



Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Presentation to CES Scrutiny Panel

Background

Nature has been collapsing at an alarming rate:

1970-2018



Wild Vertebrates
60% Decline



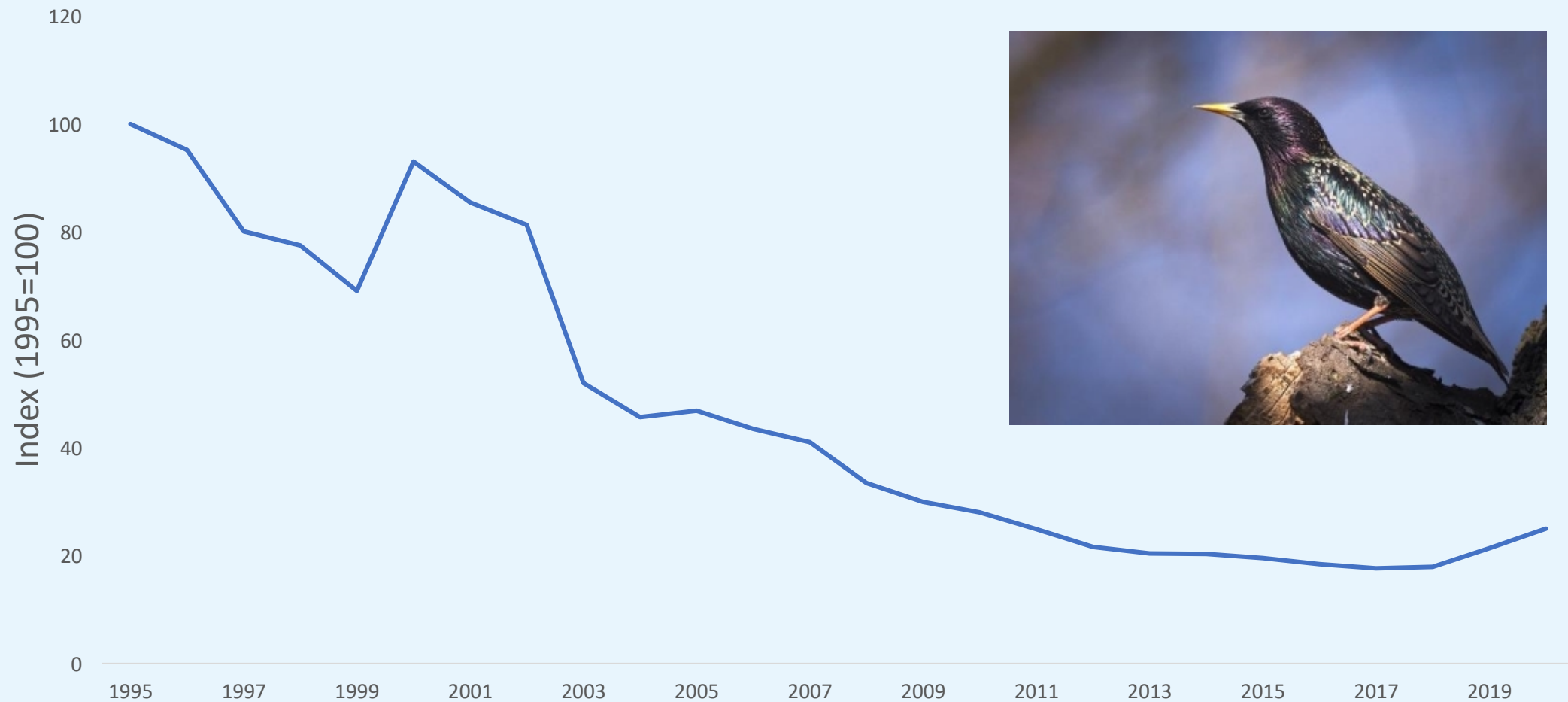
Insects
>70% Decline



Freshwater wildlife
83% Decline

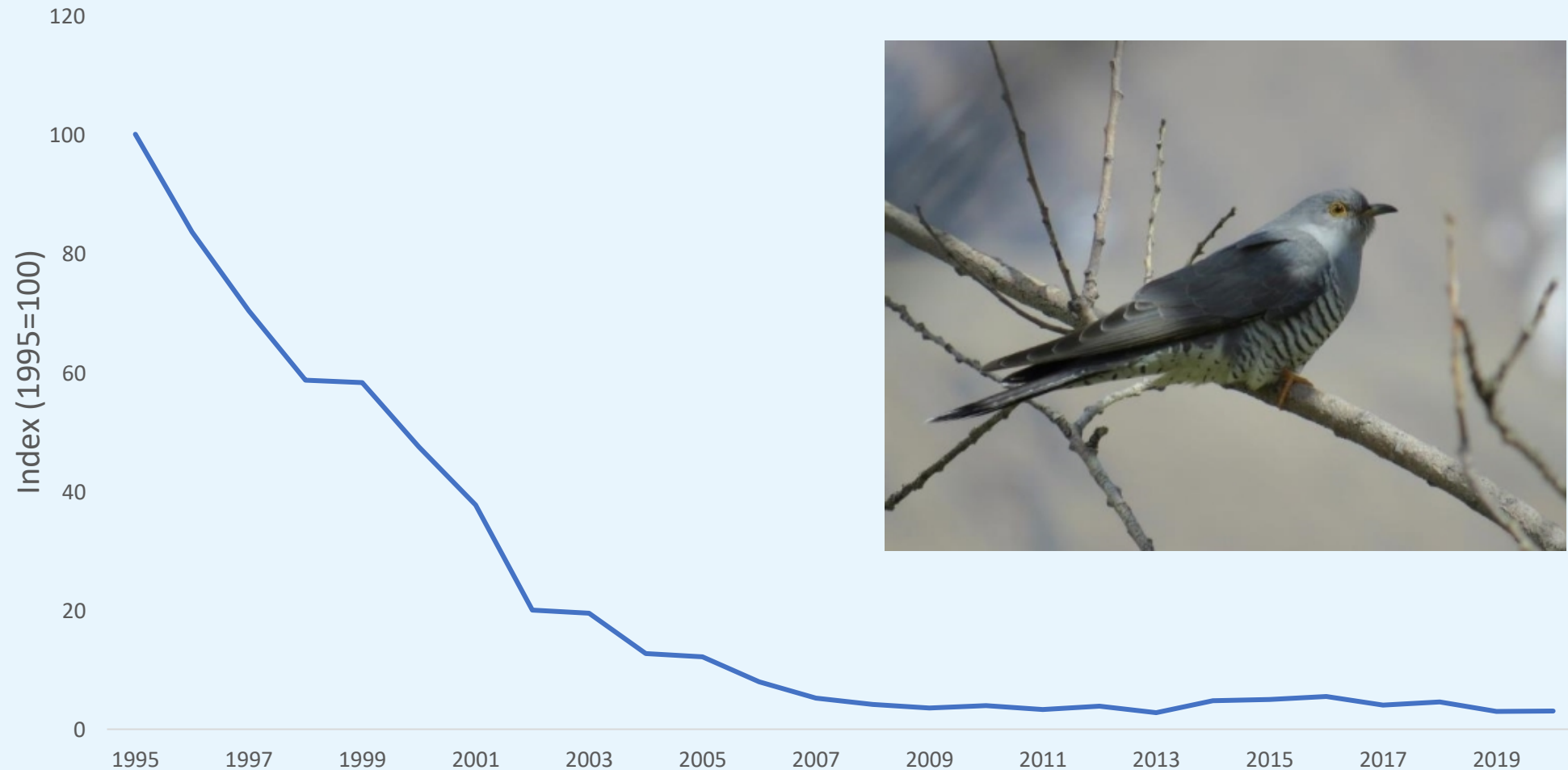
Background

Relative abundance of Starling in the WoE, 1995-2020



Background

Relative abundance of cuckoo in the WoE, 1995-2020



Background

Our use of land and resources has placed **unsustainable pressure on nature**, threatening the stability of ecosystems globally and locally.

- Changes in land use and habitat loss
 - 70% of the UK's land is farmed
- Pesticide use and pollution
- Climate Change
- Non-native species
- Freshwater management



Why does it matter?

