

Derbyshire County Council First Biodiversity Report

Fulfilling the reporting requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and covering the period 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2025

Published March 2026

Introduction and context

Background - UK Government policy and commitments

Biodiversity has declined at an alarming rate and, to reverse this trend, the UK Government's Environment Act 2021 set out both national targets and the legal responsibilities of local authorities to "conserve and enhance biodiversity". By 2030, the UK Government has committed to Halt the decline in species abundance and protect 30% of UK land.

In December 2025 the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP25) restated the UK's plans to significantly improve the natural environment through actions relating to restored nature, environmental quality, circular economy, environmental security and access to nature.

The Environment Act 2021 sets out the biodiversity duty obligations of local authorities (www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty). In line with this, Derbyshire County Council ("the Council") produced an internal "First Consideration Report" in January 2024, covering the period to the end of December 2023.

Building on the First Consideration Report, this new report has been produced to fulfil the Council's requirement to publish a review of achievements up to the end of December 2025 and its plans for the next five years up to 2030.

As a public authority, the Council must:

1. Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on this consideration.
3. Act to deliver these policies and achieve the objectives.

In addition, as the Council is a Local Planning Authority for transport, minerals, and waste as well as applications relating to schools, this report includes summary considerations on its Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations in these areas.

Summary of First Consideration Report (December 2023)

As the Council's Biodiversity Duty covers all service areas and functions that currently or could act to conserve and enhance biodiversity, the First Consideration Report followed a structured process to identify relevant:

- service areas and functions
- strategies, policies, plans and action plans (including those in development)
- primary biodiversity data already collated by the Council.

The relevant service areas and functions identified include those involved in:

- **Statutory functions** – Schools, social services (children's and adults), highways, public transportation, waste disposal, trading standards and some planning matters.
- **Developing relevant environmental strategies** – local nature recovery, species conservation, protected sites, environmental protection, etc.

- **Reviewing of internal policies and processes relevant to the environment** to include biodiversity duty.
- **Delivery of actions** that impact the environment, natural capital, impact assessments (environmental, habitat etc), planning and biodiversity net gain.
- **Managing and maintaining Council owned land** that could or does improve biodiversity (including green spaces, woodland, agriculture land, protected sites, highways, verges)
- **Disposal, management improvement and development** of Council owned buildings, schools and playing fields.
- **Educating, advising, and raising awareness** internally and externally.

The First Consideration report acted as an internal ‘stocktake’, made recommendations for actions the Council could take and provided the basis for this report.

Process for completing this report

Following a presentation on the requirements for and scope of the report to the Council’s Corporate Management Team, structured discussions have taken place with relevant Council service areas to review progress since the First Consideration Report and capture planned actions for the five years to 2030. Before publication this report was presented to senior management and Cabinet to secure approvals and ensure that senior leadership is committed to the actions identified.

In line with Government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-your-biodiversity-duty-actions> updated 17 September 2025) the report contains the required information requested¹ and is structured as follows:

Section 1: Policies and objectives set to meet Biodiversity Duty and actions that benefit biodiversity. This includes information about:

- future actions²; and
- how other external biodiversity strategies will be considered.

Section 2: Biodiversity Net Gain information relating to Local Planning Authority activities

Section 3: Information about the Council (optional)

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The period of this report (up to the end of 2030) coincides with the Government’s LGR process which will establish single-tier unitary councils, replacing the existing two-tier structure in Derbyshire where services and functions are split between county and district/borough councils and the unitary City council. This process is intended to reduce fragmentation and duplication of services and will create a smaller number of local authorities in Derbyshire and the city of Derby.

Currently each of the ten local authorities are preparing separate Biodiversity Duty reports relating to their own responsibilities. In 2030 the newly created unitary councils will have this responsibility.

Over this period some of the Council’s current functions and duties regarding biodiversity are also likely to be transferred to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA).

¹ Some the optional information in the guidance (top achievements, how policies and actions have helped, awareness-raising and community engagement, highlights and challenges) is also included in these three sections.

