



<b>Committee</b>	Full Council
<b>Month</b>	January 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Emergency Plan
<b>Report Author</b>	Georgia Arnold Deputy Town Clerk
<b>Attachments</b>	Proposed Draft SWTC Emergency Plan

Agenda item: 11

## Summary

Changes have taken place on Government Guidance in the way Town Councils should demonstrate their regard to conserving biodiversity. The Society of Local Council Clerks states<sup>1</sup>:

*Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. Conserving biodiversity can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.*

*English public authorities including town and parish councils should be able to show their duty to have regard for conserving biodiversity if they have identified ways to integrate biodiversity when they:*

- *Develop policies and strategies and put them into practice.*
- *Manage the planning system.*
- *Manage:*
  - *their land and buildings*
  - *woodlands and nature reserves*
  - *gardens, parks and public open space*
  - *community amenities e.g. sports grounds and cemeteries*
  - *waste and pollution*
  - *energy and water*
  - *wood and plant products*
- *Develop infrastructure, such as roads, buildings or flood defences.*
- *Make decisions about procurement.*
- *Implement economic, environmental and social programmes.*

To that end this report sets out the requirements and timeline for SWTC to consider.

Local Councils are now required to prepare the following documents:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.slcc.co.uk/new-government-guidance-on-biodiversity/?fbclid=IwAR0p2rTSdQzuDFVvZugq5q26v9g5dQ6dWQq3ecLle6c8oZhEWaAzOQc8rdA#:~:text=English%20public%20authorities%20including%20town,Manage%20the%20planning%20system>

<b>Document Required</b>	<b>SWTC Officer Comment</b>
a) Emergency plans	Not prepared
b) Climate action plans	Prepared and adopted <sup>2</sup>
c) Neighbourhood plans	Prepared and adopted
Series of biodiversity documents	Not prepared
d) Managing or developing the built environment	
e) Managing or creating sources of renewable energy	
f) Managing sites for biodiversity	
g) Managing council operations including transport	

## **Situation**

The documents omitted (i.e., not adopted yet by SWTC) must therefore be prepared and adopted by SWTC to comply with the government changes.

## **Emergency Plan (a)**

Officers have prepared an emergency plan and this is attached for council to consider. To note the document has redacted identifiable information to comply with Data Protection Regulations.

## **Series of biodiversity documents (d-g)**

SWTC has not formalised an adopted policy on items d-g and this will be prepared and presented to council at a future meeting for consideration. It might be these are a separately adopted series of explanations and/or added to the existing climate action plan. It is anticipated these will be formulated and progressed as part of the Climate Change Working Group (scheduled to meet spring 2024).

## **Recommendation**

Council is recommended to:

- a) Consider and adopt the proposed emergency action plan and support the proposed actions required by council should an emergency arise. Noting the document will require regular review by officers and council to ensure it is up to date.
- b) Note the changes in government legislation, requiring the additional statements to be prepared by officers / Climate Change Working Group.

<sup>2</sup> <https://saffronwalden.gov.uk/documents/policies/> Re-adopted May 2023