

# Climate Change E&E Updates

Cllr John Gardner Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration

- **Biodiversity**
- **Trees**
- **Waste vehicles**
- **Recycling**
- **Planning Policy**
- **Regeneration**

# Biodiversity - background



Stevenage is just 2,598ha.

The total area of all green habitats within the Borough is 612.6 ha (23.57%).

Stevenage has 37 Local Wildlife Sites.

Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2022 focusses on the most important sites, ie those sites that:

- have greatest biodiversity value
- at risk of being lost if no work undertaken.

97 actions for delivery to woodlands, grasslands, aged hedgerows, wetlands and neighbourhood nature.

# Biodiversity Successes

- Partnership with Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Positive community engagement
- The only district / borough in Herts with own BAP
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Delivery of four new Community Orchards since 2020
- Additional Local Wildlife Sites as result of grassland management regime
- Demand for pollinator / wildlife friendly management practices
- Delivery through Green Space Volunteers
- Support external accreditation success



# Challenges

- No dedicated resource to deliver / capacity to deliver
- Good practice vs public perception
- Biodiversity Net Gain

# Trees



# Background

- Around 30,000 trees (not including woodlands)
- Around 50% of the town's present tree population is made up of Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*).
- Tree canopy cover in Stevenage, including woodlands, (in 2016) was 17%.
- Diminished tree stock levels.
- Even when planting a new tree to compensate for the felling of an older one, a significant loss is incurred.

# Benefits

<b>Environmental:</b>	<b>Health:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce the 'greenhouse' effect by taking up carbon dioxide from the air, using the carbon to build wood and releasing the oxygen.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most trees have a positive impact on the incidence of asthma, skin cancer and stress related illness.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In urban areas, trees help to moderate the local climate: providing shade from sun in summer, shelter from rain, and reducing wind speeds.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The urban tree-scape improves public health, promotes relaxation and emotional well-being, and can thereby help to reduce healthcare costs.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By providing food and shelter for wildlife trees can help increase biodiversity and bring nature into the heart of our towns.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Desk workers who can see nature from their desks experience 23% less time off sick and reported greater job satisfaction.</li></ul>
<b>Social:</b>	<b>Economic:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can reinforce local character, distinctiveness and identity of an area, and provide a 'sense of place'.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trees can increase property values by 7-15%</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involvement in tree planting and care can bring people together, building a stronger sense of ownership and develop civic pride.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can also help to provide an environment that is conducive to economic growth and in attracting investment.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tree lined streets can help to improve road safety by giving the impression of narrowing which encourages slower driving.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a positive perception of a place for potential property buyers</li></ul>

# Successes and Challenges

- Amenity Tree Management Policy
- Policy 21: All new developments will support new tree planting, either directly or through planning contributions, equivalent to a minimum 20% tree canopy cover at maturity.
- £30k funding bid to Urban Tree Challenge Fund
- Funding for replacement tree planting.
- Around 50% of the town's present tree population is Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*).
- Legacy of historical tree planting
- Conflicting demands





# Waste



- Alternate weekly collection service to 37,788 houses & flats
- Refuse and recycling collection delivered to 600+ Stevenage businesses
- Bulky waste and assessed collection services
- 16 bring bank sites
- Clinical waste collection service
- Own fleet of refuse vehicles
- New fleet – including Euro 6 engines



# Successes

- Stevenage Transfer Station included as part of the HCC disposal contract.
  - Saving over 83,000 miles p.a. being travelled
- 70% of all general waste to Energy from Waste
  - Generates enough to power 36,000 properties
- UK processing
  - Glass to Re-Melt
  - Fibre to Mill
  - Plastics via MRF to re-processing
- Volumes increased during pandemic though all services maintained
- Waste Policy agreed in 2020

# Alternatives

- Fleet replacement programme
  - Next large scale replacement due 25/26
  - Demo's of smaller electric vehicles
  - Electric hand tools in use
- Considerations of alternate fuels for example Gas to Liquid
- Is the technology ready? Are we ready?
- £420k for equivalent refuse vehicle that costs £180k
- £62k for caged tipper versus current £23k
- Infrastructure requirements

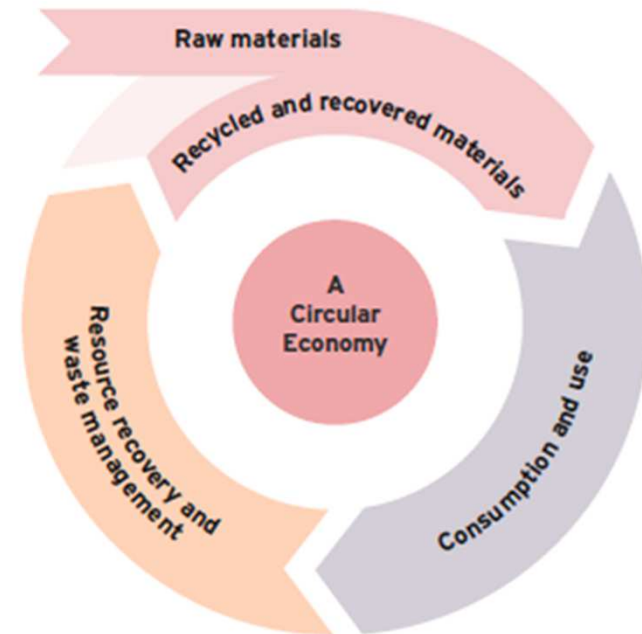
# Challenges / Opportunities

- Communal bin storage facilities to flat blocks
  - Recycling offering
  - Contamination
- Resources & Waste Strategy
  - Expected January 2022
  - Biggest change to the industry since the introduction of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

# Resources & Waste Strategy

## Consistency

- Proposals for collecting a core set of dry materials for recycling from households (including flats). All householders can expect the same materials to be collected for recycling
- Proposals for separate weekly food waste collections from households (including flats) from 2023 /24 supported by new burdens
- Free fortnightly garden waste collections
- Proposals on improving quality by source separating dry recycling materials in collections, especially paper and glass



# Resources & Waste Strategy

## Deposit Return Scheme

- DRS would see a deposit added to the price of drinks in in-scope drinks containers at the point of purchase, which would be redeemed when consumers return their empty drinks containers to designated return points.

## Extended Producer Responsibility

- Proposes that funding to meet the costs of managing packaging wastes are transferred from central government and local taxpayers to businesses.
- 'Polluter pays' principle and extend producer responsibility for packaging, ensuring that producers pay the full costs of disposal for packaging they place on the market

# Resources & Waste Strategy

## What does this mean for SBC?

- Introduction of separate food waste collections
- Dedicated resource in place to manage programme for delivery
- Implementation i.e. planning, recruitment, communications
- Cost – vehicles, labour, caddies
- Tipping / Processing (HCC)
- Responsibility for materials, Alternative Financial Model (AFM) ?
- Change to collection methods?
- Opportunity for an increased recycling rate

# Planning

- A Planning consideration for all major applications
- Station Gateway Area Action Plan – zero carbon developments?
- Biodiversity Supplement Planning Documents (SPD) Net Gain £££
- EV, Sustainable Transport SPD – approach
- Sustainable new neighbourhood, connected to town centre. New town principles.
- Revising sustainability policies in new 2023



# Regeneration

- Zero carbon partners- MACE
- Zero gas SG1
- New low carbon Hub
- Local suppliers
- Investment in improving existing buildings in the town centre, North Block , North of Queensway