² Following the option in the guidance to include future actions, “alongside the actions you’ve achieved”, rather than as a separate section.

1 Policies, objectives and actions

The Council has embedded environmental considerations into its approach to delivering services and functions in line with its increased biodiversity duties. Over the years this has included the following 'landmark' activities and initiatives:

- Since the 1970s the Council's influence on the reclamation and regeneration of the county's redundant coal pits and railways, especially in the north of the county, has provided a legacy of its contribution to enhancing biodiversity. The Council is currently responsible for the management of 114 Countryside Sites, many of which date from this time. Many miles of former railway have been redeveloped as active travel routes, which also act as wildlife corridors and linear habitats.
- The Council maintains 26 closed landfill sites, the majority of which have been planted with native tree species which have been maintained over the last 25 years.
- Creation of the Markham Vale regeneration project (since the late 1990s) has provided the opportunity to conserve and enhance biodiversity at a former colliery site alongside development of employment opportunities.
- Since 2009 the Council has reduced energy use and pollution from vehicle fuel use. As airborne pollution has a demonstrable impact on biodiversity these measures continue to be important.
- In partnership with district and borough councils the Council developed "The Landscape Character of Derbyshire" (fourth edition 2014) which provides written descriptions for the landscape character types of Derbyshire, supported by photographs and tables.
- In 2021 the Council commissioned a major study into the natural capital of Derbyshire, to understand the real value of the environment to the people of Derbyshire. This study quantified the benefits of ecosystem services in Derbyshire, for example in providing food, drinking water, stone and timber, purifying air and water, regulating flooding, and providing opportunities for enjoyment of the outdoors. This extensive piece of work valued the contribution of these services at £2.6 billion per year and has been fundamental in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other biodiversity work.
- In 2022 the Council produced guidance for district and borough councils on a variety of environmental and biodiversity topics outlining how the planning system could be used to safeguard landscapes, restore habitats for wildlife, combat biodiversity loss and promote biodiversity gain.
- The Council led the development of Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which was launched in September 2025, outlined further in Section 1.2.

Sections 1.1 to 1.3 outline the policies and objectives that help to meet the Council's Biodiversity Duty, together with actions that deliver the Council's requirement to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

1.1 Policies and objectives

Table 1 indicates the policies, objectives and strategies that encapsulate the Council's Biodiversity Duty. Some of these have been specifically revised or updated during 2024-25 to incorporate reference to the Council's enhanced Biodiversity Duty and the recently adopted Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire.

Table 1: Strategies, policies and objectives relating to the Council’s Biodiversity Duty

Strategies, Policies and objectives	Content	Comment
Environmental Sustainability Policy (2025)	Outlines the Council’s approach to environmental sustainability, including conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.	This is the Council’s primary environmental policy from which other strategies and approaches are developed. A revised policy was approved in November 2025 by the Cabinet Member for Net Zero and Environment to include biodiversity conservation and enhancement as a Council priority, in line with Biodiversity Duty.
Environmental Sustainability Strategy	Sets out the strategic priorities, objectives and themes to deliver environmental benefits, including biodiversity conservation and enhancement	This strategy is currently being developed to replace the Council’s current Climate Change Strategy 2021-25 and will include the duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity as a Council priority, in line with the Policy referenced above. The new strategy is due for approval and publication in 2026-27.
Council Plan 2025-29	Highlights the Council’s key priorities for the next four years.	The plan has three key outcomes, the second of which is, “Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all”. This includes the following Strategic Objective: “Leading the stewardship of the natural and built environment and delivering national policy and regulatory requirements relating to waste, nature recovery and heritage.”
Place Service Plan and Place Implementation Plan 2025-29	Details the actions underpinning the Council Plan’s strategic objectives	These two plans include success measures relating to compliance with the Environment Act 2021, effective collaboration to deliver LNRS outcomes, and an effective contribution to nature recovery.
Derbyshire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Provides a blueprint for nature recovery across Derbyshire and helps to prioritise where and how to invest and take action.	Derbyshire County Council was the Responsible Authority for preparing a LNRS for Derbyshire, including the city of Derby, funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The LNRS was formally approved and launched in September 2025 – see Section 1.2.
Tree and Woodland Strategy Phase 1 (Sept 2023)	Sets out a framework to create a network of thriving woodlands and trees that complement Derbyshire’s landscapes.	This strategy set a vision for increasing woodland across Derbyshire in line with the Government’s Environmental Improvement Plan. It included thematic areas around championing trees, managing trees and woodlands, directing and financing tree planting and woodland creation and building nature-connected partnerships. The strategy is currently being updated (Phase 2) to cover the next five years and to incorporate priority measures from the LNRS.
Corporate risk register	Sets out the main strategic risks for the Council, which is monitored and managed corporately	The Corporate Risk Register includes “Failure to adapt to extreme, adverse and more variable weather” including the potential impacts on habitats and biodiversity. This is supported by a series of sub-risks that are managed at a departmental level.

