Appendix 1

Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2026 – 2031) DRAFT V2.1

Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve, Newnham

Contents

1. Foreword

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Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Spaces & City Services

When we adopted our 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we pledged to undertake a midterm review on progress, direction and delivery. This revised strategy update changes in national legislation and recognises new regional strategies, partnerships and local projects, setting clear, time bound actions and measures of success. It provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the many successful projects and partnerships working to protect and restore nature across the city and beyond. Whilst also recognising the urgency to address the continued threats

The 2021 Environment Act places a new statutory duty on all Local Authorities to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report to demonstrate our collective efforts in support of biodiversity. The accompanying report showcases our shared regional and local visions, strategies and initiatives and provides case studies on what has been achieved between 2022 and 2025. However, we are now halfway through the decade in which the UK has committed to halt and reverse nature loss; hence the need to review and strengthen our efforts between 2026 and 2031.

This summer I felt great pride in joining the Friends of Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve at their opening event of the newly created wetlands in East Chesterton. This ambitious project is a great example of the collaborative approach needed to restore urban habitats and wildlife. The original concept from the Friends, supported the vision of the Cambridge Nature Network, whose partners helped secure initial Lottery funding for design and consultation. Natural England provided additional Green Recovery Funding for a new woodland buffer, planted by the local community. The resulting momentum secured a Combined Authority grant and developer (S106) contributions to dig the new wetlands, which, following the planting of reeds by volunteers have already been visited by water voles, otters and kingfishers.

Such projects give us hope that the decline in nature can be reversed when communities and partners work together on shared challenges and goals. This is also the ambition of the recently adopted statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We worked with the Combined Authority to

produce this overarching vision for our region with shared priorities and goals that complement the existing objectives and projects of the Cambridge Nature Network, and we look forward to collaborating on delivery.

The repeating message of collaboration fundamentally supports our ambition for Cambridge to achieve Nature City Accreditation for our collective work to put nature at the heart of our communities. We pledge to take a lead on this and commit to publishing annual public reports on progress against this strategy.

Swift Tower and new wetland at Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve, East Chesterton

2. Vision

Our corporate plan sets out a clear '**One Cambridge, Fair for All'** vision which we are working towards cooperatively with our residents and partner organisations. Collectively we are seeking **'Cambridge to be a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces'** and where **'strong nature networks are coordinated between relevant bodies to combat the impacts of social and climate injustice'**

We will deliver this vision through our Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027) priorities. The first of which is **'Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies'**

'Our Biodiversity Strategy vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity compared with the 2020 Biodiversity Audit baseline, both within every ward of the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to nature rich greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.

Progress towards this vision will be monitored through annual reporting published on our website.

3. Executive Summary

The Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2031) sets out a renewed commitment to address the biodiversity emergency declared by the council in 2019. Building on the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, this update aligns with the Environment Act 2021, regional Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and the Natural Cambridgeshire (Local Nature Partnership) 'Doubling Nature' ambition

Vision:

By 2031, Cambridge will achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity, ensuring priority habitats and species are protected, enhanced, and connected. This means more wildflower areas and nature rich grasslands in our parks and Commons; healthier chalk streams and riverbanks; more trees and shade on streets and in housing estates; and more places for birds, bats, insects and other wildlife to thrive. We also want every resident to have a good quality natural greenspace within a short walk of where they live, work or study, fostering engagement with nature and enhanced physical and mental wellbeing.

Strategic Objectives:

- Deliver measurable biodiversity net gain across the city, including a minimum 20% net gain on all Council-led developments and a net increase in biodiversity units across Council-managed natural green spaces by 2031.
- Improve condition and connectivity of designated sites and priority habitats, so that by 2031 all Local Nature Reserves and Commons have improved habitat condition, and no site remains in poor condition without a published management plan being implemented and monitored.
- Embed biodiversity considerations across all council services, policies, supply chains and developments.
- Educate and empower communities, businesses, and institutions to act to enhance local, with a particular focus on wards lacking high quality natural greenspace
- Maximise biodiversity potential of council properties, parks and urban spaces, whilst balancing their multi-functional uses
- Establish long-term monitoring and research partnerships.

Key Themes:

- **Biodiversity Mainstreaming:** Integrate biodiversity considerations into council procurement supply chains, planning, housing, and operations; help deliver the

Local Nature Recovery Strategy; achieve 20% biodiversity net gain for council-led developments.

