



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

CCU 7th Floor
Nobel House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T 08459 335577
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Cllr Howard Sykes
5 Ballard Way
Shaw
Oldham
OL1 1UL

Our ref: DWO345276

24 April 2014

Dear Cllr Sykes,

National Pollinator Strategy

Thank you for your letter of 15 April about the National Pollinator Strategy. I have been asked to reply.

England's National Pollinator Strategy is a ten year plan in which the Government is setting a new direction for our pollinators and helping to build a solid foundation for them. It builds on existing policies on conservation and habitat management, and on the environmental management of farmland. Bees and other pollinators are vital for the environment and our food production. We want to make sure they survive and thrive, and recognise that they face many pressures (e.g. intensification of land use, pesticides, pests and diseases).

One of the Strategy's key outcomes/successes will be to enhance and expand suitable habitats for pollinators. The Strategy will encourage all types of land managers in towns, cities and the countryside to take action on habitats, based on the 'Call to Action' message (Bees' Needs: food and a home). Changing land use management to take into account pollinators' needs will be a marathon, not a sprint. Putting back at least some of the habitats for pollinators that we've lost to industrial and retail use, homes and farming over the last 50 or more years cannot be achieved overnight. The Strategy offers a new opportunity to renew our efforts for pollinators, building on existing policies.

Our starting point to guide and inform development of the Strategy is the evidence base on pollinators, which is patchy and incomplete. We have some understanding of occurrence, geographical distribution and threatened species. However, evidence on abundance and related trends, and the role of pollinators in crop and wild flower pollination, is poor. Similarly, the evidence is patchy on the impacts of the various known pressures on pollinators and the ways in which they interact.

An important part of the Strategy, therefore, is to address the gaps in our understanding and in particular to improve current monitoring programmes, many of which rely on volunteer-based recording schemes. The Strategy includes twelve evidence-gathering actions. We want to develop a better and coordinated view of the status of pollinators and the extent to which they may be at risk.



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

In the meantime, recognising the importance of pollinators and on a precautionary basis, the Strategy sets out 18 priority actions. These are in partnership with others, to get the best outcome for pollinators, supported by available evidence. There is not one single solution to help them thrive, hence the Strategy covers many initiatives which, collectively, will help. The actions cover:

- A shared and unified simple message and evidence-based advice for all land users;
- Management of farmland, including integrated pest management;
- Management of towns, cities, public land, transport's green estate and gardens;
- Responding to pest and disease risks; and
- Sharing knowledge and engaging the public.

Many of the 18 priority actions build on or expand current initiatives being taken by the Government and others with a greater focus on pollinators' essential needs for survival (i.e. food, shelter and nest sites). We have worked closely with stakeholders to develop the Strategy; it is a shared plan between the Government and these interested groups and we look forward to working closely with them on implementation.

We are working in collaboration with Friends of the Earth and for your views to be recorded we would encourage you to formally respond to the consultation using the following link <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/plant-and-bee-health-policy/a-consultation-on-the-national-pollinator-strategy>.

Yours sincerely,



Leah Pritchard
Defra - Customer Contact Unit



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE