

Report on	Biodiversity – All Ireland Pollinator Plan
Date of Meeting	5 th July 2021
Reporting Officer	Raymond Lowry (Head of Technical Services)

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	At the Council meeting held on 28 th May 2021, Members requested that Mid Ulster District Council should register its support for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. This report outlines the framework for this.
2.0	Background
2.1	We all depend on pollinators and the important service they provide. Unfortunately, our pollinators are in decline. Of the 99 different types of bees on the island of Ireland, nearly one third are threatened with extinction. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a strategy that addresses this problem. It is a shared plan of action supported by more than 90 governmental and non-governmental organisations. By helping our pollinators, we are improving biodiversity across the island.
2.2	Pollinators are important to farmers that grow pollinator dependent crops, to gardeners that want to grow their own fruits and vegetables and for the health of our environment. The annual value of pollinators is at least €53 million in the Republic of Ireland and £603 million in the UK. (<i>Information from All-Ireland Pollinator Plan</i>)
2.3	To help pollinators we need to ensure that they have food, shelter and somewhere to breed. Many pollinator friendly actions simply require land to be managed in a slightly different way than what we have become used to. It is not about letting the landscape go wild, but about managing it in a way that is sustainable for pollinators so that they can survive and continue to provide us with their vital service.
2.4	Mid Ulster District Council are already taking actions to support pollinators. Through biodiversity initiatives both on council's own properties, and working with local community groups, local residents and schools, steps are already being undertaken to make Mid Ulster more 'pollinator friendly'.
2.5	To better support these efforts and to better promote the work being undertaken, a framework has been developed to recognise Councils as partners of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Mid Ulster District Council already undertakes actions to enhance the council's own properties for the benefit of pollinators.
3.2	Wildflower areas have been created through sowing wildflower seeds or by changing the management of existing grass areas to follow the "Don't Mow, Let it Grow" principles. The reduction and appropriate timing of mowing encourages wildflowers to become established enhancing the area for pollinators, and also has a resultant knock on benefit to other invertebrates, birds, mammals, etc. Mid Ulster council is currently trialling this on a few selected sites, and it is hoped to develop this to further suitable sites over the next few years.
3.3	In addition to initiatives on council properties, the council are working with local community groups, local residents and schools, encouraging and assisting in projects to make Mid Ulster more 'pollinator friendly'.
3.4	All of these actions undertaken by the council to improve the natural environment will help fulfil legal obligations under the Biodiversity Duty to "...further the conservation of biodiversity..." (Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011).
3.5	These actions also contribute to the delivery of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, the blueprint for conserving and improving biodiversity in Northern Ireland.
3.6	These actions also feed into Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Improvement Objective 1 – to seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.
3.7	In addition to contributing to the fulfilment of legal obligations and feeding into various strategies and plans, these actions provide a demonstration of biodiversity credentials to local residents who are increasingly concerned with supporting environmentally friendly initiatives.
3.8	In registering its support for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, and becoming an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Partner, Mid Ulster District Council will be formalising the actions already being undertaken and appropriate future initiatives.
3.9	<p>In becoming an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Partner, Mid Ulster District Council agrees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Mid Ulster District Council supports the ethos of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and will consider the Plan in their policies, plans, and management decisions where possible. 2. To consider the evidence-based actions in the guideline document "Councils: Actions to help Pollinators", and to carry out one pollinator-friendly action in the first year of signing up and plan to carry out at least three more within the following five years. The guideline document lists 30 possible actions, many of which are low cost or cost-neutral. 3. To update the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Team (within the National Biodiversity Data Centre) on the positive pollinator actions Mid Ulster District Council have planned, implemented or maintained at the end of each year.

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Minimal financial resources over and above that already committed to biodiversity related projects/activities.
	Human: Biodiversity Officer time reporting implementation of activities to All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Biodiversity Officer, Parks and Property Services time in assessing sites and implementation and management of actions. However, this would be required in fulfilling obligations under the Biodiversity Duty and Corporate Improvement Objective 1.
	Risk Management: Non-delivery of the actions will result in negative press for the Council.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Recommend Mid Ulster District Council register as a supporter of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Council-Framework- All-Ireland Pollinator Plan
6.2	Appendix 2 – Councils – Actions to Help Pollinators