

GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Date: 25th March 2022

Subject: The Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity and Declaring a Biodiversity
Emergency

Report of: Councillor Neil Emmott, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region and Harry
Catherall, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Green City Region.

Purpose of Report

To approve the Mayor of Greater Manchester's signature to the Edinburgh Declaration on biodiversity and declare a biodiversity emergency.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the signature of the Mayor to the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity on behalf of the GMCA.
2. Approve the declaration of a biodiversity emergency.

Contact Officers:

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impacts Questionnaire			
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion			
Health	G	GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment GM's natural environment provides £364m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	GM's natural environment provides £11m in flood risk reduction and urban cooling benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment GM's natural environment provides £11m in flood risk reduction and urban cooling benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment Taking action under the recommendations in this report would increase the quality of green and blue infrastructure in Greater Manchester.	
Housing			
Economy	G	Greater Manchester's natural assets provide over £1bn of benefits each year to Greater Manchester, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment Further enhancement in the natural environment is likely to result job opportunities within the sector in the longer term Further enhancement in the natural environment is likely to result job opportunities within an increasingly important sector in the longer term Greater knowledge and integration into decision making of the economic benefits of GM's natural assets will result in more sustainable use of these assets in the future There are likely to be resulting opportunities in delivering on these commitments and implementing the actions under the underpinning Greater Manchester Natural Capital Investment Plan.	
Mobility and Connectivity			
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	GM's natural environment provides £38m in air quality benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment	
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The delivery of nature based solutions play a key role in achieving the Greater Manchester Carbon Neutral 2038 target including planting more trees and restoring our lowland and upland peatland stores. GM's trees store 1.5m tonnes of carbon. Chat Moss, one of GM's most important peatland resources, stores over 5m tonnes of carbon.	
Further Assessment(s):	Carbon Assessment		
			
Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment		
Overall Score		
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenanc	N/A	
New Build Commercial/Industrial	N/A	
Transport		
Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
Land Use		
Land use		
No associated carbon impacts expected.		High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.
		Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.
		Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.
		Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Risk Management

These proposals have been informed by both national and local actors and or polices.

Legal Considerations

The contents of this report are not legally binding and as such this is to support and guide the delivery of initiatives across Greater Manchester.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

There are no financial consequences for GMCA revenue budgets.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no financial consequences for GMCA capital budgets.

Number of attachments to the report: 3

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers

N/A

Tracking/ Process [All sections to be completed]

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

Yes

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 Nature and biodiversity are in decline across the UK and globally. Locally, in Greater Manchester, initiatives across the public, private and third sectors under the 5 Year Environment Plan are seeking to reverse this and deliver the wider benefits that improving our natural environment can bring.

1.2 Despite these efforts, there have been significant changes in species numbers and distribution over recent decades. By 2018, the relative abundance of priority species in the UK – those identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action – had declined to 36% of its value in 1970. Prior to 1970, the UK's wildlife had already been depleted by centuries of pollution, habitat loss and environmental degradation.

1.3 In terms of particular species, across the UK there has been:

- A decline of 13% in the average abundance of land and freshwater based species since 1970, and a 6% drop in the past decade.
- Rapid change in the abundance of species – with half of species increasing or decreasing strongly, by up to a third over 10 years.
- Declines in key indicator species – including a 16% decline in the average abundance in butterflies over the past 25 years and 44% in breeding birds over the past 45 years.
- Mammals like hedgehogs are facing serious declines, with surveys in 2011 showing declines of between 25-40% over the previous decade.

1.4 Although local data are not readily available to this level of detail, these national trends are likely mirrored in Greater Manchester. In terms of data held (by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit) on species' trends in the city-region itself:

- Many bird species have seen declines. Between the 1980s and 2011, these include a 40% decline in red poll, 33% decline in skylarks, 32% decline in tree sparrows and 26% decline in snipe and grey partridge.
- Data collected between 1995 and 2019 for Greater Manchester show significant declines in rabbits (64% decline) and red fox (44%). North West data for brown hare show a decline of around 35%.

