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1.0	26-02-2021	First Draft (GC/AS)
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Title of the Strategic Action Plan: Water, Biodiversity, Transport, Carbon reduction

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Strategic Action Plan for Biodiversity outlines the Hertfordshire Climate Change & Sustainability Partnership's (HCCSP) ambition to support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity across Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 The Plan seeks to address challenges around the biodiversity declines seen in Hertfordshire over the last decades. Its actions are intended to ensure that outcomes resulting from new development, agricultural practices, and local authority greenspace management, can not only halt but reverse these declines. The Plan also seeks to enhance how we communicate with Hertfordshire residents in order to improve awareness and engagement around biodiversity.
- 1.3 This version of the Strategic Action Plan is a working draft. It will be developed further through a co-production approach and constructive engagement with a broad range of relevant stakeholders.

2. Policy context

2.1 International

- 2.1.1 Biodiversity is a necessity for the ongoing survival of our natural world. In addition to providing life-enabling conditions to all living organisms, healthy ecosystems provide key contributions to our society including food, fuel, fibre, clean water, medicine, healthy soil, and protection against flooding, erosion and disease. Biodiversity and climate change are strongly interlinked. Fluctuating climactic conditions are causing adverse effects for biodiversity, whilst at the same time, healthy ecosystems can help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 2.1.2 Globally, biodiversity degradation is accelerating, and it is believed to be diminishing faster than ever before in human history¹. Human activities such as urban expansion, high consumption rates and intensive food production

have led to unsustainable practices that have seen the natural world deteriorate faster than it can be replenished. Recent reports, such as the Dasgupta Reviewⁱ and a Chatham House research paperⁱⁱ continue to highlight the urgency of the situation and the significant action that is required in order to achieve necessary change.

- 2.1.3 Over the last decade, EU biodiversity policy has played a significant role in shaping relevant policy in the UK. The EU biodiversity strategy to 2020ⁱⁱⁱ has been significant, outlining six target areas for addressing biodiversity loss within Europe; including enhancing implementation of nature legislation, restoring ecosystems and establishing green infrastructure, increasing sustainable agriculture and forestry, increasing sustainable fisheries, combating alien invasive species and a greater contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.
- 2.1.4 The Habitats Directive^{iv} and The Wild Birds Directive^v form an integral part of European ecological policy, underpinning the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and ensuring the conservation of a wide range of habitats and species. This has been primarily accomplished through the formation of the Natura 2000 Network^{vi} which is a network of protected areas across the Europe including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA) which were designated to protect species and habitats.
- 2.1.5 Following Brexit, the government is introducing UK provisions regarding biodiversity. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019^{vii} are adapted from the changes made to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017^{viii}. These new regulations ensure that key environmental protections established from the EU Nature directives remain in place post-Brexit and that this legislation is transposed into domestic law for the UK. It is intended that habitat and species protection will be implemented in largely the same way after Brexit. Certain changes include the fact that the UK's SACs and SPAs will no longer be included in Europe's Natura 2000 Network and therefore the UK has established its own 'National Site Network' on land and sea to ensure that national SACs and SPAs will continue to be protected and new SACs and SPAs can be designated.
- 2.1.6 Whilst the UK is no longer accountable to EU regulatory authorities, the creation of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) is to be established to ensure that the government can be held to account on environmental policies in the absence of the EU's independent external bodies. At this time it is unclear how the OEP will mobilise its authority and how it will maintain its independence.
- 2.1.7 This year, the international community is set to review the 'UN's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020' at the UN biodiversity conference (CBD COP15). This plan has provided an overarching framework on biodiversity policy for the last decade. At CBD COP 15, due to be held in October 2020 and postponed until May 2021, it is expected that the Post-2020 Global

Biodiversity Framework will be adopted. It is anticipated that this new framework will aim to stop the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and ensure that natural recovery and restoration can be achieved by 2050.

