

Report on	All-Ireland Pollinator Plan
Date of Meeting	8th January 2024
Reporting Officer	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director, Environmental Services
Contact Officer	Mark Edgar, Biodiversity Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on the Councils involvement in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
2.0	Background
2.1	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. It is implemented by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
2.2	We all depend on pollinators and the important environmental role 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 AIPP is a shared plan of action to take steps to restore pollinator populations to healthy levels. It is supported by a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations with every local authority registered as a Partner.
2.3	By helping our pollinators, we are improving biodiversity across the island. 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 their vital service.
2.4	Mid Ulster District Council has already taking actions to support pollinators and make the district more "pollinator friendly" through biodiversity initiatives both on Council property and working with local residents, community groups and schools,
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Mid Ulster District Council became a partner of the AIPP in 2022, enabling the work the Council is undertaking for pollinators will be acknowledged at a national level. In being an AIPP Partner the Council has agreed:

1. To support the ethos of the AIPP and will consider the same in 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 to carry out at least three more within the following five years.
3. To update the AIPP Team (within the National Biodiversity Data Centre) on the positive pollinator actions Mid Ulster District Council has planned, implemented or maintained at the end of each year.

3.2 The AIPP document, “Councils: Actions to help Pollinators”, lists 30 possible actions many of which the Council is already undertaking a number of these. This is the second year Mid Ulster District Council has been an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Partner and key actions taken in support Pollinator Plan in 2023 include:

- **Pollinator Friendly Grasslands** - Mid Ulster district has a number of sites managed for pollinators through ‘Don’t Mow, Let it Grow’ (one cut & lift per year). In 2023, there has been a net gain to the suite of sites under this management. Council now have 15 sites totalling just over 6 hectares actively managed for pollinators e.g. at Polepatrick Park and Cemetery (see photo included at appendix). It is planned to increase the number of number of such sites in the next few years which will also reduce the grounds maintenance burden on the Environmental Services department.
- **Signage to identify pollinator friendly habitats** - All current Pollinator Friendly Grassland sites have had signage installed, identifying the areas as being managed for pollinators.
- **Training on pollinators and how to take action to protect them** - Five workshops were delivered to youth groups, gardening clubs and general public. These explain the benefits of pollinators; encourage participants to grow pollinator friendly plants; encourage participants to provide areas for pollinators to make their own ‘natural’ homes and a practical demonstration on making solitary bee homes. Participants make their own bee home which they take away with them to put up in their own garden/allotment/etc.
- **Plant a native hedgerow** – Four local schools visited Tullyvar Landfill Site on 29th November to help plant a native hedgerow. The event was attended by approx. 90 students from Aughnacloy Primary School, Richmond Primary School, St. Malachy's Primary School, and St. Mary's Primary School. Species were selected to provide a range of pollen and nectar for our local pollinators. It is envisaged this will become an annual event to expand native hedgerows throughout the site over coming years.
- **Install bee homes** – Building on the success of the use by pollinators of the smaller bee homes installed in 2022, several more were installed at appropriate locations in 2023. It is planned to undertake workshops with

3.3	<p>Council staff and local community groups to build more bee homes using recycled timber from the Council Recycling Centres over the coming years.</p> <p>These actions also feed into Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Improvement Objective 1 <i>“to seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action”</i>. These actions also contribute to the delivery of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, the blueprint for conserving and improving biodiversity in the country.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Actions identified will be funded from existing budgets where possible.</p> <p>Human: Work is co-ordinated by the Council’s Biodiversity Officer.</p> <p>Risk Management: All of the actions undertaken by the Council to improve the natural environment will help fulfil legal obligations under the Biodiversity Duty to <i>“...further the conservation of biodiversity...”</i> (Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011).</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 - Photos

Appendix 1 – Photos



Pollinator Friendly Grassland at Polepatrick Park and Cemetery.



Bee home made from a plant pot.



Bee home made from timber off-cuts.