Strategies, Policies and objectives	Content	Comment
Countryside Service Business Plan 2026-28	Sets out specific priorities that relate to a green and prosperous Derbyshire including management of Countryside Sites.	<p>This Plan is being updated following a review in 2025. One of the four themes is “Protecting and enhancing biodiversity”, which includes management of sites in accordance with guidelines derived from the LNRS. This will be an area of work for the next five years.</p> <p>The plan prioritises several strands of work to conserve and enhance biodiversity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of countryside sites to improve biodiversity, create natural capital & contribute to wider environmental sustainability. • Supporting and facilitating people of all ages to train, retrain or upskill to go into green careers. • A focus on gaining external funding to support the improvement of the natural environment.
Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) Management Plan 2025 onwards	Aims to ensure that the preservation, enhancement and promotion of the World Heritage Site is sensitively and appropriately managed.	The Council hosts the DVMWHS Coordination Team and is a founding partner. Actions in the management plan include promoting the appropriate stewardship of the natural environment within the buffer zone, promoting the migration of water-bound species up the River Derwent and supporting upstream natural flood mitigation measures. The management plan is aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including goal 15, “Life on Land”.
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy	Outlines how the Council uses sound Asset Management of highway infrastructure to meet strategic objectives	<p>The policy was updated in April 2025. Among the framework of policies this includes meeting biodiversity expectations.</p> <p>Within the asset management system there is a specific plan for highway trees and a policy for highway verges (next two rows).</p>
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan for Highway Trees	Provides the technical details governing the management of highway trees	This plan was updated in February 2025. It outlines the benefits of highway trees (including for biodiversity) and notes the threats to highway trees which may cause them to deteriorate. There are guidelines for planting of new trees, including a consideration of landscape character and the principle of “right tree, right place”.
Highway Verge Maintenance Policy	Explains how the Council intend to approach biodiversity management of the roadside verges.	This policy was adopted in April 2025 following research with district and borough councils. It allows officers to use their judgement and practical knowledge to develop more biodiverse road verges which also meet highway safety requirements. It uses the Lawton Principles and guidance from the charity Plant Life to provide practical recommendations for officers, FAQs and standard forms.

