



NOTICE OF MEETING

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2022 AT 3.30 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER - THE GUILDHALL

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

Information with regard to public access due to Covid precautions

- Attendees will be requested to undertake an asymptomatic/ lateral flow test within 48 hours of the meeting. Around one in three people who are infected with COVID-19 have no symptoms so could be spreading the virus without knowing it. Asymptomatic testing – getting tested when you don't have symptoms - helps protect people most at risk by helping to drive down transmission rates. We strongly encourage you to take up the habit of regular asymptomatic testing to help prevent the spread of coronavirus to your colleagues and residents you work with.
 - We strongly recommend that attendees should be double vaccinated, and if eligible, have received a booster.
 - If symptomatic you must not attend and self-isolate following the stay-at-home guidance issued by UK Health Security Agency.
 - All attendees are required to wear a face covering while moving around within the Guildhall and are recommended to continue wearing a face covering in the Council Chamber except when speaking.
 - Although not a requirement, attendees are strongly encouraged to keep a social distance and take opportunities to prevent the spread of infection.
 - Hand sanitiser is provided at the entrance and throughout the Guildhall. All attendees are encouraged to make use of hand sanitiser on entry to the Guildhall and are requested to follow the one-way system in place.
 - Attendees are encouraged book in to the venue (QR code). An NHS test and trace log will be retained and maintained for 21 days for those that cannot or have not downloaded the app.
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Membership

Councillor Lee Mason (Chair)
Councillor Matthew Atkins
Councillor Stuart Brown

Councillor Charlotte Gerada
Councillor Hannah Hockaday
Councillor Leo Madden

Standing Deputies

Councillor Simon Boshier
Councillor Ryan Brent
Councillor Graham Heaney
Councillor Ian Holder

Councillor Lee Hunt
Councillor Benedict Swann
Councillor Rob Wood

(NB This agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting).

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: www.portsmouth.gov.uk

AGENDA

Council Chamber: Risk Assessment

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Members' Interests

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022 are to follow.

4 Review into biodiversity enhancement in urban Portsmouth (Pages 3 - 10)

The Panel will hear from:

Councillor Kimberley Barrett, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Green Recovery

Rachel Hudson, Portsmouth Friends of the Earth

Andy Ames, Wilder Communities Project Officer, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Nick Sebley, Portsmouth Climate Action Board

Steve White, Operations Manager, Colas Limited

Simon Pearce, Arboriculture Officer, Portsmouth City Council

Members of the public are now permitted to use both audio visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

19 January 2022

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Agenda Item 4

What regulations enable the Local Planning Authority to require developers to consider biodiversity when submitting a planning application?

All planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan and it is therefore that Plan, which is primarily made up of the Portsmouth Plan 2012, which dictates what can be required from developers. Policy PCS13 of the Plan requires all new development to ensure *'that development retains and protects the biodiversity value of the development site and produces a net gain in biodiversity wherever possible. Any unavoidable negative impacts on biodiversity as a result of development should be appropriately mitigated.'* Greater protection and scrutiny is provided for proposed development on sites of local, national and international importance for nature conservation. This local policy ensures planning decisions meet the duty placed on all public authorities to have regard in exercising their function to the purpose of conserving biodiversity by s40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

This general duty is in addition to the duty imposed to comply with the 'Habitats Regulations' in respect of specific designated sites, such as the Solent Waters Special Protection Area ('SPA'). This regulatory requirement is that no planning permission can be granted for a scheme that is likely to have a significant effect on the designated site, whether alone or in combination with other projects unless it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of that designated site.

While strategic scale schemes, or developments in particular proximity to the SPA around Portsmouth, can have a direct 'likely significant effect' when considered on their own the requirement to consider all projects in combination with other projects has meant that Habitat Regulation Assessment is needed in respect of a large proportion of new development in Portsmouth. This applies primarily to residential development that increases the number of people living in proximity to the SPA. When such development is combined together this results in both increased recreational disturbance of wildfowl, including species for which the SPA is designated, and increased waste water following into the SPA resulting in eutrophication and associated adverse impacts on the SPA and relevant species. These significant effects therefore require mitigation before development can be granted planning permission and the cost of that mitigation is a requirement placed on developers. Recreational disturbance is managed through a range of mitigation measures collectively called the 'Bird Aware' programme, and eutrophication resulting from increased nitrates and phosphates is managed through the 'Interim Nutrient Neutral Mitigation Strategy'. Both these strategies require a financial contribution to developers to fund mitigation schemes to resolve the adverse effects resulting from the proposed development.

Finally, it can be noted that following the introduction of the Environment Act at the end of 2021 Government intends to change how biodiversity conservation and enhancement will be achieved through the Planning system. Further secondary legislation is required before this new approach is introduced so full details are not yet known, but the Act makes provision for a requirement for a net gain in biodiversity to be a condition of all planning permission. The Act also makes provision, subject to further legislation, for the general duty referred to above to be amended not just to conserve, but also enhance biodiversity and increase the obligations on local authorities to

publish reports on biodiversity in their area. The regulatory and statutory regime for biodiversity within the Planning process is therefore going through a very significant review and is likely to be significantly more beneficial to biodiversity and onerous on both developers and Councils within the next few years.

