be enhanced.
- **Influence** – We will influence others by leading by example and educating the public of the benefits.

8.3 Climate Strategy - This is one of the three priority actions in the Climate Strategy. Specifically, this project will deliver on the positive example aspect of the nature theme in the councils Climate strategy.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9.2 The contract for the Biodiversity for All project with the CPCA was developed with 3C Legal Services.

9.3 All procurement is undertaken with the support of the Council's procurement Officer in line with Procurement Rules.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As set out in the main body of the report the delivery of biodiversity enhancement work (Short term actions on HDC strategic sites will require a project team and the services of an external contractor to deliver the proposed works before the end of the project in March 2025).

10.2 The services required:

Service	Role
Open Spaces	Assessment of proposed benefits against community need and existing site benefits for the community Existing plans for the site
Ecology	Biodiversity value/opportunity on the site Any environmental designations
Grounds Maintenance	Consideration of current maintenance implications
Planning	Status of Site in relation to Neighbourhood/Local Plan Any linked S106 development agreements
Insurance	Any insurance/liability implications
Health & Safety	Any health and safety implications given nature of public open space/assets
Contractor	Delivery of public consultation phase and delivery of biodiversity enhancement works.

10.3 The costs of the proposed, short-term works will be project-managed and monitored by the Council's project governance.

10.4 The proposed priority sites will have a plan of work co-designed with stakeholders and the Biodiversity for All project team. In particular, when identifying biodiversity improvements to be delivered, our Operational teams will be engaged to ensure the practical, ongoing safety and financial

maintenance of the deliverables. Collaboration across teams underpins out project team and their decision making.

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The provision of open spaces, managing them for the benefit of biodiversity, our environment and wellbeing benefits, is critical to delivering our Corporate Plan. Access to play for all ages and nature, which supports physical and mental health, are key components of the wider determinants of health which impact the long-term sustainability, health, and economy of our district.
- 11.2 The Council adopted a Healthy Open Spaces Strategy in 2020, which set out our key priorities and actions for 2030 to ensure Council open spaces are protected, that biodiversity and nature are enhanced and that they support healthy and active communities. 90% of our residents confirmed that greenspaces improved mental health and well-being with nature and wildlife being the most important aspects of greenspaces.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Council adopted its Climate Strategy in February 2023 including an action plan for short, medium and long-term actions. Following engagement and an evidence review, the strategy identified increasing biodiversity and natural capital as one of the three district-wide climate priorities.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 13.1 Improving the biodiversity of our sites delivers the key outcomes of the Corporate Plan in sections 1 and 2. It also delivers against the climate strategy by increasing biodiversity and natural capital as one of the three district-wide climate priorities. The project will also help the council achieve its objectives in the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy, leading to improved well-being and mental health outcomes for residents.
- 13.2 Due to funding constraints, an agreement of the approach we are taking is important to be able to prioritise the schedule of work on our sites and set out our plan for the short-term sites and seek future funding for the medium and long-term priority sites.
- 13.3 It is also vital to formally recognise the importance of consulting with residents and have an element of co-design in the project, to ensure community buy-in to what we are trying to achieve. To achieve all of our objectives, it is important to get an agreement to contract an external organisation to deliver this aspect of the Biodiversity for All project so that we can maximise the opportunity and deliver in a short space of time.

14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A - Elements of The Biodiversity for All Project
Appendix B - HDC Strategic Sites that have had Ecological Audits delivered.

Appendix C - Example of work set out in an MKA Audit
Appendix D - Summary Table from the MKA Audits
Appendix E – HDC Strategic Sites - Ecological Audits Delivered
Appendix F – Tranche 1 Strategic Sites (3 sites)
Appendix G - Medium & Long-Term Tranches
Appendix H - Strategic Site Prioritisation Process (diagram)
Appendix I - Glossary of Terms

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020-2030
- Climate Strategy
- Corporate Plan 2023-2028

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Nicholas Massey – Open Spaces Project Manager
Email: nick.massey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

References

1. [the-lawton-review-factsheet.pdf \(woodlandtrust.org.uk\)](#)
2. Maller, C., Townsend, M., St Leger, L., Henderson-Wilson, C., Pryor, A., Prosser, L. and Moore, M., 2009, January. Healthy parks, healthy people: The health benefits of contact with nature in a park context. In *The George Wright Forum* (Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 51-83). George Wright Society.
3. [The relationship between biodiversity, carbon storage and the provision of other ecosystem services \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix A – Elements of The Biodiversity for All Project