2.2 National

- 2.2.1 Various pieces of legislation protect wildlife and wild areas in the UK, and govern human action and impact relating to them. A summary of key legislation is presented in Appendix A.
- 2.2.2 The UK's Biodiversity 2020 Strategy^{ix} set out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy and conservation efforts for the decade leading up to 2020. Its stated aim was to 'halt overall *biodiversity* loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'.
- 2.2.3 In 2018, the Government unveiled the 25 Year Environment Plan^x which sets out aims to improve the environment within a generation. It includes goals to improve air and water quality, protect threatened wildlife, trees and plants, and to provide richer habitats. It identifies how the government will work with businesses and communities, as well as areas of action such as reducing risks of harm from environmental hazards; using nature's resources more sustainably; enhancing engagement with the natural environment; and improving biosecurity.
- 2.2.4 In September 2020, the Prime Minister made a commitment to protect 30% of the UK's land by 2030^{xi}. With around 26% of English land already protected through means such as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status, this commitment will mean protecting an additional 4% (or over 400,000 hectares) to support nature recovery.

2.3 Local

- 2.3.1 The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan^{xii}, originally published by the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum in 1998, sets out a 50 year vision for Hertfordshire's wildlife and natural habitats, and reviews priority habitats and species within a local context. The report details the ecological characteristics of Hertfordshire and identifies Key Biodiversity Areas where conservation action is deemed valuable. It also identified 5 Species Action Plans and 8 Habitat Action Plans to guide work around improving biodiversity in Hertfordshire. While setting the scene for biodiversity action within Hertfordshire, the plan's actions tend towards the micro level rather than the more strategic high-level, and the actions of the latter years of the plan's lifespan are less expatiated. Further to this, with national policy having moved on somewhat since the plan's inception, there is a need to reflect this with an updated action plan which ensures the maximisation of newly created opportunities.

2.3.2 Building upon the national State of Nature Report^{xiii} (first published by the State of Nature Partnership in 2013), the Hertfordshire State of Nature Report^{xiv}, published in 2020 by the Herts Middlesex Wildlife Trust, looks at Hertfordshire's wildlife over the last 50 years. It assesses over 7,500 different species and looks at how their numbers have changed from 1970 to 2020. It makes use of records from the Herts Environmental Records Centre and the detail with which it considers the county's wildlife and wild spaces makes it the first report of its kind. While the report paints a picture of biodiversity decline, it also points to the huge opportunities that strong partnership working can create for reversing the current fortunes of Hertfordshire's wildlife. The report's information can act as a valuable tool for guiding the shape of nature conversation as we move forward.

3. Defining the problem

3.1 Climate Change

- 3.1.1 Within the UK, The State of Nature Report has identified climate change as the second greatest driver of changes in biodiversity^{xv}. However, given its combined and cumulative impact alongside other key contributors to biodiversity loss, it can be difficult to measure the specific and direct impact of climate change separately to other drivers^{xvi}. Nationally, climate change is creating wetter winters and drier summers with more frequent extreme weather events and increased risks of flooding^{xvii}. Since the 1980s, average temperatures in the UK have increased by nearly 1°C with all the UK's hottest years on record occurring within the last twenty years^{xviii}. These changing weather events have been experienced within Hertfordshire in line with climatic trends throughout the UK and are having a direct impact on Hertfordshire's wildlife^{xix}.
- 3.1.2 Climate change is believed to play a key role in the population sizes of different species and has led, predominantly, to declines in wildlife within Hertfordshire, particularly for species that are susceptible to unseasonable or extreme weather. Unpredictable seasons can affect hibernation and nesting patterns as well as food chains. Increasing average annual temperatures can lead to range contraction for certain species and has led to some species moving through or into Hertfordshire as they move North and further inland in response to climate change. In some cases, this could lead to an increase of certain species found in Hertfordshire but could also result in a decline in others^{xx}. There is growing concern that small and fragmented habitats will limit and prevent wildlife from being able to migrate and adapt as needed.
- 3.1.3 Hertfordshire's wetlands and chalklands are suffering increased strain due to weather changes. Warmer temperatures throughout the year and drier summers led to nearly 50km of Hertfordshire's chalk rivers and wetland

features drying out in 2019^{xxi}. Species reliant on these ecosystems suffer as a result.