- Hiding behind some of these declines are likely declines in the numbers of smaller insects or invertebrates.

1.5 Further detail on these trends is set out in Annex 1.

1.6 These dramatic changes have been caused by habitats being lost, destroyed, fragmented and becoming less diverse due to the impact of development, climate change, pollution and invasive species.

1.7 In turn, these changes have had wider impacts on the city-region and the ability of the natural environment to provide the ecosystem services we rely on. For example, the city-region's peatlands are less able to store carbon, our uplands are less able to reduce flood risk further downstream and our urban parks and green spaces are less able to provide a quality environment to improve people's mental health.

1.8 As well as the decline in biodiversity and the loss of this innate value, these declines also have economic impacts. Greater Manchester's natural assets contribute over £1bn each year in benefits to the economy and society, through climate and air quality regulation, physical and mental health, amenity and carbon storage. The decline in the state of the natural environment will continue to reduce these benefits, increasing pressure elsewhere (e.g. on budgets for health and social care and flood protection).

1.9 These issues are set in greater detail in the recently published report of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot¹. This report also sets out the range of projects and initiatives within Greater Manchester to seek to recover and restore biodiversity, reversing habitat loss and fragmentation and what more can be done.

1.10 However, we are facing a biodiversity emergency requiring more urgent and ambitious action to tackle the decline in the diversity and abundance of key species and habitats.

¹ https://gmgreencity.com/resource_library/local-nature-recovery-strategy/

2. THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION:

2.1 Reflecting this position, the Mayor's manifesto sets out the commitment to "sign up to the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity" as part of a wider set of commitments on the natural environment and green spaces.

2.2 The Edinburgh Declaration is a statement of intent, agreed in August 2020, which calls on the international Convention on Biodiversity (which has its 15th meeting in April) to take bold action to reverse biodiversity loss. It also calls for greater prominence to be given to the role of cities and local authorities in delivering on this. The declaration has been signed by Mayors, Council Leaders and Ministers worldwide.

2.3 The Declaration itself (see Annex 2) consists of:

- An introductory section, setting out an understanding of the threats to global biodiversity and the role of regional and city authorities in tackling them.
- Support for the post-2020 framework global biodiversity framework as a means of tackling these threats in a coordinated way.
- A set of commitments to which signatories sign up to supporting on behalf of their region or city to tackle the biodiversity emergency in their areas. In Greater Manchester, we are already taking action against each of these – a commentary is provided in Annex 2.
- A call for action in advance of April's Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity for national governments to implement transformative change to tackle the biodiversity emergency and formally recognise the role and importance of regions and cities in doing so.

2.4 As set out in Annex 2, Greater Manchester is already taking actions to meet the commitments in the Declaration. Cities and local authorities are encouraged to sign up to the Declaration. Signatories are subject to a short, straightforward vetting process.

2.5 The GMCA is recommended to approve the signature of the Mayor to the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity on behalf of the GMCA.

3. DECLARING A BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY

3.1 In 2019, Greater Manchester declared a climate emergency. Numerous local authorities across the UK have combined climate emergency declarations with biodiversity emergency declarations, or declared separate biodiversity emergencies.

3.2 Given this, and the signing of the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity, there is an opportunity to for Greater Manchester to declare a biodiversity emergency.

3.3 As with the climate emergency declaration, this would bring into focus the issues being faced and provide greater impetus to tackling them. This would add further weight to the seriousness Greater Manchester attaches to the biodiversity emergency. It would demonstrate Greater Manchester's:

- Recognition of the severity of the biodiversity emergency at a strategic level.
- Understanding of the need to tackle this alongside and complementary to the tackling of the climate emergency.
- Commitment to taking action to tackle the biodiversity emergency, including through the pledges outlined in the Mayor's manifesto and wider initiatives being led by partners across the city-region.