Impacts of Wildlife Loss



Ecosystem services provided by insects and other invertebrates



APPROXIMATELY

3/4

OF THE CROP TYPES GROWN BY HUMANS REQUIRE POLLINATION BY INSECTS

a service estimated to be worth between \$235 and \$577 billion per year worldwide

Opportunities



Carbon sequestration ✓



Health and Wellbeing ✓



Food security ✓



Green Jobs ✓



Reduced flood risk ✓



Improved water quality ✓

The need for an Action Plan

- In July 2020, B&NES Council declared an ecological emergency, recognising the severity of the degradation of the natural environment and loss of wildlife, and the urgency of action needed to restore nature
- Following an early review of council services in terms of the Ecological Emergency declaration, the council has established a new service area and Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure Team, with additional resources, to support the council in its response to the Ecological Emergency
- During Spring 2021 a preliminary stakeholder workshop was held to explore a vision and initial priorities or themes for an Ecological Emergency response and action plan
- The priority is now to produce a responsive and dynamic Action Plan to help focus and structure the Council's on-going work to address the Ecological Emergency
- This will also demonstrate leadership and a commitment to action, setting a positive example for communities, residents and partner organisations

What will the Action Plan be?

It will:

- Be targeted at those services and functions where the Council is uniquely placed to help address the Ecological Emergency
- Be focused on the most important and impactful actions that we can take, recognising limited resources
- Be based on our best available evidence
- Have SMART actions that we can review progress towards
- **Be collaborative, with input from across the Council and from other stakeholders**

It will not:

- Be all-encompassing – being targeted & focused means it can't include everything we could possibly do
- Be final – other actions will be identified in the future, and the Plan should be updated
- Set out Actions for other partners/stakeholders – it is a Council Action Plan
- Be perfect – ecosystems are complex and we need to have the humility and courage to change course if needed

Nature Positive by 2030



Increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature across B&NES



Increase the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES



Enable more people to access and engage with nature

Theme 1: Mainstreaming nature recovery in leadership and decision-making

- Embed nature within decision-making across the Council, including the Local Plan
- B&NES must lead by example and better communicate this

Theme 2: Increasing the extent of land and water managed positively for nature

- Review & improve management of existing landholdings, verges, hedges etc.
- Make sure the most important sites for nature are in a favourable state
- Continue delivery through existing Strategic GI Projects: act at scale

Theme 3: Increasing investment into nature-based solutions

- Direct investment into priority areas for nature recovery
- Work with and utilise developing mechanisms for investment
- Utilise Biodiversity Net Gain as a mechanism to fund nature recovery

Theme 4: Enabling more people to access and engage with nature

- Enable and empower community groups and residents to take action
- Incorporate role of nature in public health and expand Green Social Prescribing

Theme 5: Improving our evidence base and monitoring

- Agree an ecological baseline to measure from & produce State of Nature Report
- Put in place a monitoring framework for measuring progress
- Conduct Natural Capital mapping of estate to inform decision-making

Theme 6: Working in partnership and with communities

- Work with landholders and farmers and facilitate them contributing towards nature recovery
- Importance of continuing existing partnership working (e.g. WENP & BACP)

Proposed Structure

1. Introduction
 - What is the ecological emergency, what are the causes, why should we care, what is the Action Plan?
2. Our Vision and Aims
3. State of Nature in B&NES
4. Some of our work so far
5. Action Plan
6. Appendices as required