- **The Core:** Enhance the habitat condition of all Local Nature Reserves and Commons; support Cambridge Nature Network; restore chalk streams; review and monitor grazing practices.

- **Nature in Your Neighbourhood:** Promote community-led projects, Nature City Accreditation, pollinator-friendly initiatives, and biodiversity education, targeting support for wards with lower tree canopy cover, fewer wildlife rich sites, or greater social disadvantage.

Action Plan (2026–2031):

The strategy outlines targeted actions under these themes, including policy adoption, habitat restoration, species recovery, and collaborative projects with partners. Progress will be monitored through site condition assessments, and community engagement metrics. Each action in the plan specifies a lead service, partners and timescales, and we will use these to publish an annual report on delivery and outcomes

Outcome:

This strategy aims to reverse biodiversity decline, strengthen ecological resilience, and embed nature at the heart of Cambridge's communities—delivering environmental, social, and health benefits for future generations.

4. Introduction

The term 'biodiversity' describes all forms of life, their interactions and the ecosystems that support them and us. It includes all species, both common and rare, which combine to provide us with the air we breathe, water we drink and the food we eat.

4.1 Why we need a strategy

In 2019, we declared a biodiversity emergency in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally. We adopted the Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 to guide our work to meet this challenge and pledged to undertake a

mid-term review to ensure we are meeting our objectives. This revised strategy for 2026-2031 is the result of this mid-term review.

As with the Council's climate change emergency declaration, the biodiversity emergency requires all our services to consider their net impact on biodiversity within their operations. This revised strategy embeds biodiversity principles and considerations across all Council service areas and the communities we serve.

For many years, we have worked with our Friends Groups, Local Nature Reserve volunteers and partners such as the Wildlife Trust, Cambridge Past Present and Future, community gardens and orchards to maintain and improve the rich diversity of habitats in and around Cambridge. We greatly value this shared expertise and passion, recognising that we cannot hope to reverse the decline and help our species adapt to a changing climate alone. For this reason, the strategy review seeks to further engage with other city property owners, businesses, community groups and visitors to respect, protect and enhance our city's wildlife and the multiple benefits it provides our communities.

Despite current efforts, our 2020–2025 core sites habitat audits show that many of our most visible Commons and recreation spaces remain in poor or only moderate ecological condition; furthermore, recreational pressure and urbanisation continue to erode wildlife value. This strategy therefore focuses on changing how we manage land and support more environmentally attuned behaviour in every neighbourhood.

We are partners in the Cambridge Nature Network (CNN), which incorporates our iconic riverside commons and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and we look forward to continue to work closely with other network stakeholders including the East Cambridge Farmland Cluster, Cambridge University colleges and the wider local community to conserve and enhance the network as a vital strategic piece of green infrastructure (network of natural and semi-natural features—such as parks, wetlands, green roofs, and street trees—that provides environmental, social, and economic benefits).for the city.

Due to the economic success of Cambridge and the local region, major housing and employment growth sites which were identified within the Cambridge City Council's former Nature Conservation Strategy (2006) have now been built, along with associated new country parks and habitats to complement the existing network of LNRs, woodlands and water courses. Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Park are now vibrant new strategic green spaces, providing welcome respite for communities during the Covid pandemic and new homes for farmland and wetland species. These schemes demonstrate that with good design and planning policy, biodiversity net gain is achievable on multifunctional spaces, with Hobsons Park being designated a County Wildlife Site in 2025.

In addition, developments have included planning conditions securing Section 106 contributions, which have helped fund biodiversity projects on existing green spaces, such as 'The Rush' fish pass at Sheep's Green LNR and new wetlands at Logan's Meadow LNR.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service between the City and South Cambridgeshire District Council allows us to help plan on a strategic Greater Cambridge geography for existing and new green infrastructure and measurable biodiversity net gain within our emerging shared local plan. Identifying land not just for new homes but for new habitats and green connections to meet our duty under the Environment Act 2021.

4.2 Cambridge biodiversity in context

The biodiversity emergency we are experiencing is not just local but also global. Current global species extinction rates are 100 to 1000 times higher than the expected baseline rate, and they are increasing. Some of the key driving forces which are causing the emergency are increasing demands for housing, food and energy production. These can result in habitat loss, habitat degradation, habitat fragmentation and environmental pollution. They also contribute to, and exacerbate, the effects of climate change.

