



## Greater Manchester Green City Region Partnership

Date: 4 April 2024

Subject: Update on the Biodiversity Emergency and State of Nature Report

Report of: Sam Evans, Head of Natural Environment, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide an update on initiatives in place to tackle the Biodiversity Emergency in Greater Manchester, particularly the activities being carried out by the GMCA in:

- Providing an evidence base on the current state of nature in Greater Manchester.
- Developing a Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy to set out priorities for nature's recovery.
- Developing an action plan, as part of its compliance with the Biodiversity Duty, to set out the action the GMCA will take for biodiversity.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Partnership is requested to note the contents in the attached report, in particular:

1. The publication of a State of Nature Report.
2. Progress in developing the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
3. Compliance with the Biodiversity Duty.

### CONTACT OFFICER

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## **1. The Biodiversity Emergency**

1.1 Greater Manchester Combined Authority declared a biodiversity emergency in March 2022. This reflected the need for more urgent and ambitious action to tackle the decline in the diversity and abundance of key species and habitats across the city-region.

1.2 There have been efforts across Greater Manchester, both within the private, public and third sectors, to try to halt this decline. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority is playing its part in these, including in:

- Providing an evidence base on the current state of nature in Greater Manchester.
- Developing a Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy to set out priorities for nature's recovery.
- Developing an action plan, as part of its compliance with the Biodiversity Duty, to set out the action the organisation will take for biodiversity and to contribute to the achievement of national goals and targets on biodiversity.

1.3 These are each covered in further detail below.

## **2. The State of Nature in Greater Manchester**

2.1 To better understand the scale of the biodiversity emergency locally, a report on the State of Nature in Greater Manchester has been produced by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and key partners, and is attached at Annex A.

2.2 This report brings together available local evidence and highlights the urgent challenges faced by nature across the city-region.

2.3 It covers trends in wildlife populations, the extent and condition of our most important spaces for nature, the use of land, pressures on nature, wider benefits we receive from nature and people's access to nature and engagement with it.

2.4 The report is being used to communicate the need for everyone to work together to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity.

### **3. The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

- 3.1 A [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS) for Greater Manchester is in development, which will set out how and where everyone can work together to help nature recover across the city-region. A total of 48 individual strategies will cover all of England, collectively forming a National Nature Recovery Network.
- 3.2 The strategy for Greater Manchester will set out priorities and targets for nature recovery, measures to help deliver them and maps of where action should be taken. These priorities, maps and targets will support the planning system and help direct funding (public, philanthropic or private) for nature recovery.
- 3.3 Since commencing development of the strategy last summer, significant engagement has taken place, including the launch of a public survey. This engagement will continue with a public consultation later this year before the publication of the final strategy in 2025.

### **4. The Biodiversity Duty**

- 4.1 Since the declaration of a Biodiversity Emergency, the Environment Act 2021 has introduced the Biodiversity Duty on public bodies, including all Local Authorities.
- 4.2 Under the Biodiversity Duty, public authorities must:
- Consider what you can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
  - Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
  - Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives.
- 4.3 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has considered what it can do on its part to conserve and enhance biodiversity and is now agreeing policies and specific objectives to form part of an action plan, to sit under the GMCA Sustainability Strategy.

### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Partnership is requested to note the contents in the attached report, in particular:
1. The publication of a State of Nature Report.
  2. Progress in developing the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
  3. Compliance with the Biodiversity Duty.