

# Fleet Town Council Biodiversity Statement Approved December 2023

## 1. Background

The Environment Act 2021 places obligations on Parish and Town Councils, as well as all public authorities, to consider what they can do to protect and enhance biodiversity. This duty includes agreeing policies and specific objectives based on what might be possible and taking action to achieve objectives.

By 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, Councils are required to:

- Have an agenda item to discuss what steps it will take to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Note what action is already taking place in the parish.
- Agree the next steps to set environmental objectives and a delivery plan.

## 2. Biodiversity Statement

The Council agreed the following Biodiversity Statement at the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities meeting in December 2023.

### Vision Statement

- The Council has agreed a Vision for Fleet which acknowledges the need to build sustainability into the Council's strategic objectives and actions. The Council is committed to becoming more environmentally conscious and promoting green initiatives.

### Planning Applications

- Working with the Local Planning Authority to ensure all planning development achieves a net biodiversity gain.
- Updating the Council's Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the biodiversity net gain required.

### Partnerships

- Implementing the Greening Campaign initiatives and taking best practice forward into the Council's operations.
- Setting up an independent Climate Action Network to support a range of environmental initiatives, including lobbying.
- Developing links with the District and County Councils to share plans, gain knowledge and to prevent duplication of effort.
- Attending Climate Engagement meetings offered by the District Council, and engaging with any initiatives that help improve biodiversity.
- Sharing best practice between local Councils.
- Connecting with national campaigns, such as Keep Britain Tidy.

### Land and Property Management

- Maintaining and developing the Council's open spaces policies to ensure that the preservation of plants and wildlife are a key consideration.
- Utilising the Greening Campaign to carry out biodiversity surveys to identify areas that would benefit or lend themselves from a wider range of planting.
- Considering biodiversity issues when implementing changes to buildings or land.

- Making use of specialist advisors at the District or County to inform the Council's plans to improve biodiversity.

**Local Community**

- Raising awareness of biodiversity through the Greening Campaign and through general communications from the Council.

**Funding**

- Using grant opportunities, where possible, to enable open spaces projects that enhance the environment.

**Governance**

- Implementing environmental considerations and impact (positive and negative) into Council decision making and awarding contracts.