

# Briefing Note



## **Biodiversity Update – November 2020**

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### **Purpose**

**To provide an update on Biodiversity and the wider Greenest City Aspirations**

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Following the agreement at the Delegated Decision meeting on 8th September 2020 the Supplementary Planning Document for Biodiversity is out to consultation. The Biodiversity SPD refers to the relevant planning policy, legislation and best practice guidance. It sets out what information should be provided with planning applications, how it should be evaluated, and how the final form of development should respond to that aspect of the natural environment. The SPD articulates the policy requirements and highlights good practice to shape high quality design where biodiversity net gains is reviewed across future proposed developments in Milton Keynes.

Consultation is for an eight-week period, ending late November. The responses will be considered with subsequent redrafting before moving towards the adoption process.

### **Biodiversity Metric and offsetting**

Ecology officers continue to work on planning applications with biodiversity implications and supporting pre-application advice. The recent Caldecott South development planning enquiry resolved in a compromise agreement. This enabled areas of archaeological and biological interest to be retained and translocation of important areas of meadow grassland. The development resulted in a net loss to biodiversity which will be offset through a S106 agreement in excess of £1 million to enhance biodiversity within the Borough.

### **Woodland Trust**

The Woodland Trust has launched an Emergency Tree Fund to help local authorities turn their ambition into reality, overcome potential barriers, stimulate activity, and provide exemplars of innovation and inspiration that can be applied in other local authority areas.

An expression of interest has been submitted to fund a community tree planting project. The project aims to engage local people in creating sustainable Forest Gardens. The community will design and plant these with guidance and support from a dedicated project officer funded through the project. The outcome of the expression of interest is due early December.

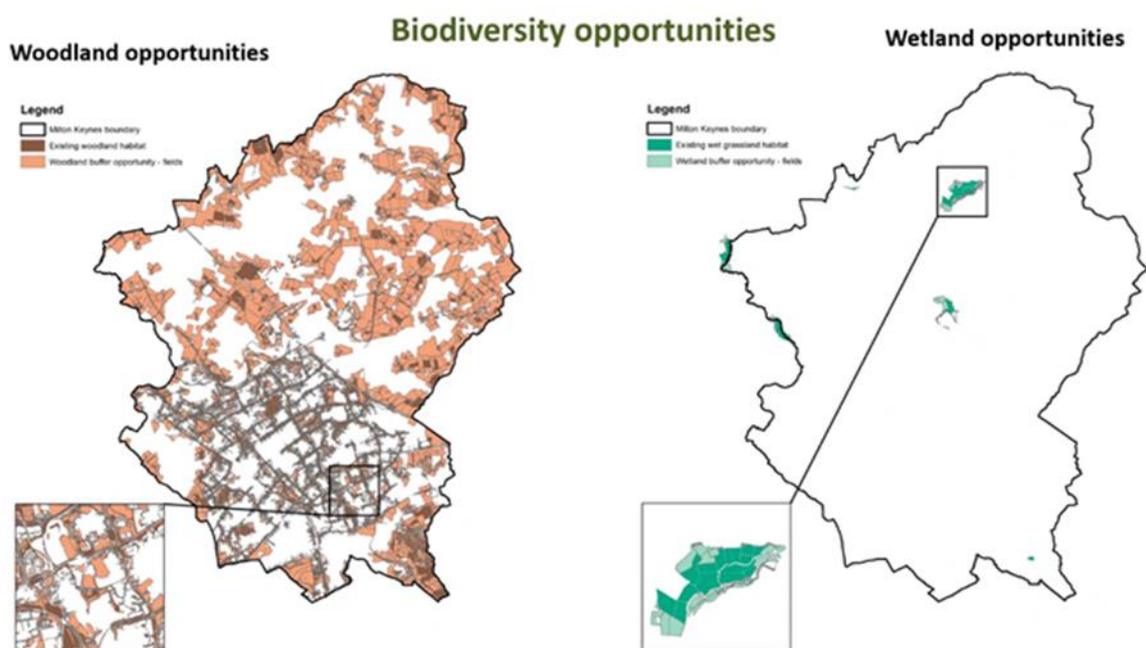
## Natural Capital Mapping

The concept of natural capital recognises that the natural environment provides many benefits to people, in terms of our health, wealth and well-being. In recognising that natural resources are a form of 'capital', in the same way that 'built' or 'social' capital are, we ensure that they cannot be ignored in decision making about environmental change

The Natural Capital Mapping information has been produced as part of the Growth Arc assessment; this includes Milton Keynes. Whilst within the urban area MKC holds good GIS data this is more limited in rural areas, these maps will be used to:

- Identifying high value natural capital assets that should be protected from inappropriate development
- Identifying strategic networks of green and blue infrastructure, which can form part of future nature recovery networks
- Identifying low value areas where there may be opportunities to enhance

The mapping for Milton Keynes is now completed and the data will be transferred to the council in the coming weeks, below is an example mapping output



*The biodiversity opportunities map for woodland identifies the existing woodland; dark brown. From this a woodland buffer area; light brown, is created indicating areas that could be extended to link into other woodlands. This follows the ecological approach defined in Making Space for Nature<sup>1</sup> - Bigger, better and more connected.*

This information is likely to be of significant value for producing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, a key element for Local Authorities flowing from the Government's Environment white paper.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-making-space-for-nature-review>