

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
NATURE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Report Reference EN-22-15
Meeting Date 23rd January 2023
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Planning and Facilities Officer / Town Clerk



1.0 OVERVIEW UPDATE

The Nature Action Plan was adopted by the committee in March 2020 and the committee receives a standing update on progress against the plan. To date 24 of the 29 actions on the action plan have been completed (including ongoing actions).

The five outstanding actions are:

- Launch of the Tree Planting Mission (6)
- Information to be published on website promoting hedges and hedgehog holes (15)
- Engagement with landowners to connect green corridors (19)
- Creation of wildlife corridor between Bluebell Wood and Knutsford Heath (20)
- Engagement with landowners to develop Booths Mere to St John's Wood wildlife corridor (22)

An update on each is provided in the table overleaf.

2.0 NATURE ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

The Planning and Facilities Officer developed the planting plan for the winter season. The council has been awarded funding from The Tree Council to plant trees this season. The trees will be planted during February half-term utilising the same "Plant a tree with Ranger Bob" initiative as last year. ANSA will be putting forward a second batch for funding but there is no confirmed date at this stage.

3.0 OTHER RELEVANT UPDATES / INFORMATION

The Government has introduced higher fines for the felling of trees without a licence. These have been introduced as part of measures under the Environment Act 2021 and update the Forestry Act 1967. It applies to the felling of trees where a licence from the Forestry Commission is required under the latter Act and increases the fines to unlimited. This does not affect the felling of trees protected under s211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or those subject to preservation orders.

The notice of motion submitted by the Knutsford CEC Ward Councillors calling for a change in the borough council's policy of not allowing tree planting on the highway is currently listed for consideration at the Highways and Transport Committee meeting on 2nd March.

Working group members have noticed a national campaign – Trees for Streets – which aims "to make it easy for residents and organisations to donate to the planting and watering of trees in their streets and neighbourhoods". The organisation works with a number of metropolitan local authorities (e.g.

Croydon, Cambridge, Hillingdon etc) predominantly in London and at present no county unitaries.

Friends of the Moor and Friends of the Heath are hosting events as part of the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. The events are at 11am on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th respectively and the Knutsford Ornithological Society will be on hand to help identify birds.

4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

None, information only report.

ANNEXES

Ref	Action	Task	Responsible	Target	Status	Notes
6	Three	Launch of the tree mission	PFO	May-20	Outstanding	The council will be leading a “plant a tree in ‘23” campaign
15	Nine	Information to be published on council website promoting hedges and hedgehog holes	PFO	May-20	In Progress	This section of the website in due course.
16	Nine	Hedgehog highway campaign to encourage creation of hedgehog holes	PFO	Nov-21	In Progress	A competition will be run with the schools after the February half term to promote the hedgehog hole surrounds.
19	Eleven	Target landowners identified to encourage planting of trees and hedges to connect green corridors	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Outstanding	Nature Action Plan working group has identified the areas; engagement will take place later this year.
20	Twelve	Project established with landowners to create wildlife corridor from Bluebell Wood to the Heath	WG/PFO	Jun-20	Outstanding	Engagement has begun and the working group are devising a proposed route for a wildlife corridor.
22	Twelve	Engagement with Cheshire East Council and Developer to link Booths Mere to wildlife corridor from St Johns Wood	WG/PFO	Jun-20	Outstanding	The determination of the outline planning application will assist in identifying a suitable route.
23	Thirteen	Identification of suitable ponds for planting schemes	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Complete	Pond information to encourage pond creation to be added to website.