- 3.1.4 Following on from the Paris Climate Agreement in 2018, the UK government set out targets to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050^{xxii}. Within Hertfordshire, a climate emergency has been declared with many local authorities setting targets to reduce their carbon emissions significantly by 2030 in order to reduce impact on the climate.
- 3.1.5 Carbon reduction is a significant factor in national and local policies on climate change and there is a reliance on the ability to offset carbon in order to meet carbon reduction targets^{xxiii}. Natural systems have a key role to play in carbon sequestration and schemes such as the Woodland Carbon Fund^{xxiv} highlight the emphasis that has been placed on tree planting as a prioritised form of carbon sequestration within the UK.
- 3.1.6 Within Hertfordshire, grasslands and chalk grasslands are recognised as significant contributors to carbon sequestration^{xxv}. Whilst there has been a notable emphasis on tree planting, there are concerns that these strategies may reduce key grasslands which are associated with a third of all Hertfordshire's species of conservation concern^{xxvi}. It is therefore important that future carbon sequestration policies take account of local and naturally occurring carbon sinks that already exist in order to protect and limit the impact on existing species and biodiversity.

3.2 Population Growth

- 3.2.1 Within Hertfordshire and across UK, the human population continues to grow^{xxvii}. Many drivers of biodiversity loss are interlinked and with an increasing population comes increased demand for commodities such as food and water. This can lead to pressure on natural resources, for instance through over-abstraction of water and more intensive agriculture.
- 3.2.2 Inevitably a growing population has increasing land-use demands. Changes in land use can have a direct impact on local wildlife, with development of new housing, infrastructure and industry often resulting in habitat loss for any species previously located in these areas.
- 3.2.3 Local nature reserves and other sites which support wildlife are also at risk from over-use and misuse by visitors. In Hertfordshire, these issues appear to have been exasperated throughout the COVID-19 lockdowns. Public engagement with wildlife and local greenspaces has many benefits, both to people and nature; however, increasing visitor numbers can bring issues to local wildlife through disturbance, unintentional damage, littering and in some cases anti-social behaviour and vandalism^{xxviii}. Local conservation efforts have the potential to engage the public and lead to more positive engagement with nature.

3.3 Development

- 3.3.1 Owing to its growing population, Hertfordshire's local strategic plans forecast more than 100,000 new homes needing to be built over the next 15 years^{xxix}. This represents a significant amount of land and, alongside other sites, may involve some use of Green Belt land for development. These changes have the potential to increase pressure on biodiversity through habitat loss or fragmentation, as well as increases in pollution and disturbance where new developments are accompanied by heightened levels of road traffic.
- 3.3.2 While the anticipated national mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain policy will not come into effect until after the Environment Bill becomes legislation (which is projected to be in Autumn 2021), some local authorities have set biodiversity net gain targets through their own local plan policy. However, there remain challenges around implementing robust biodiversity conditions through the planning system and ensuring these gains are delivered by developers. As such, many developments are not resulting in significant biodiversity gains at the present time.
- 3.3.3 Furthermore, without clear ecological network maps and a solid understanding of the biodiversity levels of different parcels of land across the county, local planning authorities may face challenges in determining the best locations or means for strategic biodiversity gains for Hertfordshire in the context of development.

3.4 Intensive agriculture

- 3.4.1 Approximately 61% (100,000 Ha) of Hertfordshire's total land area is farmland, with 55% (90,000 Ha) of the total area being managed as arable, which is far above the national average.^{xxx} As is true of the rest of the UK, most farming in Hertfordshire is now intensive and carried out on a larger scale than it was in past decades. Much of Hertfordshire's rural land accommodates this intensive farming^{xxxi}, although there is a growing interest in more balanced land management approaches such as regenerative agriculture.
- 3.4.2 Modern intensive agriculture seeks to maximise yields and therefore often relies upon heavy use of agrochemicals like herbicides and pesticides, and results in monocultures, less complex rotations, and poor soil management. This typically leads to reduced insect diversity, and may diminish populations of birds and amphibians, amongst other animals. As a result, this type of agricultural management is a key driver of biodiversity loss in the UK. The Hertfordshire State of Nature Report found that of the 23 species associated with farmland and identified as Hertfordshire Species of Conservation Concern, 4 had gone extinct, while 16 had noticeably declined since 1970.
- 3.4.3 Added to this, arable land may retain less biodiversity than its pastoral counterpart owing to loss of non-crop habitat (which is typically more species

diverse) and higher usage of agrochemicals. Arable land management may also have wider environmental implications, with an Environment Agency report suggesting that intensive agriculture has caused arable soils to lose 40 to 60% of their organic carbon^{xxxii}. Moreover, intensive cultivation of crops effectively extracts plant nutrients from the soil, potentially degrading soil health if no suitable amendments are made.