3.4 This aligns with the following Greater Manchester strategies and plans:

- Greater Manchester Strategy – both options above align with the new Greater Manchester Strategy.
- Greater Manchester 5 Year Environment Plan – reporting on action against the biodiversity emergency would be aligned with that on the climate emergency (i.e. 6-monthly reports to the GMCA) and already within the remit of the existing Natural Capital Group (Greater Manchester's Local Nature Partnership) to deliver on.
- Places for Everyone – the joint development has a policy to “seek an overall enhancement of biodiversity...which underpin the value of the natural environment and its ability to provide a wide range of important benefits, including supporting human health and quality of life.” The plan also contains a policy to a net gain in biodiversity from new development.

3.5 The declarations are therefore compatible with commitments in the plan.

3.6 The GMCA is recommended to approve the declaration a biodiversity emergency, with the proposed declaration set out at Annex 3.

4. OPPORTUNITIES/RISKS

4.1 The key opportunities include:

- Recognition of the severity of the biodiversity emergency at a strategic level and its economic, social and wider environmental impacts.
- Understanding of the need to tackle this alongside and complementary to the tackling of the climate emergency.
- Commitment to taking action to tackle the biodiversity emergency, including through the pledges outlined in the Mayor's manifesto and wider initiatives being led by partners across the city-region.

4.2 If progress is not made on the issues set out above, the key risks include:

- Continued declines in the abundance and diversity of species and key habitats across Greater Manchester.
- Continued decline in the benefits to the economy and society the natural environment is able to provide to people (e.g. physical and mental health benefits) and the wider environment (e.g. reduced flood risk, carbon storage).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with signing the Edinburgh Declaration or declaring a biodiversity emergency.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve the signature of the Mayor to the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity on behalf of the GMCA
2. Approve the declaration of a biodiversity emergency

Annex 1 – Biodiversity trends globally, nationally and locally

Global biodiversity trends

The Living Planet Index (LPI) is a measure of the state of the world’s biological diversity based on population trends of vertebrate species from terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats. The LPI measures population trends to assess the average percentage change in population sizes. The LPI is adopted by the Convention of Biological Diversity as an indicator of progress towards its 2011-2020 target to take effective action to halt the loss of biodiversity.

The Living Planet Index 2020 shows that since 1970 our wildlife populations (vertebrate species populations) have declined on average by 68%. The LPI is an average figure and is much greater, for example, for freshwater species, which have seen an average population decline of 84%.

The Living Planet Index is one indicator among many which demonstrates the global decline in our biodiversity, including the Biodiversity Intactness Index, the Red List Index and the Species Habitat Index.

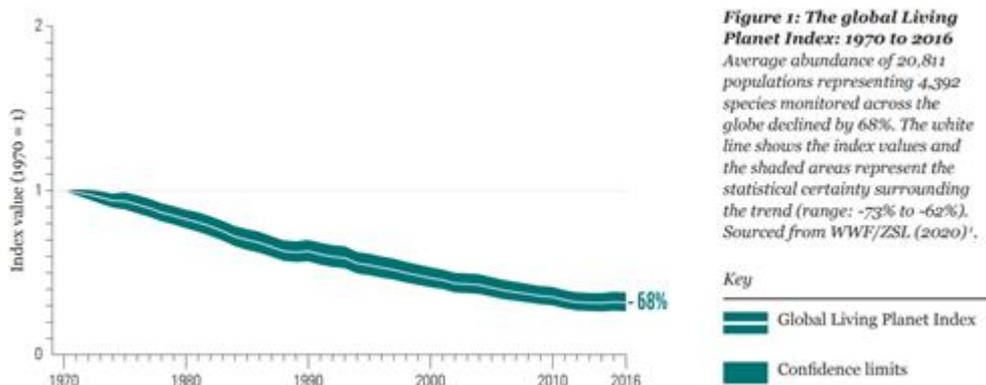


Figure 1. The global Living Planet Index: 1970s to 2016 (Source WWF ZSL 2020)

National biodiversity trends

There have been significant changes in species numbers and distribution nationally.

England's Biodiversity Indicators 2020 report on changes in the relative abundance of priority species populations (species of conservation concern) in the UK. In 2018, the index of relative abundance of priority species in the UK had declined to 36% of its value in 1970. Prior to 1970, the UK's wildlife had already been depleted by centuries of pollution, habitat loss and environmental degradation.

The JNCC state of nature report in 2019 found that 15% of species in England are threatened with local extinction and reported that the average abundance of land and freshwater based species declined by 13% since 1970, with a 6% drop in the last decade.

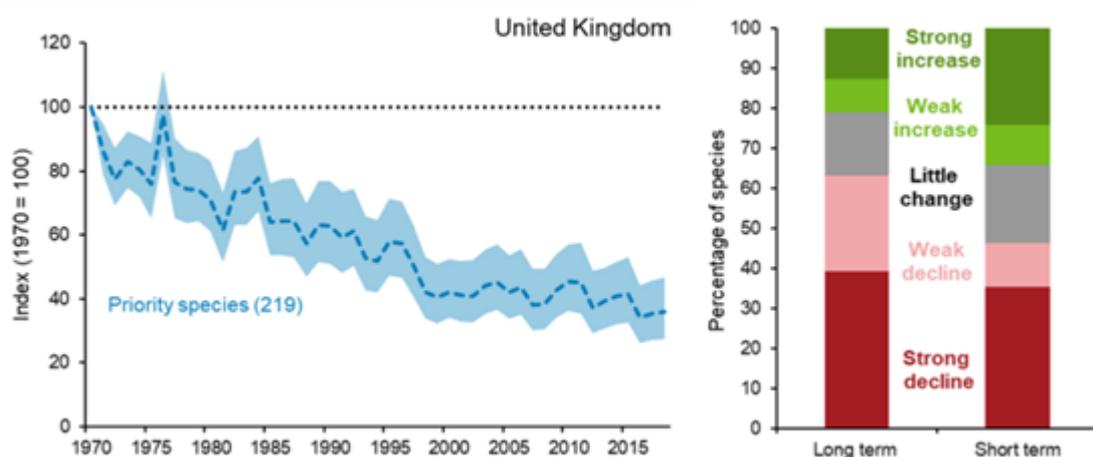


Figure 2. Change in the relative abundance of priority species in the UK, 1970s to 2018
(England Biodiversity Indicators 2020)

In the urban context, urban specialist birds are considered a good biodiversity indicator for urban areas¹ because good quality long term data is available on their distribution and abundance. The 2021 Environment Agency State of the Urban Environment reports that urban specialist birds have decline in abundance in the UK since 1994 (figure 1).

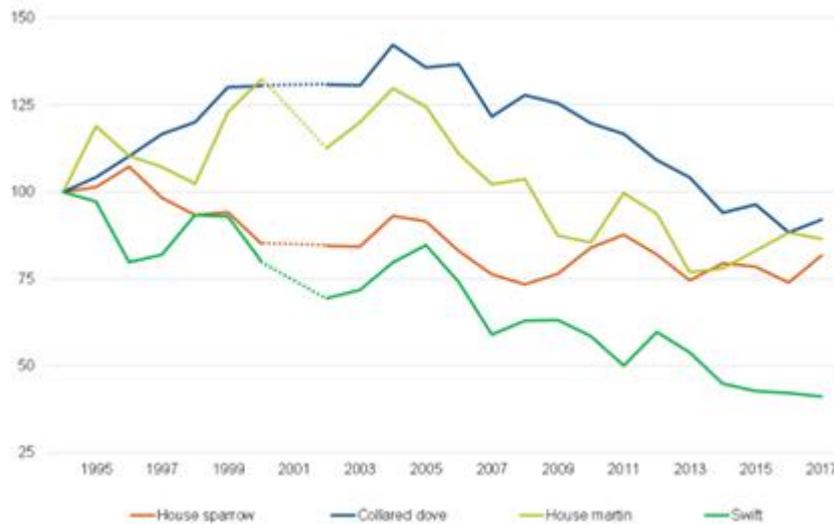


Figure 3. Trends in UK Urban specialist bird species, 1994 to 2017. Data standards to a 1994 baseline (EA Chief Scientist's Group 2021).