- **HDC Strategic Sites Biodiversity Development**
 - Baselining and Auditing each of HDC's Strategic Sites.
 - Tendering for a delivery partner to undertake the community engagement and co-design elements of the project.
 - Delivery of agreed biodiversity enhancement works.
- **Community Driven Delivery**
 - Pilot Grant Funding Round
 - HDC working with 10 identified Town and Parish Council partners.
 - Delivery of baselining and audits on identified non-HDC-owned sites.
 - Grant funding the Town and Parish Council Partners to deliver the recommended works based on the audits.
 - Full Community Biodiversity Grant Round
 - Developing on the learnings from the Pilot round.
 - Open to any landowner or manager who has permission to deliver works and allows public access.
 - Delivery of baselining and audits on 15 identified non-HDC-owned sites.
 - Grant funding at least 10 successful applicants to deliver the recommended works based on the audits.
- **Jobs and Skills**
 - Recruitment of two Graduate Ecologists to create an in-house ecological expertise capacity.
 - Delivery of the Green Skills / Green Recovery Project
 - Working with Groundworks East to deliver training and experience to individuals not in work education and employment. Helping them to achieve a City and Guilds Level 1 qualification in Horticulture.
 - Delivering evidence-based work on HDC-owned sites.
- **Mapping and Citizen Science**
 - Partnering and promoting the INaturalist Citizen Science app to enable mapping and community engagement to identify all the different elements of biodiversity in the district.

Appendix B - HDC Strategic Sites that have had Ecological Audits delivered.

St Neots

- Priory Park*
- Barford Rd, Pocket Park
- St Neots Riverside
- Paxton Pits

St Ives

- Berman Park
- The Thicket
- Holt Island
- Hill Rise Park*

Huntingdon

- Spring Common*
- Stukeley Meadows
- Sapley Playing Fields
- Oxmoor Urban Park
- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park

**Denotes Priority Strategic Site*

Appendix C – Example of work set out in an MKA Audit

Strategic Site

Spring Common

Overview of Site

A site located in the centre of Huntingdon, which supports various different habitat types, such as neutral grassland and wet woodland, as well as hedgerows, ditches and areas of scrub.

Examples of Biodiversity Enhancement Actions

- Management Plan Development to Enhance Habitats.
 - Updating management methods for improving grassland and other habitats will increase species diversity.
- Digging a new Pond to Create a New Aquatic Habitat.
 - Creation of a new pond in the wetland area to help with the water retention in the area.
- Additional Planting to Enhance Existing and Creating a New Habitat.
 - Planting mixed scrub at the boundaries of wet woodland to create a scalloped scrub woodland edge, which will benefit species such as bats and will improve the connection between different habitats.

Appendix D – Summary Table from the MKA Audits

Site	Area (h)	Current Status	Habitat Type Units	Linear Type Units	Hedgerow Type	River Type	Scenario One	Scenario Two	Scenario Three	Priority Habitats
St Neots										
Priory Park St Neots	32	Mostly Poor	145.59	15.56	0	0	34.70%	55.26%	63.00%	No
Barford Rd, Pocket Park St Neots	18	Mostly Moderate	129.48	5.6	0	0	14.00%	24.80%	43.20%	Yes
St Neots Riverside	29	Mostly Poor	58.76	0	0	6.48	Not provided in same format			Yes
Paxton Pits	131.6	Mostly Good	1697.44	0	33.16	12.77	Not provided as part of the study, due to Mgt Plan			Yes
St Ives										
Berman Park, St Ives	8.2	Moderate and Poor	65.83	0	0	0	9.92%	19.70%	21.80%	Yes
**The Thicket	500x75m	Good	72.12	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
**Holt Island	2.8	Mostly Good	33.85	0	0	0	2.16%	-30.00%		Yes
Hill Rise Park St Ives	6	Mostly Moderate	49.26	1.06	0	0	225.00%	235.50%	238.20%	Yes
Huntingdon										
Spring Common	5.26	Moderate and Good	52.11	6.94	0	0	11.80%	29.20%	27.90%	Yes
Stukeley Meadows	4.45	Mostly Moderate	34.49	0	0	0.92	32.40%	70.70%	267.00%	Yes
Sapley Playing Fields	7.3	Mostly Poor	27.98	14.71	0	0	11.80%	12.10%	39.20%	Yes
Oxmoor Urban Park	4	Mostly Moderate	21.03	4.14	0	0	67.00%	N/A	88.40%	Yes
Hinchingbrooke Country Park	65	Moderate and Good	811.36	0	0	0	3.60%	12.90%	27.70%	Yes

Appendix E – Tranche 1 Strategic Sites (3 sites)

Spring Common, Huntingdon (1 of 3)

Scenario	Actions	Total uplift	%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the neutral grassland to good condition. • Improve the swamp habitat to moderate condition. • Planting mixed scrub at the boundaries of wet woodland to create a scalloped scrub woodland edge. 	11.8%	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the southwest section of the ditch to moderate condition. 	41%	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new pond in the wetland area. • Establishment of reedbed in the wetland area. • Restoration of the relic woodland pond. 	68.9%	

Priory Park, St Neots (2 of 3)

Scenario	Actions	Total uplift	%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and extend the wildflower meadow grassland at Priory. • Park by reseeding with a perennial wildflower grassland mix and • Adopting a sensitive management regime • Improve the condition of existing woodland habitats • Improve 50% of the tree lines in moderate condition to good condition 	34.70%	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the extent of the west woodland belt • Restore the pond in the woodland pocket at the centre of the park • Designate the east section of the park as meadow grassland 	89.96%	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild-scale conversion of Priory Park to parkland habitat 	152.96%	

Hill Rise, St Ives (3 of 3)

Scenario	Actions	Total uplift	%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the condition of the woodland from moderate to good. • Plant mixed scrubs along the woodland edge. • Increase the extent of species-rich neutral grassland to the north of the park. • Plant a species-rich native hedgerow to create a double hedgerow feature. 	225%	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of species-rich grassland around the boundary of the park 	460.4%	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Orchard Habitat 	698.6%	

Appendix F – Tranche 2 Strategic Sites

Sapley Playing Fields, Huntingdon

Scenario	Actions	Total uplift	%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of Amenity grassland borders to neutral wildflower grassland in moderate condition. • Creation of native scrub border in moderate condition along woodland boundary. • Enhancement of existing mixed scrub to moderate condition. 	11.8%	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a 'biodiversity garden' centred around a wildlife pond with a wildflower grassland border. • Replace non-native ornamental hedgerow with a native species-rich hedgerow of at least twice the length 	23.9%	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting a native line of trees along the south-western boundary. • Planting 320m of additional species-rich native hedgerow to the park boundaries. • Creation of a traditional-style orchard managed for wildlife 	63.1%	

Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon

Scenario	Actions	Total uplift	%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the mixed scrub to good condition through invasive species removal and management. • Improve the neutral grassland habitats to good condition through management works tailored to specific grassland areas • Enable mixed scrub to develop into the areas of neutral grassland currently in poor condition. • Create an additional wildflower strip, sown with a perennial mix, of approximately 240m². 	32.40%	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the woodland to good condition through a bespoke management regime. • Improve the condition of the main ditch channel without the need for extensive channel restoration works by installing floating vegetation rafts along the bank margins. 	103.10%	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious ditch restoration project involving the removal of concrete reinforcement and re-meandering of the channel. 	370.10%	