- 3.4.5 Following Brexit, expected changes to the funding landscape for the agricultural sector may provide new opportunities which support farmers' transition to less intensive models while maintaining profitable businesses and yields which meet demands for high quality produce.

3.5 Over-abstraction

- 3.5.1 Chalk streams are a rare habitat, with fewer than 200 of them existing across the world. 10% of these are found in Hertfordshire and support a diversity of wildlife, as well as acting as a valuable water source^{xxxiii}.
- 3.5.2 Hertfordshire's water consumption levels are higher than the national average, with demand in this area of the country expected to increase even further over the coming decades according to the Environment Agency^{xxxiv}. The county relies on the chalk aquifers for the majority (60%) of its tap water^{xxxv}, leading to high abstraction levels. This paired with the fact of climate change pressures reducing levels of 'effective rainfall' means that Hertfordshire's chalk streams are left vulnerable to low flow and prolonged periods of drought. This has clear ramifications for the rich biodiversity that chalk streams have traditionally supported, including many important populations and specialist species.
- 3.5.3 Water companies, including Affinity Water in Hertfordshire, have made commitments^{xxxvi} to reduce abstraction and look at new water sources in order to help protect chalk streams.

3.6 Disengagement from Nature

- 3.6.1 Individuals and their choices and behaviours can provide important support for biodiversity. However, such behaviours can also, unfortunately, impact in more harmful ways, a scenario which is increasingly perpetuated through human disengagement from the natural world.
- 3.6.2 The government funded 2016 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment study^{xxxvii} found that more than 10% of children had not visited any natural environment (such as parks, beaches, forests) in the last twelve months, while a 2019 survey indicated nature language falling out of children's vocabularies and a widespread inability to identify common features of the natural landscape, such as bluebells and blackberries^{xxxviii}. Other

research has found that 69% of Britons feel they are losing touch with nature, with many never having seen creatures such as hedgehogs or toads, and some reflecting that they do not know enough to be able to teach their children about wildlife^{xxix}.

- 3.6.3 Disengagement from nature and its needs might also be seen reflected in apparent preferences for management of both privately and publicly owned open spaces. For example, negative feedback around changes to council verge cutting regimes designed to support biodiversity, may reflect either a lack of understanding of the reasons for new mowing patterns, or preferences for landscape aesthetics which happen to be less conducive to biodiversification.
- 3.6.4 There is evidence for such aesthetic or practical preferences in the increase of artificial lawns^{xl}, and in the paving over of front gardens for parking spaces or design purposes, with a 2021 report indicating that almost a third of the 20.8 million homes with front gardens have seen these turned in to hardstanding^{xli}. Both trends have been noted by wildlife and conservation experts as posing a threat to habitats and wildlife.
- 3.6.5 Whilst there appears to be no specific data on this disengagement from nature within Hertfordshire, these national trends should be noted amongst potential pressures facing biodiversity, and thought given to how communication can highlight the effects of such choices, in order to bring human preferences and biodiversity needs into better alignment.

3.7 Under-investment

- 3.7.1 Ensuring that our public greenspace supports and enhances biodiversity requires a commitment and investment in ongoing management. For example, The Hertfordshire State of Nature Report notes that the biggest threat to woodland biodiversity in Hertfordshire (and the UK) is insufficient woodland management rather than insufficient total area of woodland.
- 3.7.2 There is a growing evidence base which identifies the human benefits derived from biodiverse natural capital; including carbon sequestration, reduced flood risk, improved air quality and better health and wellbeing. Many of these benefits to residents can be derived from public greenspace. However, within the portfolio of local authority duties, greenspace management remains a non-statutory function, and as such budgets for greenspace management have consistently faced competition from other statutory functions. In some cases, this has resulted in a downward trend in real term or actual budgets. Such restrictions will challenge the ability of local authorities to deliver greenspace management which supports biodiversity.

