

**Subject:** Biodiversity Policy Statement

**Status:** For Publication

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**Report to:** The Cabinet

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007

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**Report of:** Executive Director of Resource

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**Portfolio**

**Holder:** A Clean and Green Rossendale  
A Well Managed Council

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**Key Decision:** Yes

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval of a policy statement in response to the biodiversity duty set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 Adoption of this policy statement will positively impact on the following corporate priorities

- Keeping our Borough Clean and Green, through encouraging the use of non invasive native species in such a way as to encourage a greater number of species within the Borough.
- A Well Managed Council through ensuring that the Council both positively responds to the duties placed upon it and acts in a socially responsible manner.

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 This report deals with the following identified risks:

- Regulatory risks which relate to failure to take a co-ordinated corporate response to a new duty placed upon the Council.
- Strategic risks which would arise from the diversion of attention if a policy response were not rooted in the Council's existing approach to the broader environmental agenda.

#### **4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on the Council to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of its functions. This report and the attached Policy Statement are about how the Council will fulfill its obligations under this duty.
- 4.2 Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth and includes all species of plants and animals, and the natural systems that support them.
- 4.3 The Council has already taken some steps in relation to biodiversity over a long period of time through for example the promotion of tree planting and through the recognition of its importance within Aim 8 of the Environment Strategy recently approved by the Cabinet. However, these sporadic efforts valuable in themselves do not represent a coherent corporate response to a new duty which affects all the Council's functions. Such a response is set out in the attached Policy Statement which is presented for approval.
- 4.4 There is a danger that a duty such as this could create an overly bureaucratic approach which delays and frustrates the decision making process of the organisation. The attached policy statement seeks to overcome this by
- Putting in place a process which will fully analyses the impact, positive, negative, or neutral on biodiversity, or all key decisions.
  - Encouraging the continuation of practical responses to biodiversity issues at individual service level. This includes factoring these issues into the spatial planning framework and the development plans for individual parks as well as looking to use undevelopable land for allotments which both promote biodiversity and have positive impacts on health and wellbeing

#### **5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE**

- 5.1 The individual projects described in the Policy Statement are either already resourced through business plan, will generate additional marginal income such as allotments or have no obvious financial implications.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES**

- 6.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

#### **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 There are no immediate human resources implications arising from this report.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Biodiversity, its promotion and safeguarding, are important elements of the Council's responsibility for the stewardship of place. By addressing the issues in a coherent way it will be possible to gain not just the obvious environmental benefits but benefits in other priority areas such as health and wellbeing.

## 9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Cabinet are recommended to approve the attached biodiversity policy statement

## 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Portfolio holders, Senior Management Team, relevant service managers, LSP Environment Theme Group

## 11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Guidance for Public Authorities and implementing the Biodiversity Duty	www.defra.gov.uk