



Information Governance

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Date: 15 April 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: FOI316171870

Thank you for your request for information relating to definition of rewilding.

Your request and our responses are shown below:

1. How does the Council define rewilding?

Coventry City Council has not agreed a definition of 'rewilding.' There is no universally accepted definition of the term and it is recognised that there is confusion regarding how the term is used, particularly the concepts of rewilding and restoration.

The preferred definition on rewilding for Coventry would be similar to the following;

“the reorganisation of biota and ecosystem processes to set an identified social–ecological system on a preferred trajectory, leading to the self sustaining provision of ecosystem services with minimal ongoing management,” Pettoirelli, N, Barlow, J, Stephens, PA, et al. Making rewilding fit for policy. J Appl Ecol. 2018; 55: 1114– 1125 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13082>

This definition includes an approach which focuses on promoting minimal management of

biodiversity sites and encouraging public access and other uses but does not include the geographically large-scale projects or re-introduction of larger predators and herbivores which is impracticable for Coventry

2. Do you have any current or planned policies/initiatives on rewilding? If yes, can you provide details of these?

There are a number of planned projects which can be considered as rewilding and further projects which are in earlier stages. The projects include considerable new woodland creation and establishment of wildflower grasslands which will be a major contribution to green infrastructure within the city. There are also projects to enhance and improve existing woodland and grassland, but these should be considered restoration rather than rewilding and are excluded below.

Rewilding examples include:

- Elm Farm – on the northern border of the city this is currently agricultural (improved pasture heavily sheep-grazed). The site will be feature new woodlands and wildflower meadows with a network of accessible paths and other resources.
- Tiny forests – The biodiversity and other benefits of Tiny Forests is well-established, and they are being successfully created in other parts of the UK. They are ideal in urban environments and potential sites are being identified within Coventry.
- Ruderal habitats – The number of post-industrial sites in Coventry is rapidly diminishing and where appropriate new areas are being deliberately created. These will be cleared of vegetation and allowed to colonise naturally providing benefit for invertebrates and other wildlife. The first area will be in Hawkesbury adjacent to the canal.

The Council has areas of land outside the authority boundary; Warwickshire Wildlife Trust is developing proposals for larger-scale projects to enhance biodiversity on these areas. Details are not yet available but are likely to involve significant new areas of woodland and wetland habitats on sites that are currently agricultural and improved grassland. Any future project will require a partnership between local authorities, the Wildlife Trust and local communities.

3. Have you set aside any budget or funding for rewilding?

Rewilding and biodiversity enhancement projects will be funded from a number of sources. The main source is likely to be biodiversity offset contributions which are allocated to appropriate projects such as Elm Farm above. The funding will provide for establishment costs and the long-term management and ecological monitoring of sites. The finance from biodiversity offsetting is currently £2.5 million which will fund projects over a number of years. The amount specifically dedicated to rewilding is still subject to further planning.

The City Council will make a significant additional financial contribution owned to biodiversity enhancement and rewilding through dedicating council owned land for new wildlife habitats. Elm Farm is the first example but sites in all parts of the city have been identified as potential biodiversity/rewilding sites. These are in addition to the existing Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites which are part of the Council Estate.

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If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

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