Local biodiversity trends

In Greater Manchester, records of species distribution and abundance is monitored by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (the GMEU).

The GMEU report that many bird species have seen declines between 1980 and 2011. These include:

- a 40% decline in Red Polls,
- 33% in decline in Skylarks,
- 32% decline in Tree Sparrows, and a
- 26% decline in Snipe and Grey Partridge (Source GMEU).

Compared to birds, the population trends for mammals are relatively poorly known. Data collected between 1995 and 2019 for Greater Manchester show significant declines in Rabbits (64% decline) and Red Fox (44%) and increases in Grey Squirrel (14%), Roe Deer (86%) and Reeves Muntjac deer (172%) (Source GMEU).

To maximise local knowledge of biodiversity trends in Greater Manchester the GMCA is supporting a NERC fellowship to bring a data revolution to local nature recovery.

Annex 2 – Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity

For subnational governments, cities and local authorities on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

31 August 2020

Preamble

We, subnational governments, cities and local authorities - as participants and contributors to the Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and supported by the Secretariat and some Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity - are deeply concerned about the significant implications that the loss of biodiversity and climate change has on our livelihood and communities. The impacts on our environment, infrastructure, economy, health and wellbeing, and our enjoyment of nature are already visible. Indeed, the COVID-19 global pandemic has reminded us how important it is to live in harmony with nature. Healthy biodiversity and the ecosystem services that it provides are key for human wellbeing and to build the resilience of our cities and regions, both during and after the pandemic, and it should be central to our recovery.

We are concerned that, as outlined in the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, none of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been fully met; that action by CBD Parties alone is insufficient to put us on a path to the 2050 vision of 'living in harmony with nature' or to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and that convergence across multilateral environment agreements (MEA's) is progressing at too slow a pace.

We acknowledge that the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services concludes that, despite insufficient action, it is not too late for the climate or for biodiversity, but that transformative action is needed at all levels.

We recognise the need for transformative change across terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and across urban development and all productive sectors to ensure enhanced food security, human health and sustainable livelihoods whilst avoiding, mitigating or minimising the negative impact on biodiversity. We also recognise the role that many indigenous peoples and local communities have in the management of their territories, through effective biodiversity mainstreaming across all sectors.

We note the need to develop effective policy, governance and financing solutions at all levels of government and to ensure vertical integration across national, subnational, city and local levels to effect transformative change. These should address both the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and integrate all dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic, cultural and social).

We also note the vital role that indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, non-governmental organisations, and wider society, play in decision making and in taking action at subnational, city and local levels, and that there should be a fully collaborative approach to ensure active participation of these groups.

We highlight the key role of the private sector, including the financial sector, and encourage them to catalyse the transformative change needed through full, active and responsible engagement, in support of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use.

We emphasise the key role that subnational governments, cities and local authorities already play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and in delivering actions across planning, implementation, and monitoring.

We welcome the endorsement of the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities, and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020) under Decision X/22 and recognise the productive role that this has played in the last decade mobilising subnational, city and local authority actions towards implementing the goals of the Convention; and in fostering an increased recognition on the critical role of our constituency in the CBD.

We celebrate the commitments and statements already issued by subnational governments, cities and local authorities including recent declarations of intent¹², and in particular the results achieved through the outputs of the 5th and 6th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments - the Quintana Roo Communique on Mainstreaming Local and Subnational Biodiversity (2016) and the Sharm El-Sheikh Communique for Local and Subnational Action for Nature and People (2018).

We acknowledge the need to build upon the existing Plan of Action under Decision X/22, and the advocacy agenda of subnational governments, cities and local authorities over the past decade, and collectively commit to raising our ambition and action in the coming decade.

Development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

We welcome the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in particular clear, action based, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets and the inclusion of an integrated monitoring framework.

