

**Council 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 - Agenda Item 8**  
**Proposed Amendment**

Most people would agree that our wild places, and the wildlife that depends upon them, should be cherished and protected. But our wildlife continues to struggle. Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust have recently published a 'Hertfordshire State of Nature report' (Ref: 1) evidencing the need and the urgency to address these problems. This report should be seen not just as a story of changes to species and habitats, but of people's relationship with wildlife. Increasingly we are becoming disconnected from wildlife in our everyday lives. We must make more space – both physical and emotional – for wildlife if we want future generations to be able to enjoy the wildlife experiences that we treasure.

Whilst NHDC undertakes a number of current and planned activities such as:

1. Tree planting
2. A wilding audit
3. Limiting the use of any Herbicides or Pesticides to the absolute minimum used within the grounds maintenance contract
4. Selective cutting
5. Supporting local ecological groups
6. Supporting residents to wild the verge to the front of their properties.
7. Maintaining our commons and meadows in environmentally sustainable ways as per agreed Greenspace Action Plans, that also includes input from volunteers

There is currently no additional budgets identified within the Service and Financial Planning process to undertake a wider 'rewilding' strategy.

In consultation with Officers, fellow councillors and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust we are proposing the creation of a 3 year pilot programme to look at the creation of a rewilding scheme, to introduce 'nature highways' and / or 'bee and wildflower corridors' through North Hertfordshire.

This pilot will focus / look at particularly community engagement - getting schools, groups and other members of the community directly involved in the project. This approach from elsewhere has been shown as key to success for generating long-lasting momentum and building a strong sense of community ownership.

**We are therefore proposing the addition of £150k over three years to be added to the budget for this purpose. This funding will allow us, subject to agreement, to assign a dedicated person (part-time) to coordinate action, engage local communities and to manage the project and to undertake the purchase of the necessary materiel.**

Further, in partnership with Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust they have already undertaken an ecological networks map for the county, which shows where existing habitats are, and models where the priorities might be for linking them up. It can help give the strategic context for wildlife corridor projects.

Proposed: Cllr. Simon Harwood

Seconded: Cllr. David Levett