Strategies, Policies and objectives	Content	Comment
Derbyshire and Derby Minerals Plan (in formal Examination)	Sets out strategic priorities and policies for minerals development and, where necessary identifies specific sites for mineral working	<p>A joint Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council Local Plan to deliver sustainable minerals development.</p> <p>Following consultation, the plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in November 2024 and is currently in the Examination stage. Once the Plan is approved it will play a key role in both conserving and enhancing biodiversity in Derbyshire.</p> <p>The new plan will run to 2038. It covers the geographical county of Derbyshire, excluding that part which lies within the Peak District National Park.</p> <p>Objective 6 is “Protecting, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, and Built and Historic Environment”. The plan also includes a set of non-strategic development management policies on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows, the historic environment and the protection and conservation of soil resources and green and blue infrastructure.</p>
Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	Sets out the Council’s actions to help manage flood risk in Derbyshire. It also gives the role of partners (such as district and borough councils, water companies, parish and town councils).	<p>The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Part 2 Objectives & Actions (as updated in 2023) has two Objectives relating to biodiversity:</p> <p>Local Objective 5: “Work to restore, protect and enhance the historic and natural environments of Derbyshire” includes three relevant actions.</p> <p>Local Objective 2: “To work with all relevant bodies to ensure development in Derbyshire delivers Sustainable Drainage with multiple benefits” includes actions relating to biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery.</p>
Property Asset Management Strategy	Defines a process for management of Council land and assets to ensure that the right decisions are made regarding their future use, management, development or disposal.	<p>The strategy is currently in the process of being updated (to be adopted in February 2026) and the Council’s Biodiversity Duty has been highlighted for incorporation during the review.</p> <p>Biodiversity considerations are included in all Asset Management Plans developed for each asset (as discussed in Section 1.3).</p>
Contract for management of Council land by Vertas Derbyshire Ltd (VDL)	Defines terms for grounds maintenance of hundreds of Council sites, including some schools and countryside areas by VDL, a subsidiary of the Council.	<p>Although the main focus of this contract is amenity maintenance (e.g. for aesthetics, safety, and access) VDL has provided a biodiversity contribution report. This includes the desire to participate in initiatives like No-Mow May where appropriate and organising work schedules to minimise wildlife disturbance. VDL also has a range of sustainable practices, for example using battery-powered equipment. It is hoped that these achievements can be built on in the following years.</p>

1.2 LNRS development

The Council was pleased to take the role of Responsible Authority for the development of the Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (including both Derbyshire and the city of Derby). This was a facilitative and coordinating role to create a new partnership of organisations to inform and contribute towards its development.

This process involved significant engagement and consultation, including public surveys, stakeholder engagement events, technical group workshops and targeted work with farmers, landowners and land managers.

The Council facilitated effective collaboration to produce a cohesive and deliverable strategy, and the partnerships and connections formed have been equally valuable. The data gathered and the joint accountability created provide a strong foundation for delivery of the LNRS over the next few years, leading to an anticipated review of progress around 2030.

The LNRS was approved by Cabinet in September 2025 and is now a live document on the [Derbyshire LNRS website](#), complete with mapping of nature recovery priorities and measures.

One significant achievement associated with the development of the LNRS has been raising the profile of biodiversity conservation and enhancement within the Council, particularly with Elected Members and senior managers who were proud to endorse and approve the LNRS. The response from the public has also been positive and provides a strong platform to move forward.

Now that the LNRS has been published the onus shifts to delivery. In part this will include facilitating and enabling partners to deliver actions that have been identified. Initial steps include working with key stakeholders to reprofile the governance from preparation to delivery of the strategy. This will be supported by a dedicated LNRS Coordinator, funded through the grant received from Defra for LNRS delivery.

The second strand of work relating to the LNRS is to embed relevant responsibilities and actions with key teams within the Council. This is a significant piece of work and requires a mapping exercise to identify which elements of the LNRS relate to each area of delivery.

The future ownership of the LNRS is still to be determined through the process of Local Government Reorganisation. For example, responsibility for LNRS may move to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) as the Strategic Authority. Timescales are unclear and will depend on the timescale Defra sets for review of LNRS progress.

1.3 Actions

Table 2 outlines the actions the Council has taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity and, where relevant, how the Council plans to fulfil its Biodiversity Duty over the five-year period from January 2026 to December 2030, both independently and in partnership.

Table 2: Past and future biodiversity actions delivering the Council’s Biodiversity Duty