Biodiversity Questionnaire for Allotment Associations

The Council, through its Transport, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel, is conducting a review into biodiversity enhancement in urban Portsmouth with the aim of positively contributing to re-wilding and support for other approaches to re "greening" Portsmouth.

The views of allotment holders are very important to us, so please keep reading and please do complete our short questionnaire on behalf of your Association.

Biodiversity is the variety of living things on earth, from the smallest insect to the largest mammal and tree. Allotments, especially those in a compact city such as Portsmouth, are important habitats for wildlife as they provide food, shelter and breeding sites for many species of insects and wildlife. By growing food and gardening in harmony with nature, we benefit as much as pollinators and wild creatures.

In your experience what proportion of allotment holder members of your association:

(please tick relevant box):

	None	Some	Most
Add compost to soil (helping to increase earthworm activity and improve soil life)			/
Rotate vegetable crops (to maintain nutrient balance)			/
Grow a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs (to offer nectar to bees/ other insects throughout the seasons)			/
Have fruit/ orchard trees on their allotment (to offer nectar to bees/ other pollinators)		/	
Grow companion plants (to reduce disease and increase pollination)		/	
Include a pond/ pond in a pot to provide shallow water (for wildlife)		/	
Provide food and shelter for wildlife in autumn (e.g. leaves raked into netted container)		/	
Avoid the use of chemicals and pesticides			/
Provide nesting boxes/ insect hotels/ bee blocks/ bird feeders		/	
Avoid the use of peat-based compost		/	
Have a log pile or bug houses (to provide a home to insects/wildlife)		/	
Include a <u>maintained</u> wild area within their allotment for wildflowers and/ or wild grasses?		/	
<p>Please add any comments about other activities your allotment holders take to improve biodiversity:</p> <p>Keen/experienced plot-holders are fully aware of the benefits associated with biodiverse environments and are quick to embrace new ideas from wherever they originate – be that TV, internet, books or magazine articles.</p>			

In the communal areas of your allotment site, do you:

(please tick relevant box)

	Yes	No
Use fences as frames for climbers/ivy (to create wildlife havens)?		/
Grow hedges around the perimeter of the site (to encourage wildlife)?	/	
Cut grass only when it is 5cm+ long (leaving it for more than 2 weeks in the summer)?	/	
Have a <u>maintained</u> wild area?		/
Have a log pile?	/	
Provide nesting boxes/ hedgehog houses?		/
Please provide comments about other activities your Association undertakes to improve biodiversity on your allotment site:		

Thinking about your Association and its allotment holder members:

	Yes	No
Is your Association in favour of areas of rewilding on individual plots?		/
Do you feel that there is a problem with dirty plots?	/	
Do you think it would be helpful for your members to receive more information about the role they can play in increasing biodiversity on their allotment?	/	
Would you like help/ advice/ training on identifying biodiversity opportunities?	/	
Are there any projects you have in mind which would enhance the biodiversity of your site?		/
Please expand on your responses here:		
<p>In our view re-wilding/re-greening does not, and should not, be associated with allotments. By their very nature, allotments are already 'green' sites in that there are many different types of plants/vegetables/flowers grown on individual plots which, when considered collectively, contribute immensely to the provision of a bio-diverse environment. Encouraging plot-holders to re-wild (grow grasses, weeds, wild flowers) is the first step leading to a dirty plot. It is also very inconsiderate to adjacent plot-holders who have to deal with the issue of rapidly spreading weeds/grasses etc from re-wilded/dirty plots.</p> <p>We are not against bio-diversity – we do however believe that, in the case of allotment sites, bio-diversity and rewilding/re-greening are, and should be treated as, separate issues.</p>		

If you have any other comments about biodiversity enhancement, please include them here:

Thank you very much for contributing to our review.

If you would like a link to the review report when it is published in March 2022, please insert your email address in the box below:

My email address is:

You can also follow the progress of our review by keeping an eye out on the Portsmouth Council website at [Browse meetings - Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel Portsmouth City Council](#) or subscribe for updates at [Logon to Subscribe to Updates Portsmouth City Council](#)

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Views submitted by Jane Shepherd for this review.

There are green spaces and places for trees that are going unidentified. The Council has an open invitation for residents to suggest places for trees but they don't seem to have planted many and it's going at a snail's pace.

For many of us it's easy to forget that we can suggest spots for trees or wilding, life gets in the way and there's no quick mechanism to feedback.

My idea would be to have volunteer biodiversity scouts in each ward who can look out for opportunities and feedback to the council. They could have some basic training or info sheets, and do an audit of their patch.

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