4. Forthcoming Legislation and Policy

- 4.1 The Environment Bill^{xiii} is expected to mandate a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain from new developments. While the policy is expected to encourage developers to locate these net gains within the development site, it will also be possible to offset these elsewhere. This will create opportunities target investment to areas within Hertfordshire where it will have the greatest impact by strategically locating them to ensure the strengthening or joining up of existing ecological networks. Funding for habitat improvement and creation is expected to arise as a result of this legislation.
- 4.2 The Environment Bill is also expected to indicate that local areas will need Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to deliver priorities for nature recovery both locally and nationally, driving forward the National Nature Recovery Network. The spatial planning that is part of developing a LNRS will enable investment in nature to be directed to where it most benefits the natural environment. As such, it will involve consistent mapping of existing habitats and opportunities for habitat creation and restoration. Amongst other things, a LNRS have the potential to guide the effective delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 4.3 The Agricultural Act 2020 passed into law in November 2020. It sets out the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)^{xiii}, which will replace existing funding from government to the farming sector. The scheme makes provision for farmers and land managers to be rewarded with public money when they provide 'public goods'. These goods could include better air or water quality, improved soil health, or thriving wildlife and biodiversity. The scheme is thus designed to help achieve the aims of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the net zero emissions by 2050 commitment. Trials and tests have already begun ahead of additional national pilots to commence in late 2021, and the scheme will be fully rolled out in 2024.
- 4.4 In August 2020, the government published for consultation the *Planning for the Future White Paper*^{xiv}, setting out the most substantial planning system reforms in decades. The Paper included only limited details for how the planning system would address the climate emergency and declines in biodiversity. Ensuring that future planning policy is fully aligned with the policies and targets that are expected from the Environment Bill will have important implications for biodiversity. As such, changes incorporated into national planning policy following the consultation should be monitored closely.
- 4.5 The new England Tree Strategy^{xiv} has now gone through consultation and the final Strategy is expected to be published this spring. It will set out the government's policy priorities to deliver a tree planting programme, protect and improve existing woodland, and help recover biodiversity. It will also support the commitment of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

5. HCCSP Influence

- 5.1 Given the forthcoming policy and legislation, HCCSP has the means to significantly influence the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and help drive forward required action. The Environment Bill and the Environmental Land Management Scheme both represent opportunities for local authorities to guide the direction of investment into biodiversity preservation and improvement within Hertfordshire.
- 5.2 Collectively, the local authorities own substantial amounts of land in Hertfordshire, and each authority has control of their own greenspace management. This provides another sphere of influence for HCCSP to shape action around biodiversity support.
- 5.3 Local authorities also play a leadership role within their communities and have the ability to provide clear communication to Hertfordshire residents to encourage individual and group action around biodiversity.
- 5.5 HCCSP can therefore make a valuable contribution under the following themes:
 - Raising awareness of the value and need for protection of biodiversity and promoting behaviour change to residents and businesses
 - Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement
 - Enabling improvements in biodiversity protection and enhancement through the planning system
 - Lobbying government for greater investment and changes in national policy

Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership Strategic Action Plan - Biodiversity

Actions to be delivered by partners to make changes to their own assets, premises or services				
Priority to address	Action	Numerical target(s) (where appropriate) / or other means of measuring success	Organisation(s) who will deliver the action	Timeframe for delivery inc. intermediary milestones where appropriate
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Develop a Biodiversity Baseline using Natural England’s metric to quantify existing levels of biodiversity across Hertfordshire	Receipt of a Biodiversity Baseline resource from the appointed contractor	CMS to run procurement process Appointed contractor to deliver baseline	2021/22
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Local authorities to adopt procurement policies which require trees/plants that they procure to be UK sown/grown, or where not possible to be procured from a nursery with “plant healthy” certification	Evidence of policy in each local authority	Each council (individual)	2022/23
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Local authorities to adopt a policy which seeks to increase tree canopy cover in urban wards which have lower levels of existing canopy cover (below 20%).	Evidence of policy in each local authority	Each council (individual)	2022/23
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land	Ensure robust public engagement around decision making on	All authorities agree to build consultation into	Each council (individual)	2022/23

management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	biodiversity	their working practice		
		Review individual strategies for consultation/mandate section		
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Commitment for local authorities to minimise and where possible exclude use of peat compost and pesticides/herbicides	Agreement that each council has adopted this process	Each council (individual)	2021/22
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	In association with the Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers group, conduct an audit of local authority greenspaces to identify opportunities to support and enhance biodiversity	Audit report production	CMS	2021/22
Actions requiring others to act in response to partners' use of their regulatory powers				
Priority to address	Action	Numerical target(s) (where appropriate) / or other means of measuring success	Organisation(s) who will deliver the action	Timeframe for delivery inc. intermediary milestones where appropriate