Biodiversity actions	Achievements to date	Actions to 2030
<p>Management of Countryside Services sites</p>	<p>The management and maintenance of countryside sites includes many actions related to improving biodiversity, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass management enhancement plans (cut and collect meadows to reduce nutrient levels, trailside cuts, and specialist contractor work) including more detailed management on wildflower meadows • Implementing “No Mow May” at all relevant public grassland sites • Adjusting hedgerow cuts so they are later and less frequent, to encourage fruiting for birds and other wildlife. • Environmental education and awareness training delivered by rangers who collaborate with volunteers to improve the sites and their biodiversity • Use of sites for Forest Schools and other activities. • Use of sites by local agricultural colleges for practical conservation management training. • Tree planting for Community Forest development. • Practices such as ‘no pesticide and herbicide’ use (except for non-native invasive species, where direct injection is used) and peat-free materials. 	<p>A key action is to continue to document and improve the management plans and contract management documentation for all sites.</p> <p>Further improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping LNRS priorities and measures to sites so that all sites contribute to LNRS delivery • Considering extending the No Mow period into June (“Let it bloom June”)* <p>* this will need to be carefully considered site-by-site to ensure that it meets health and safety and resourcing requirements. It will not be possible at all sites.</p> <p>Other projects may be possible if external funding such as Countryside Stewardship or Natural England grants becomes available and is secured.</p>

Biodiversity actions	Achievements to date	Actions to 2030
Management of Countryside sites with specific designations	<p>Among Countryside Service sites, some have specific designations which influences their management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two SSSIs – Cromford Canal & Breadsall Cutting – these are biodiversity monitored sites & audited by Natural England. One geological SSSI - Carlton Hill • Five reservoirs that have specific legislative obligations • The Cromford and Chesterfield canals, which have “Navigation Authority” obligations • Six sites designated as local nature reserves. 	Continue to improve management plans for these sites as outlined above.
Delivery and management of greenways and other active travel routes	<p>Many of the Council’s greenways are on former railway lines, although some are through town centres or fields. Before any projects are commenced a full ecological appraisal is completed. Habitat protection and improvement is included as a matter of course and an independent ecologist is employed for the duration of the project. Funding for site establishment is included in the grant proposals to ensure that biodiversity and habitat improvements can be delivered.</p> <p>The intention is for these routes to be valuable linear wildlife corridors.</p>	<p>This approach will be continued for future projects, including final delivery of the Little Eaton Greenway and continued development of the White Peak Loop, which has a full delivery timescale beyond 2030.</p> <p>Whether on a disused railway line or through a town centre, all proposed active travel routes will include a BNG feasibility which will include options for onsite or offsite enhancement or creation in order to achieve a net gain.</p>
Delivery of Derbyshire’s Heartwood Community Forest	<p>In 2023 the Council successfully bid to develop a new Community Forest that will create, maintain, and develop additional community woodlands across eastern and southern Derbyshire. The work is fully funded by tree planting and woodland creation grants from Defra. Since the Community Forest was launched in 2024 around 47,000 trees have been planted in 43 hectares of new woodland. The formal Forest Plan was approved by Cabinet in September 2025 and includes reference to the LNRS.</p>	<p>Continued delivery of the Community Forest through fully-funded planting programmes which aim to both connect communities with nature and improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Development of the Community Forest’s governance in collaboration with local partners.</p>

Biodiversity actions	Achievements to date	Actions to 2030
Million Trees programme	The Million Trees programme was launched in 2021 aiming to facilitate and encourage the planting of one million trees by 2030 across Derbyshire. Over 609,200 trees have already been planted, by organisations and individuals. This includes both woodlands and individual trees on private land.	Promotion and coordination to ensure that the total of one million trees are planted by 2030, including provision of guidance around suitable species and guidance for caring for trees.
Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site management	Work in updating the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan has exposed the need for a more detailed framework to implement LNRS priorities and measures within the DVMWHS and its Buffer Zone so as not to inadvertently negatively impact on its Outstanding Universal Value.	Funding is being sought from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to produce a detailed framework for DVMWHS that will protect biodiversity within the landscape by appropriately implementing the priorities and measures of the LNRS.
Delivery of Natural flood Management (NfM) projects	<p>Funding of an NfM Officer at Don Catchment Rivers Trust (DCRT) to deliver a number of NfM projects.</p> <p>This includes an NfM project at the Council's Grassmoor Country Park (including scrapes, earth embankments and ponds).</p>	<p>Continuing to fund DCRT as budget allows.</p> <p>Taking projects forward through feasibility and delivery (as funding allows). Aiming to progress three projects: at Renishaw, Breadsall and Ockbrook/Draycott/Breaston. These projects are at varying levels of readiness and may be dependent on feasibility and funding success.</p>
Sustainable drainage work in schools	Worked with five schools (primary and secondary) to install sustainable drainage planters for biodiversity and to reduce surface water flooding.	Feasibility work is underway for a much larger project at one school, to include planters and other NfM measures which are to be decided.
Engagement with water companies to deliver their Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) programme	Discussions with Severn Trent Water around their ambitions for SuDS within Derbyshire catchments.	The Council will work with Severn Trent Water to assist delivery of its SuDS programme for catchments with problematic combined sewer overflows. Solutions will include SuDS and other NfM, which will provide local biodiversity opportunities.

