

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 9 JULY 2019

Petition from Enrico Petrucco

#### Pollinator Action Plan

“I want my Council to adopt a Pollinator Action Plan”

“We rely on bees and other pollination insects for so many plants and crops. But too often we forget they need somewhere to live. Your Council plays a vital role in taking care of your local area.”

**RESPONSE** by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport):

I thank Mr Petrucco for presenting the petition.

This Council is committed to keeping Reading’s environment clean, green and safe, and identifies this as a priority in the latest refreshed version of our Corporate Plan 2018-21 approved at full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> June.

Achieving this priority must involve taking care and supporting the biodiversity of the town, particularly in view of the recently declared climate emergency. The Council recognises that pollinating insects are an essential part of this biodiversity.

Reading’s existing Biodiversity Action Plan dates from 2006, and is now due for review. The Council proposes to commence this review later this year. Alongside a wide range of other elements, this will detail the actions that the Council and other partners will take to stem the decline in pollinator (and other invertebrate) numbers. This will be delivered in time to inform actions anticipated to start next year.

As part of the review and updating of the Reading Climate Change Strategy, which is covered under item 9 on today’s agenda, I would draw Mr Petrucco’s attention to the Natural Environment section and the existing reference in T3SP1.4 on page 11 to aligning our active and long-standing local work with the National Pollinator Strategy.

It is worth stressing the fact that the Council is already undertaking actions to help pollinators and has been for over ten years. This is also covered in my answer to a question to this Committee in a few minutes (copy attached), and includes the management of approximately 36 hectares of grassland as hay meadow, including the restoration of wildflower rich grassland at Clayfield Copse, McIlroys Park, Arthur Newbery Park and Prospect Park.

In determining planning applications, the Council also requires developers, where appropriate, to plant predominantly native and wildlife friendly species in new landscaping schemes.