

Appendix II

Climate and Ecological Emergency – Summary and Key Open Space Actions

Swale Declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019, recognising the need to protect local species alongside mitigating climate change. The Action Plan includes the objective: To improve development outcomes which support and improve people and places, access and recreation, connectivity and green spaces and the natural and built environment. Some reports recommend Swale should more than double our tree cover by 2030.

Ecology, biodiversity and green space are vital to both mitigating climate change and to helping us to adapt to the inevitable climate change due to historic carbon emissions. We rely on these assets for our quality of life, and provision of food and water. Protecting and enhancing these assets is vital. Green spaces and planting in urban areas promote good physical and mental health.

Relevant actions include:

- Tree planting on council land (target; 148,100 trees or 60 acres of woodland) to offset 20% of council emissions.
- Minimise use of fertilizers, pesticides and weed killers
- Encourage coppicing of council woodland to promote biodiversity and use of local woodland products in Swale's country parks.
- Engage business and community groups to support tree planting and conservation work in Swale's efforts to achieve action 1
- Support Swale in Bloom working with schools, community groups, voluntary groups and Town and Parish Councils to enhance local habitats and wildlife corridors improving biodiversity conditions across Swale

Although not related to biodiversity, the following action is also still relevant to open spaces:

- Ensure LED lighting is fitted across the council estate, including parks and open spaces.