<p>Enabling improvements in biodiversity protection and enhancement through the planning system</p>	<p>Seek to maximise alignment and consistency of planning policy across LPAs on biodiversity in order to maximise Biodiversity Net Gain potential within Hertfordshire</p> <p>Engage with planners to develop a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</p>	<p>Broadly consistent policy</p> <p>Production and adoption of by each LPA of a Biodiversity SPD</p>	<p>Each council – LPA (individual)</p>	<p>As soon as is practicable within each council’s planning review policy timetable. To be reviewed annually to monitor adoption process.</p> <p>2022/23</p>
<p>Enabling improvements in biodiversity protection and enhancement through the planning system</p>	<p>LPAs to introduce planning policy which requires trees/plants procured by developers to be UK sown and grown or where not possible to be procured from a nursery with “plant healthy” certification</p>	<p>Agreement that each council has adopted such policy</p>	<p>Each council – LPA (individual)</p>	<p>As soon as is practicable within each council’s planning review policy timetable.</p>
<p>Enabling improvements in biodiversity protection and enhancement through the planning system</p>	<p>That LPAs require the submission of full landscaping schemes to be submitted early, with rest of the planning application</p>	<p>Agreement that all LPAs have adopted this approach</p>	<p>Each Council - (LPA) individual</p>	<p>2021/22</p>
<p>Enabling improvements in biodiversity protection and enhancement through the planning system</p>	<p>LPAs to review current performance in upholding and enforcing Hedgerows Regulations 1997, and report performance to HSOG</p>	<p>Summary report production</p>	<p>Each Council (LPA) individual to review</p> <p>HSOG to collate findings and</p>	<p>2022/23</p>

			produce report	
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Identify and declare at least one new Local Nature Reserve within each district area	The declaration of 10 new Local Nature Reserves across Hertfordshire	HSOG	2023/24
Actions which rely on partners' encouraging, influencing or facilitating others to change				
Priority to address	Action	Numerical target(s) (where appropriate) / or other means of measuring success	Organisation(s) who will deliver the action	Timeframe for delivery inc. intermediary milestones where appropriate
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Establish a Biodiversity Forum comprising officers from all partner organisations and other relevant stakeholder groups (e.g. The Environment Agency; Herts Middlesex Wildlife Trust) to support the development of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Agreement of appropriate governance; establishment of Terms of Reference, membership list, and date for inaugural meeting	HSOG	2021/22
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple	Review of barriers and opportunities for partnership greenspace management functions to deliver enhancements to biodiversity	Summary report production	HSOG	2022/23

stakeholder engagement				
Lobbying government for greater investment and changes in national policy	Explore appropriate opportunities for lobbying government in relation to the safeguarding and enhancement of public greenspace	Report annually on lobbying activity	HSOG	2021/22 ongoing
Raising awareness of the value and need for protection of biodiversity and promoting behaviour change to residents and businesses	Develop a communication plan around how to best engage the community <i>[Subgroup has developed a significant list of communication plan projects which would benefit from being delivered in a co-ordinated fashion].</i>	Determine most suitable route for delivery of communication plan The production of a communication plan	HSOG to explore most appropriate delivery option. Explore different ways of delivering	2021/22 2022/23
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	HSOG to engage with the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire, in collaboration with Natural England and other local partners	Annual progress report	Biodiversity Forum	2021/22 onwards
Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement	Engage with Hertfordshire's farming community and other private landowners to explore opportunities to deliver improvements for biodiversity through management which synchronises with individual business models and working practices	Annual progress report	CMS	2022/23
Raising awareness of the value and need for	Explore initiatives to increase tree canopy cover through community	Report recommendations to	HSOG	2021/22

<p>protection of biodiversity and promoting behaviour change to residents and businesses</p>	<p>engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore a Hertfordshire-wide tree community/resident/business sponsorship programme b) Explore the opportunity of a Hertfordshire-wide local authority tree giveaway scheme 	<p>HCCSP</p>		
<p>Lobbying government for greater investment and changes in national policy</p>	<p>Each partner to consider supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (CEE)</p>	<p>Individual authorities to explore</p>	<p>Each authority – (individual)</p>	<p>2021/22</p>
<p>Enhancing biodiversity through suitable land management, delivered directly by partners or through partnership working with multiple stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>Take a strategic approach to landscape and catchment management through effective engagement with partners in neighbouring authority areas outside Hertfordshire.</p>	<p>Initially engage with the Buckinghamshire Pilot Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p> <p>The engagement partners in the development of Hertfordshire’s LNRS</p>	<p>HSOG</p>	<p>2021/22</p> <p>Date tbc based on the upcoming Environment Bill</p>