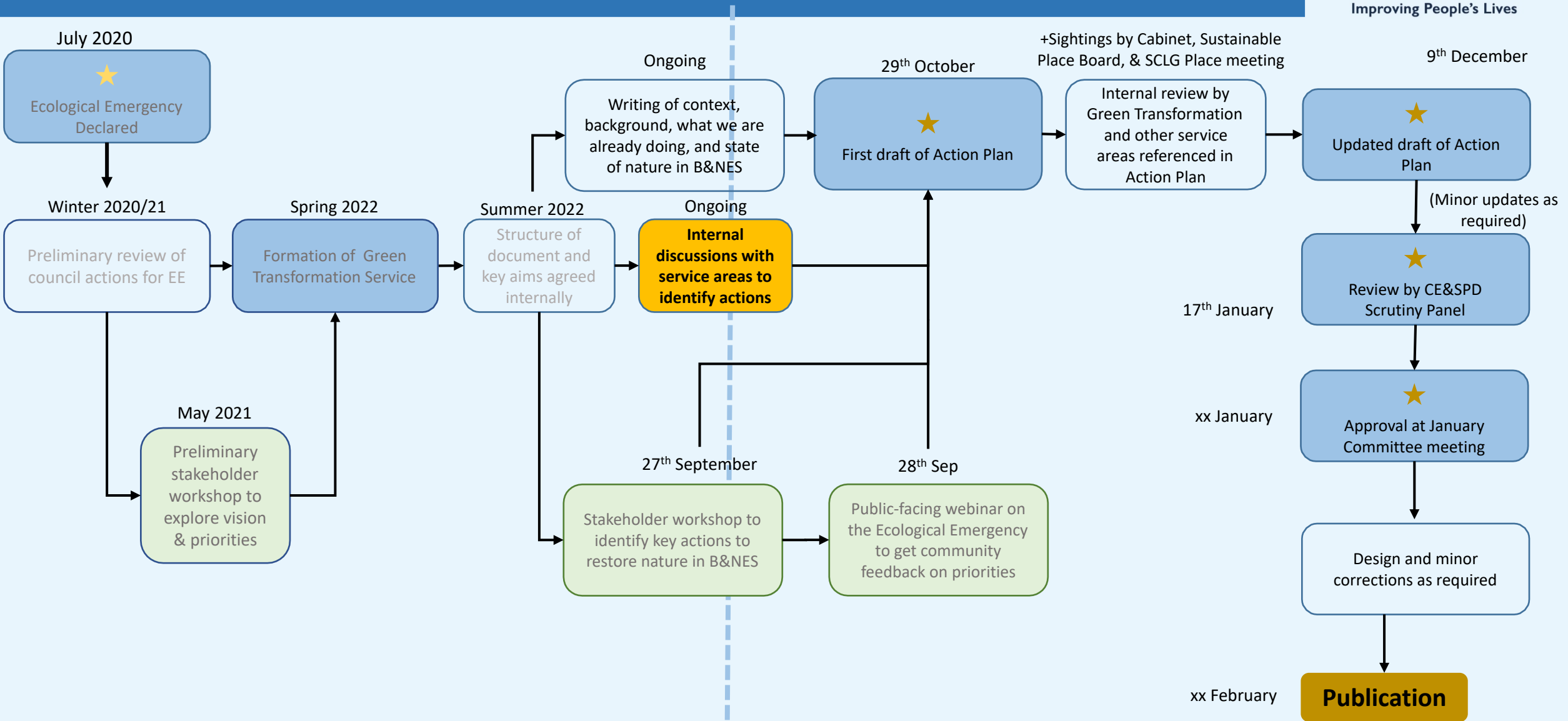
Action Plan Examples

Theme	Action no.	Description	Action Owner	Timeline
Leadership and DM	1.1	Produce and deliver an ecological emergency literacy training programme for all decision makers	Nature Recovery & GI	2023
Leadership and DM	1.2	Produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for maximising biodiversity gain in solar developments	Planning	2024
Land management	2.1	Produce a clear timeline for reducing pesticide use across land owned by B&NES Council	Parks & Green Spaces	2023
Land management	2.2	Set out a Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan for the years 2023-26, building on the delivery of 100,000 trees by 2023.	Nature Recovery & GI	
Nature-based solutions	3.1	Work with water companies on encouraging investment in natural solutions to improving water quality through the WINEP Process	Nature Recovery & GI	2022-2030
Access & engagement	4.1	Produce and disseminate a template for Local Nature Action Plans that parish and town councils can use to organise local action to restore nature	Nature Recovery & GI	2023
Access & engagement	4.2	Continue to empower residents and communities to manage land positively for wildlife through Neighbourhood Nature Areas	Parks & Green Spaces	2023-2030
Evidence & monitoring	5.1	Agree an 'ecological baseline' from which to measure nature's recovery and produce a 'State of the Environment' report for B&NES	Nature Recovery & GI	2023
Evidence & monitoring	5.2	Continue to monitor change in tree canopy cover across B&NES using Aerial Photography for Great Britain (APGB), updating the figure every three years based on a baseline of 16.54% in 2020	Nature Recovery & GI	2023-2030
Working in partnership	6.1	Continue to contribute towards the West of England Nature Partnership and Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership to facilitate partnership working across the region	Nature Recovery & GI	2023-2030



Note that these example actions are only intended to give an indication of what the Action Plan will look like; the content has not been agreed

Timeline



Plans for engagement

- Nature Recovery Manager and Principal Ecologist will lead engagement with other service areas and within Green Transformation team
- External stakeholder workshop held on 27th September
- Public-facing webinar held during Climate & Biodiversity Festival
- Further comments on Action Plan through West of England Nature Partnership?
- Sightings by Cabinet, Sustainable Place Board, & Place Group

Questions and discussion