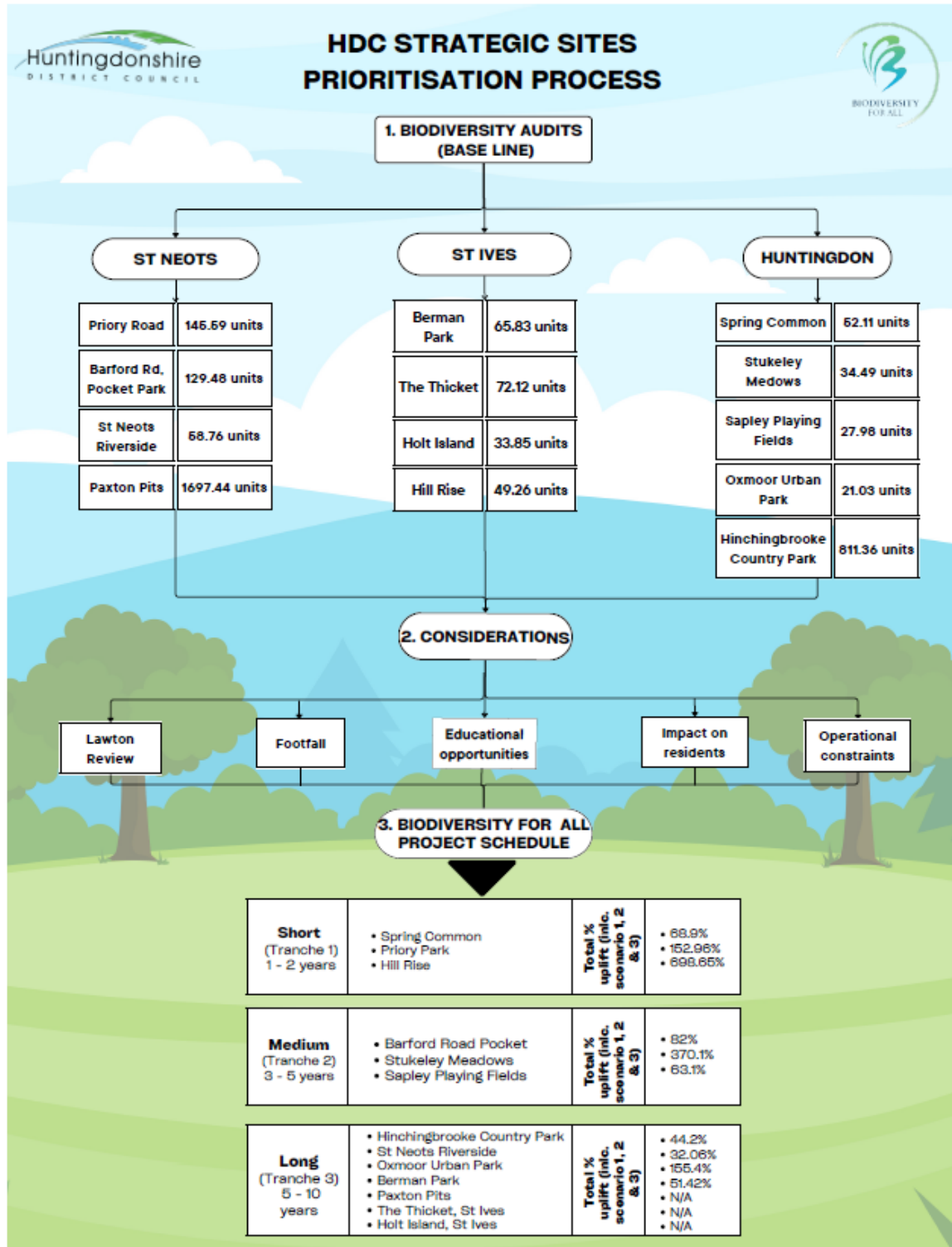
Barford Road Pocket, St Neots

Scenario	Actions	Total uplift	%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of existing amenity grassland along the 'biodiversity walkway' to other neutral grassland in moderate condition. • Enhancement of neutral grassland from moderate to good condition. • Enhancement of neutral grassland to the south of the park from poor to moderate condition. 	14%	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the broadleaved woodland from moderate to good condition. • Enhance the wet woodland from moderate to good condition. • Enhance the woodland pond from poor to moderate condition. 	38.80%	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a line of willows along the bank of the River Great Ouse, with a pollarding management regime. • Creation of a small orchard to the north of the park, created and managed with support from Grow Wild St Neots. 	82%	

Appendix G - Tranche 3 Strategic Sites

- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park – Work delivered by Green Skills and management plan
- St Neots Riverside – Work delivered through Green Skills
- Oxmoor Urban Park – Work delivered by Open Spaces Team
- Berman Park – Work scheduled for Green Skills
- Paxton Pits – Work scheduled for Green Skills
- The Thicket, St Ives
- Holt Island, St Ives

Appendix H – Prioritisation Process



APPENDIX I - GLOSSARY

Biodiversity: The variety of plant and animal life in a particular habitat, region, or the world. High biodiversity is often considered to indicate a healthy ecosystem.

Biodiversity for All: The programme of activities funded through CPCA grant to deliver Biodiversity improvement in Huntingdonshire. [Biodiversity for All - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): An approach to development and land management that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Under Environment Act 2021, developers must ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced, with a 10% increase in habitat value for wildlife compared to pre-development.

Biodiversity Units: A measure used in biodiversity accounting to quantify changes in biodiversity as a result of development or conservation activities.

Climate Strategy: The Council's adopted strategy to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

CPCA (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority): The combined authority covering the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, focusing on local governance, economic growth, and development.

Corporate Plan: Our Corporate Plan provides a clear direction for what we are doing and why we are doing it. It sets out what we aim to achieve in addition to the provision of core statutory services and also provides the framework for evaluating the council's performance. The Corporate Plan is reviewed annually to ensure that the key activities and measures are still relevant and that we are continuing to achieve the targets we set ourselves. [Corporate Plan and Performance - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs): The UK government department responsible for environmental protection, food production and standards, agriculture, fisheries, and rural communities.

Ecology: The branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings.

Environment Act 2021: A UK law focusing on environmental protection and recovery, including measures to improve air and water quality, tackle waste, increase recycling, and protect biodiversity.

Green Skills Project: A motivational project run by GroundWork UK funded by part of the CPCA grant, that is often the final stepping stone into employment and offers a taster of the construction and landscaping industries [Green Skills - Groundwork](https://www.groundwork.org.uk)

HDC Strategic Sites: Refers to key locations identified by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) for significant development or conservation, playing a crucial role for Local Communities and biodiversity net gain.

Healthy Open Spaces Strategy: A strategy adopted to contribute to the health and well-being of the community, often including aspects like green spaces, parks, and recreational areas.

Lawton Review: A scientific review led by Professor Sir John Lawton, focusing on wildlife conservation in the UK. It emphasizes the need for more, bigger, better, and joined habitats.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy: A plan or framework designed to drive local efforts for nature recovery, including restoring habitats and creating green spaces.

S106 (Section 106): Refers to a legal agreement under the UK's Town and Country Planning Act 1990, allowing local authorities to enter into a legally-binding agreement with a developer to mitigate the impacts of their development.

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