6. Funding

- 6.1 It is expected that the primary cost associated with these actions will be in the form of officer time; that of the HCCSP Coordinator and relevant County/District Council officers.
- 6.2 Release of funds to employ CMS in running the procurement process for the biodiversity baseline has already been agreed by HCCSP, as has the provisional contribution from each authority towards the cost of the biodiversity baseline itself. This may be brought back to HCCSP if the quotes exceed our initial estimates.
- 6.3 Further to this there may be cost implications for the development of a Biodiversity Communications Plan and therefore different options will be explored for this.
- 6.4 Funding will be required for delivery of habitat creation and restoration. Some funding is expected to become available as a result of forthcoming legislation. Further funding may also become available through central government grants. However, additional funding may also need to be identified within existing budgets.

7. References

ⁱ [Food system impacts on biodiversity loss | UNEP - UN Environment Programme// Chatham House](#)

ⁱⁱ [Final Report - The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020](#)

^{iv} [EU Habitats Directive](#)

^v [EU Wild Birds Directive](#)

^{vi} [Natura 2000 Network](#)

^{vii} [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#)

^{viii} [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)

^{ix} [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#)

^x [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)

^{xi} [Commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030](#)

^{xii} [Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan](#)

^{xiii} [State of Nature Report](#)

^{xiv} [Hertfordshire State of Nature Report](#)

^{xv} [State of Nature, 2019, UK Full Report](#)

^{xvi} [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)

^{xvii} [Met Office, 'Effects of Climate Change'](#)

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- xviii [Met Office, 'Effects of Climate Change'](#)
- xix [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xx [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxi [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxii [HM Government, Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#)
- xxiii [The Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future, 2011](#)
- xxiv [Woodland Carbon Fund](#)
- xxv [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxvi [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxvii <https://datacommons.org/>
- xxviii <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/increase-nature-reserve-vandalism-during-lockdown>
- xxix [Hertfordshire County Council, 2019/2020 Annual Prospectus and Budget](#)
- xxx [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxxi [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxxii [The State of the Environment: Soil – The Environment Agency](#)
- xxxiii [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxxiv [A National Framework for Water Resources – The Environment Agency](#)
- xxxv [Hertfordshire's State of Nature Report, 2020](#)
- xxxvi <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/corporate/environment/sustainability>
- xxxvii [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment](#)
- xxxviii [Children and nature identification survey](#)
- xxxix <https://www.countryfile.com/wildlife/wildlife-stories/brits-losing-touch-with-nature-finds-research/>
- xl [Artificial grass increase](#)
- xli [Front gardens turned into hardstandings](#)
- xlii [The Environment Bill 2019-21](#)
- xliiii [The Environmental Land Management Scheme – An Overview](#)
- xliv [Planning for the Future White Paper](#)
- xlv [The England Tree Strategy](#)

Appendix A

The primary piece of legislation for the protection of wildlife (animals, flora and fauna), and the countryside is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The act prohibits and limits certain actions relating to wild animals, including taking, injuring, and killing, as well as disturbing places of shelter and protection. The 1991 amendment makes it an offence to knowingly cause or permit to cause some of these actions.

The *Planning and Policy Guidelines* around Nature Conservation (1994) make protected species presence a material consideration for local planning authorities where the proposed development would likely result in harm to the species or its habitat.

The Town and Country (Trees) Regulations 1999 allows local planning authorities to institute a Tree Preservation Order to protect single trees or groups of trees and woodland.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 makes new provision for public access to the countryside, including the “right to roam”, and enables the making of traffic regulation orders for the purpose of conserving the natural beauty of an area.

The Act also places a duty on local authorities and other public bodies to show regard for biodiversity conservation and to keep lists of priority species and habitats for which conservation measures should be taken.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 enabled the establishment of a new agency, Natural England. It also places a duty on public authorities and bodies to conserve biodiversity and requires government departments and local authorities to make consideration of biodiversity in the carrying out of their functions.

In addition to the aforementioned legislation, various other Acts relate to or give protection to specific species, features or habitats, such as The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, The Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996, and The Hedgerows Regulations 1997.