Biodiversity actions	Achievements to date	Actions to 2030
Derbyshire Road Verges Policy	The Highways Service adopted the Derbyshire Road Verges Policy in 2025 which aims to create opportunities for high biodiversity grasslands along the County's road network.	<p>The Highways Service will encourage and support the district and borough councils to implement the policy wherever feasible, in particular in areas which are deemed to have strategic importance.</p> <p>The Service will review and prioritise the further actions required that were identified in the development of the Derbyshire Road Verges Policy. In particular mapping resource needs and options for the deposition of cut materials.</p> <p>The Service will integrate the Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy into strategic planning and project delivery in exercising its duties as the Highways Authority.</p>
Vertas Management of Property sites	Many Council sites (including many schools) are managed by VDL, a subsidiary of the Council. VDL has an active biodiversity plan including no-mow May and timing hedge trimming with regard to nesting birds and autumn fruiting.	Establish closer working relationships with VDL, in particular regarding school sites where greater biodiversity can be delivered through changes in management practices.
Schools Improvement (capital) programme	The Council has attempted to exceed biodiversity requirements wherever possible – including planting, bat and bird boxes, etc.	Continue to identify opportunities to exceed biodiversity requirements where possible.
New and refurbishment design programmes	The Council has a programme of capital work relating to buildings, including new build and extensions.	All relevant projects are progressed to comply with BNG requirements, which is considered from feasibility stage. Additional features such as bat and bird boxes are included where feasible.
Delivery of the Derbyshire and Derby Minerals Local Plan	Collation of evidence to support the plan. External consultation and review of the plan contents.	Once the Plan is approved it will be used to make decisions on planning applications for mineral extraction, processing and restoration. The Council will monitor indicators relating to policies on restoration of sites, biodiversity, trees (including woodland and hedgerows), soil quality, and green and blue infrastructure.

Biodiversity actions	Achievements to date	Actions to 2030
Children's Outdoor Activity Centres	<p>Nature-based activities at two sites (Lea Green and White Hall) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature walks and river walks • Construction of bird and bat boxes and bee hotels • Bushcraft <p>Management of sites to encourage more biodiversity, including hedge planting, wildflower meadows, no-mow areas and moorland species planting (White Hall). Collaboration with conservation organisations including Moors for the Future, Tree App and Peak District National Park Authority (White Hall). STEM and Alternative Provision opportunities.</p>	Continue to deliver these programmes and explore opportunities to collaborate.
Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service	<p>Delivery of Level 2 "Skills for Professionals in Horticulture, Environmental and Animal Care" at three Council sites, including practical skills contributing to biodiversity for 16-19 year olds.</p> <p>At Hurst Farm (a housing estate in Matlock) the team has supported a community food growing project that has created a biodiverse food growing space. The project teaches gardening and cooking skills, and encourages connection with nature.</p>	Continue to deliver these programmes and look for partnerships with other organisations to develop opportunities further.
Derbyshire Makes	This 3-year programme celebrating making in Derbyshire, is delivered by "Local" and "Arts Derbyshire" and is funded by the Council, Arts Council England, and National Lottery Heritage Fund. Sustainability is a core strand of the programme.	Derbyshire Makes will run until 2027 and further opportunities to deliver biodiversity objectives will be explored.
Derbyshire Schools – promotion of nature projects	Through the Council's support to schools (including the "Services for Schools" website) the Council promotes programmes such as the National Education Nature Park. To date 145 schools are registered, with 41% mapping their boundary and 19% mapping habitats.	Continue to develop and improve links with National Education Nature Park and other agencies supported by Department for Education to improve participation in the Nature Park and link this to other programmes delivered in schools.