We thank the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for taking an inclusive and participatory approach in developing the framework; and welcome the ‘whole of government’ approach embodied in the framework, which captures the principle of governance across all levels of government, including at the level of subnational governments, cities and local authorities.

We continue to support the 2050 vision “living in harmony with nature” and stand ready with a raised ambition to make a contribution that will deliver a local to global impact, and meaningfully contribute to the long term goals.

We share the ambition of the 2030 Mission as was set out in the Zero Draft version of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, ‘To take urgent action across society to put biodiversity on a path to recovery for the benefit of the planet and people.’ This ensures a clear pathway towards the 2050 Vision and corresponds with the ambition of subnational governments, cities and local authorities towards addressing the most pressing global challenges, including climate change, disaster risk reduction, health and poverty alleviation, as well as biodiversity.

Implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

We welcome the inclusion of subnational governments, cities and local authorities, as key enablers for the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. However, we recognise that our role extends beyond the provision of enabling conditions.

Subnational governments, cities and local authorities play key roles in conserving, restoring and reducing threats to biodiversity, in meeting people’s needs through sustainable use and equitable benefit-sharing, in developing the tools and solutions needed for implementing biodiversity protection actions, and in monitoring and reporting.

We recognise that our actions in implementing and mainstreaming biodiversity ensure that support mechanisms and enabling conditions are in place at subnational, city and local levels - and that a vertically integrated and cross-cutting governance approach would enhance these efforts.

We highlight the significant role that subnational governments, cities and local authorities play in resource mobilisation for implementation and mainstreaming of biodiversity actions. We stress the need for immediate and increased efforts to mobilise financial resources at all levels of government and from the private sector.

We are uniquely and most effectively positioned to deliver the outreach, awareness, and uptake of the framework across the whole of society, facilitating engagement with key stakeholders to implement the framework at subnational, city and local levels.

Nevertheless, we recognise that more can be done to build upon already existing policies and frameworks to ensure the full participation of the whole of society in delivering the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Commitment for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

[Italics – GMCA initiatives and policy in place that meet these commitments]

Subnational governments, cities and local authorities will continue to build upon our previous efforts, to deliver transformative actions by:

- Recognising the overall value of nature and integrating it into subnational, city and local planning, management and governance instruments;

GMCA has set this out in the 5 Year Environment Plan and underpinning Natural Capital Accounts, which set out the value of nature to the city-region. The natural environment is reflected in our plans – such as the Greater Manchester Strategy and Places for Everyone joint plan. Decisions to the GMCA now contain a sustainability appraisal which requires an assessment of the impact of a decision on the natural environment.

- Implementing appropriate actions that deliver on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework goals and action targets

GMCA, through the Natural Capital Group, is implementing the actions set out in the 5 Year Environment Plan for the natural environment.

- Aligning biodiversity strategies and actions, and our monitoring and reporting efforts with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), within our subnational, city and local competencies;

These actions are aligned to the priorities in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan; the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot supported the government's proposals for roll-out across England.

- Increasing resource mobilisation for investment in biodiversity action at subnational, city and local levels, and providing incentives to ensure positive outcomes;

Through the Greater Manchester Environment Fund, we are increasing the resource mobilised for investment and working to develop further incentives to do so (e.g. in the Places for Everyone joint plan).

- Mainstreaming biodiversity across public, private and business sectors to achieve greater environmental, societal and economic resilience;

Our Natural Capital Group and Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot bring together representatives across all sectors and work to mainstream biodiversity across them.

- Communicating, educating and raising public awareness with specific efforts to make knowledge available in several languages;

Through campaigns with partners and successive Green Summits, we have a regular communications programme to raise public awareness around biodiversity.

- Strengthening capacity building in order to implement nature-based solutions (NBS) and green and blue infrastructure, particularly through ecosystem-based approaches and as a contribution to a green recovery from COVID-19;

Biodiversity and the natural environment are a key part of our plan to build back from the Covid-19 pandemic. Funding secured through the Greater Manchester Environment Fund is already supporting delivery of this on the ground, as our projects like IGNITION.

