

**ADOPTION OF THE  
LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

Presented by the Head of Parklands

**SUMMARY**

The current Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan was adopted by the Authority in 2000. This Plan was informed by partners and provides a framework for focused biodiversity enhancements and awareness-raising across the Regional Park.

A review of this document has taken place and an updated Plan produced, taking into account both existing and new priorities and opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the Regional Park.

Member approval was given on 23 November 2017 (Paper E/529/17) for the commencement of partner consultation. This process is now complete and in December 2018 Executive Committee approved referral of the draft Plan for adoption by the Authority (Paper E/599/18).

A full copy of the draft Plan is included at Appendix A to this report (electronic copy only).

**RECOMMENDATION**

- Members Approve:
- (1) adoption of the draft Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan attached as Appendix A to this report; and
  - (2) delegation to the Conservation Manager to make amendments to the draft Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan to take account of comments from Members.

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) were launched in the UK in 1994 in response to the 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro. Extensive consultation led to the production of the first report, entitled 'Meeting the Rio Challenge', establishing the framework and criteria for identifying species and habitat types of conservation concern. BAPs were widely produced by a range of organisations

including private companies, local authorities and charities to provide targeted action for biodiversity. The first Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan was adopted in 2000.

- 2 Devolution led the four nations of the UK to develop their own national strategies for biodiversity. The Lawton Review 'Making Space for Nature' in 2010, and the Government White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature' in June 2011 led to the most recent England biodiversity strategy 'Biodiversity 2020' published in 2011 which saw a shift in the approach to biodiversity action to landscape scale conservation strategies. The work of the Authority is considered an appropriate landscape scale for the purposes of the White Paper.
- 3 Despite this change in emphasis to landscape scale conservation strategies many of the BAPs still provide a valid framework for conservation work within their area. The merits of the BAP process, the review of key habitats and species, the setting of SMART targets and the drawing together of key partners for targeted action, are still considered to be an effective method enabling conservation action. The existing Lea Catchment Nature Improvement Area which itself is a landscape scale partnership will provide an excellent forum for engagement and delivery of the BAP.
- 4 In November 2017 Members approved the commencement of consultation on the draft Lee Valley Regional Park BAP (Paper E/529/17) and in December 2018 Members approved referral of the draft Plan to the Authority (Paper E/599/18).
- 5 The Lee Valley Regional Park Development Framework (PDF) sets out the Park Authority's aspirations for future development and management of the Regional Park. The draft strategic policies acknowledge the importance of the BAP in securing the protection and enhancements of habitats and species throughout the Regional Park.

## **LEE VALLEY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

- 6 The first Lee Valley BAP was adopted in 2000 and identified habitats and species within the Regional Park that would benefit from specific programmes of action to conserve and enhance them. The BAP habitats targeted for action were:

- wet woodland;
- standing open water;
- rivers and streams;
- floodplain grassland and fen;
- urban habitats.

The BAP species were:

- Otter;
- Water Vole;
- Early Marsh Orchid;
- Bittern; and
- Kingfisher.

- 7 The Lee Valley BAP has provided an excellent framework for biodiversity

action drawing in a range of delivery partners. However the Plan needed to be reviewed and the targets reassessed in light of changes in national and regional priorities.

## **DRAFT LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

- 8 The draft Lee Valley Regional Park BAP targets affect all land within the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority boundary and therefore working with partners is key to the delivery of targets and ultimately the success of the Plan.
- 9 Following a review of national targets in relation to the habitats and species of the Regional Park the following key habitats are targeted for action in the current draft:
  - woodland;
  - standing open water;
  - rivers and streams;
  - grassland and fen; and
  - built environment and brownfield.

Some of these habitats have broadened in their scope to encompass all the habitats of note within the Regional Park and reflect changes in national priorities.

The following key species have been targeted for action:

- Otter;
- Water Vole;
- Early Marsh Orchid;
- Bittern;
- Kingfisher;
- Bats;
- Creeping Marshwort\*;
- Invasive non-native species\*;
- Barbel\*.

Three new species action plans have been included (noted with an asterix above); these reflect either new species identified since the launch of the previous BAP or species that following review are now regarded as additional priorities.

The work on delivery of the Habitat Action Plans will provide benefits to a range of species, providing a more robust and inter-connected habitat across the Regional Park which is fundamental to the success of the Plan. The delivery of the Species Action Plans will target very specific work requirements of key species, these species are also an excellent tool for community awareness and engagement.

- 10 For each habitat or species action plan highlighted in the Lee Valley BAP a suite of SMART targets will be drawn up over the coming year to deliver the aims and objectives set out in the draft BAP. These will be drawn up in collaboration with key stakeholders who will also assist in their delivery.
- 11 Engagement and awareness raising with landowners, partners and the general

public is key to the success of the BAP. The BAP document will be publicly accessible on the Authority's website and progress on the targets will be reported annually and made available on the website. There will be an on-going series of events taking place to highlight the BAP and the wildlife of the Regional Park.

## **DRAFT LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION**

- 12 The public consultation produced 278 individual comments from 33 organisations and individuals. Following a review of these comments, the draft document has been revised. The revisions have not made substantive changes to the draft approved for consultation. A copy of the revised document and the consultation responses are appended to this report at A and B (electronic copy only).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 13 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report. Work carried out through the delivery of the proposed Lee Valley Regional Park BAP will enhance the biodiversity value, appreciation and understanding of the key habitats and species within the Regional Park.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. It is anticipated that the allocated annual BAP capital budget of £50K will enable the delivery of many of the BAP targets.
- 15 It is anticipated that any additional funding could be sought through the planning system; for example through S106 or Community Infrastructure Levy or grant applications as necessary.

### **HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 16 If approved, delivery of the BAP will be co-ordinated by existing staff in the Conservation Team.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 17 The Regional Park Authority has a statutory duty for Nature Conservation. During the last 51 years this duty is reflected in the work of many of the Authority's teams.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 18 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 19 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

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**BACKGROUND REPORTS**

None

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Authority	3259	A Biodiversity Action Plan for the Lee Valley Regional Park	21 January 1999
Authority	3479	Biodiversity Action Plan – Progress Report	12 July 2001
Authority	3530	A Biodiversity Action Plan for the Lee Valley Regional Park: Progress report for 2001 – 2002	11 April 2002
Authority	3618	A Biodiversity Action Plan for the Lee Valley Regional Park: Progress report for 2002 – 2003	15 May 2003
Authority	3730	A Biodiversity Action Plan for the Lee Valley Regional Park: Progress report for 2003 – 2004, programme for 2004 – 2005	27 May 2004
Authority	3807	A Biodiversity Action Plan for the Lee Valley Regional Park: Progress report for 2004 – 2005, programme for 2006 – 2007	26 May 2005
Authority	3865	Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan: 2006/07	20 April 2006
Authority	A/3916/07	Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan: 2007/08	22 February 2007
Authority	A/3987/08	Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan: 2008/09	22 May 2008
Executive Committee	E/529/17	Lee Valley Biodiversity Action Plan	23 November 2017
Executive Committee	E/599/18	Adoption of the Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan	13 December 2018

**APPENDICES ATTACHED**

Appendix A	Draft Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan (available on the Authority's website only)
Appendix B	Responses to consultation (available on the Authority's website only)

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
PDF	Park Development Framework

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