Biodiversity actions	Achievements to date	Actions to 2030
Incorporation of biodiversity considerations into Asset Plans	All Council assets (buildings, land, etc.) are assessed through an asset planning process to determine the future role of the asset (linked to the Asset Strategy explained in Section 1.1). Biodiversity is now a consideration in this process, for example considering the potential that the asset provides for conservation or enhancement of local biodiversity.	As the asset planning process is continued all assets will be assessed through this process. Strengthen connections with other Council services when reviewing the future of assets.
Markham Vale Business Park	The Council has led the regeneration of the former derelict Markham Colliery site since 1998. The total site is 364 hectares, of which 242 hectares is greenspace, and includes extensive environmental landscaping, new planting and trails, and the creation of habitats for plants and wildlife. Specific features include extensive hedgerows, natural dams, wildflower seeding and new woodland areas. Local wildlife volunteers help manage the site and record biodiversity counts for several protected species.	The Council will continue to look for opportunities to improve biodiversity including with other local stakeholders, for example around natural flood management and promotion of habitats for butterflies.
Economic development	Identification of an opportunity to provide advice on biodiversity through relevant business support programmes.	Supporting and advising businesses that are keen to understand their role in promoting biodiversity, including opportunities around BNG. The Council is also keen to explore opportunities for green finance to support biodiversity enhancement.
BNG gain site	The Council commissioned a “Biodiversity Net Gain: Options and Feasibility Study” in March 2022 to provide a clear understanding of the responsibilities, requirements, and approach to successfully delivering BNG. Further to this The Stockley Hill Project evaluated options to improve biodiversity regeneration of part of the Glapwell landfill site, including a biodiversity evaluation piloted by Countryside Service.	The Council has identified land assets which could potentially be used as Biodiversity Gain sites and is now undertaking work to quantify the demand for biodiversity units in Derbyshire. The Council will develop a Biodiversity Gain site if this research suggests that the approach would be viable.

Other actions, in which biodiversity is a consideration, but not the principal driver include:

- Ash Dieback Programme - Delivery of the programme in a way that will safely manage the risks whilst minimising biodiversity loss.
- Annual target setting, reporting and actions to reduce building energy and fuel use – resulting in reduced pollution and which therefore plays a part in reducing the pressures on biodiversity.

1.4 Consideration of other strategies

The information below summarises how the Council has taken into account the following strategies to influence development and delivery of its approach to fulfilling its Biodiversity Duty.

1.4.1 Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Section 1.2 outlines the Council's role in producing the LNRS.

As the LNRS was only approved and published in September 2025 there has been little opportunity to date to incorporate detailed actions into the council's work planning. However, during the LNRS preparation proactive steps were taken to ensure relevant information is included or referenced when other relevant strategies or plans were written or updated. The LNRS is currently referred to in the following:

- The Council Plan and Place Service Plan
- The Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Countryside Service Business Plan
- The approved Forest Plan for Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest
- Draft Derbyshire and Derby Minerals Local Plan (although work on the plan preceded work on the LNRS)

As other strategies and plans are either written or reviewed these will make appropriate reference to the LNRS, with as much specific detail as possible.

An important action for the Council over the next five years to the end of 2030 is to translate the detailed priorities and measures from the LNRS into actions and activities, e.g. those outlined in Section 1.3.

1.4.2 Protected site strategies

There are not currently any protected site strategies in Derbyshire as Natural England has not yet progressed any beyond pilots outside of Derbyshire.

Derbyshire County Council would welcome opportunities to engage with the development of the strategy and when published the Council will review and embed the outcomes as appropriate.