- Providing opportunities for knowledge exchange across subnational, city and local levels, and between all sectors of society;

The Mayor, Leaders and officers regularly speak at international and national level conferences and events on biodiversity and wider environmental issues.

- Sharing best practices across subnational, city and local levels, to efficiently implement transformative actions;

As above, representatives of Greater Manchester regularly speak at conferences and events to share the city-region's experience and best practice in tackling the biodiversity emergency.

- Delivering convergence with other intergovernmental agreements and processes, taking forward bold and innovative actions at the subnational, city and local level which result in mutually beneficial outcomes.

This declaration will form part of a wider set of actions and commitments at a Greater Manchester level, as part of delivery of the 5 Year Environment Plan.

Call for action:

We subnational governments, cities and local authorities therefore call upon Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to:

- I. Take strong and bold actions to bring about transformative change, as outlined in the IPBES global assessment report, in order to halt biodiversity loss.
- II. Recognise the vital role of subnational governments, cities and local authorities, in delivering the 2050 vision of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the 2030 mission as set out in the Zero Draft document; and to explicitly place that recognition throughout the framework text, including the monitoring framework for the goals and targets.
- III. Support the adoption at COP15, of a new dedicated Decision for the greater inclusion of subnational governments, cities and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; that builds upon and renews the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020) as endorsed under Decision X/22; and that significantly raises ambition

for subnational, city and local implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework throughout the next decade.

- IV. Establish a multi-stakeholder platform that ensures representation of subnational governments, cities and local authorities to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

We, subnational governments, cities and local authorities, stand ready to meet the challenge of delivering, alongside Parties, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to ensure investment, and play a stronger role in the implementation of the framework through a renewed and significantly stepped-up Plan of Action for subnational governments, cities and local authorities for the coming decade.

Annex 3 – Draft Declaration of a Greater Manchester Biodiversity Emergency

The GMCA resolves:

1. That the findings of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, produced by the Convention on Biological Diversity, be noted, in particular:
 - That biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate, and the pressures driving this decline are intensifying.
 - None of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will be fully met, in turn threatening the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and undermining efforts to address climate change.
 - The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature, and it reminds us all of the profound consequences to our own well-being and survival that can result from continued biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems.
 - Reports provided by the world's governments, as well as other sources of evidence, reveal examples of progress which, if scaled up, could support the transformative changes necessary to achieve the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

2. That the GMCA believes that:
 - The impacts of the continued decline in biodiversity are so severe that Governments at all levels must work together and make this a top priority.
 - As well as improvements in the innate value people place on biodiversity, tackling the decline in biodiversity can deliver wider benefits for the environment, economy and society and that embedding a Natural Capital Approach was essential to realising these.

2. That the GMCA declare a 'biodiversity emergency' alongside the climate emergency to support the delivery of the GM 5 Year Environment Plan.

3. That the existing Green City Region Board and Partnership Group, supported by the Natural Capital Group:

- Monitor progress of indicators of key species diversity and abundance in Greater Manchester.
 - Take a mission-based approach to reversing these declines as part of the 5 Year Environment and in line with work to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
 - Consider systematically the biodiversity impact of each area of the GMCA's activities.
 - Make recommendations and set an ambitious timescale for reducing these impacts in line with the tasks set out in the 5 Year Environment Plan.
 - Assess the feasibility of requiring all report risk and procurement assessments to include biodiversity or natural capital appraisals, including presenting alternative approaches which reduce the impact wherever possible.
 - Report to GMCA every six months on progress and actions required to take to address this emergency and how it will continue to work with GM Districts to implement a Mission Based Approach.
4. That it be agreed to task a director level officer with responsibility for tackling the biodiversity impact of the GMCA's activities.
 5. That it be agreed to equip staff, particularly those involved with buildings, energy and transport management and procurement of goods and service, with an awareness of the biodiversity and natural capital costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce these.
 6. That all organisations, businesses and citizens can play their part in tackling the biodiversity emergency.