1.4.3 Species conservation strategies

There are not currently any Species Conservation Strategies in Derbyshire as Natural England has not yet progressed any beyond pilots outside of Derbyshire.

Derbyshire County Council would welcome opportunities to engage with the development of the strategy and when published the Council will review and embed the outcomes as appropriate.

2 Biodiversity net gain delivery as Local Planning Authority (LPA)

Sections 2.1 to 2.3 summarise actions relating to the Council's LPA role.

2.1 Summary of actions to date

The Council's Planning Service has ensured compliance with BNG legislation including undertaking:

- validation checks,
- appraisal of the metric calculations,
- checks of co-compliance with other habitats and species regulations and the published LNRS, and
- providing additional information to applicants to take note of the deemed pre-commencement condition.

The Planning Service has entered into voluntary BNG arrangements, secured through legal agreement, on developments not otherwise statutorily required but where the scale and scope of the proposal have indicated this to be reasonable.

2.2 Detail of biodiversity gains resulting from plans

As a Minerals and Waste Authority the Council receives a lower volume of planning applications than district and borough councils, but these are generally larger and more complex. To date, none of the eligible applications have reached the condition discharge stage.

2.3 Summary of plans to meet BNG obligations

The Council's Planning Service is developing specific local guidance including how the Council will require the integration of BNG with the published LNRS. The Planning Service will also create and supply a transparent charging schedule for monitoring sites secured by Section 106 and a reasoned definition of significant habitat. Guidance will be updated to reflect changes to BNG anticipated through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and through any local change as a result of local government reorganisation.

3 Information about Derbyshire County Council

The Council covers the geographical county of Derbyshire, i.e. the districts and boroughs of Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash, High Peak, North East Derbyshire and South Derbyshire. Part of this area lies within the Peak District National Park. Some responsibilities and functions are shared with district and borough councils and the Peak District National Park Authority.

The report does not cover the city of Derby as this is the responsibility of Derby City Council as a unitary authority, although Derbyshire's LNRS covers the City of Derby.

Under Local Government Reorganisation the 10 Derbyshire and Derby councils will be reduced to one or two, under current proposals.

The Council is, since May 2024, a constituent member of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) with Derby City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council. Some Council functions are formally being transferred to EMCCA, and it is expected that this will include elements of nature recovery.

The Council is an upper-tier local authority delivering statutory and non-statutory services. A full summary of functions is available [here](#). Key roles relating to biodiversity are summarised below.

The Natural Environment

The Council has a significant role in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment in Derbyshire. This includes management of 114 countryside sites and developing and delivering key strategies and policies such as the Tree and Woodland Strategy for Derbyshire and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire as part of Biodiversity Duty responsibilities.

Infrastructure

There are two key aspects of local infrastructure that the Council has direct or indirect control over with particular relevance to biodiversity:

- **Highways infrastructure**, which includes many miles of verges and other land assets.
- **Green infrastructure**, including country parks and open spaces, which provide many opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity as well as social, economic, health and environmental benefits to communities.

Flood prevention

As the lead local flood authority (LLFA) the Council is responsible for creating and applying a local flood risk management strategy (under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010)) to help manage flood risk in Derbyshire, working with partners such as district and borough councils, water companies, parish and town councils and landowners. Where possible this includes designing or developing nature-based solutions.

The Built Environment

Council properties are used for an array of purposes, including care homes for the elderly and schools for children. Both the buildings and the land they occupy offer opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

Children and learning

While many schools are now academies or part of Multi Academy Trusts and therefore not under local authority control, the Council still has responsibility for some schools within the county. The Council also provides a range of services for schools that schools can choose to buy into, runs two outdoor education centres and provides a range of other support to children and families.

Planning

The Council is a Local Planning Authority regarding minerals and waste and for applications relating to the Council's schools and libraries.

Public Health and Wellbeing

Public Health and other service areas within the Adult Social Care and Health Department play a leadership role in providing advice to other organisations (such as the NHS) and the public. Access to the local environment and connection with nature are identified as being important elements of physical and mental wellbeing.