The result is a decrease in species diversity, or changes in how different plant and animals interact. Ultimately these declines and changes undermine nature's productivity, resilience and adaptability placing it at risk of further damage or collapse.

All these pressures are damaging to the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and the ecosystem services that we rely on for our social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing - including clean air, urban cooling, flood alleviation and food to name but a few. A thriving biodiverse environment is critical for life with a growing evidence base to suggest that we lead healthier lives, both mentally and physically, if we have more opportunities to interact with nature.

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (ranked 189 out of 218). Almost 15% of all species in the UK are at risk from extinction. With 72% of the UK land area managed for agriculture it is no surprise that changes in this industrial sector, responding to Government policy and societal changes, have one of the greatest impacts on our nation's biodiversity. Other drivers for change include urbanisation, invasive species, hydrological change and climate change.

In comparison to other parts of the UK, Cambridgeshire has some of the lowest proportions of threatened Priority Habitats and land designated for nature conservation, and it has the second lowest proportion of woodland coverage. Within the region intensive agricultural has also been instrumental in land use changes and biodiversity losses. Grassland cover has decreased from around 30% in the 1930s to less than 10% in 2018, being replaced in large part by arable farmland. Cambridgeshire also contains relatively little accessible green infrastructure for people, while growing populations are placing greater recreational pressures on these existing greenspaces.

The same suite of threats impact on the biodiversity of Cambridge as they do throughout the rest of the world. Our city and its associated sub region are experiencing rapid urban growth, including housing, commercial and institutional development. Whilst this helps support a thriving local economy it places significant pressure on our natural environment[1] and the biodiversity it supports.

It is challenging in an urban environment to balance the needs of both wildlife and people. If we are to reverse the declines in biodiversity, we must value and make space for nature in the urban communities where we live and in the surrounding countryside. This will mean protecting and enhancing the precious biodiversity resources that we have left but also ensuring there is sufficient outdoor recreational space for residents to be able to access and enjoy.

The very fact that these pressures are occurring at a local level does mean that it is within our power to do something about them. Biodiversity is resilient, particularly in our towns and cities; and has the capacity to bounce back. There are many examples of positive interventions making a difference for biodiversity within the city and across the UK.

The suite of actions set out within this strategy is the response of Cambridge City Council to the biodiversity emergency we face locally, nationally, and internationally. We recognise the importance of a healthy and biodiverse environment that is sustainably planned and managed to ensure the current and future prosperity and health and wellbeing of all sections of our communities. Our aim is to go beyond simply halting the decline in biodiversity but to actively restore the quality of our natural environment and leave our city's wildlife in a better state than that in which we found it. We hope the following strategy will inspire you to join us and help to deliver the proposed actions and associated changes needed to achieve this.

4.3 Legislation and policy

This Biodiversity Strategy considers and is aligned with a range of national, regional and local policies and plans, as outlined below, Legislative documents, policy reports and reviews or policy drivers are described in further detail in Appendix 1.

National Legislation

- Environment Act 2021
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

Policy documents (national, regional and local)

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 (updated 2024)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) and Cambridge Local Plan (2018)
- Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (publication timeline December 2026)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Doubling Nature Strategy (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- UK National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP) 2025
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (December 2025)

Reviews, plans and policy drivers (national, regional, and local)

- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2020/2021)
- Greater Cambridge chalk streams project report (2024)
- CCC/MKA Ecology Ltd Biodiversity Audit (2021)
- Natural England Nature Networks
- Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security (HM Gov 2026)
- Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (The Lawton Report, 2010)
- Cambridge Nature Network Report

Our strategy recognises and adopts the principle of the following national initiatives that support our vision and objectives.

The Big Chalk Partnership

An ambitious, national-scale alliance of over 150 organisations—primarily National Landscapes, National Parks, conservation groups, farms, community groups, and government agencies—working across southern England's chalk and limestone geologies, Big Chalk promotes collaborative conservation, data-driven project planning, and dynamic partnerships to ensure these vulnerable landscapes thrive in a changing climate.

Butterfly Conservation **-** ***Butterfly-Friendly Cities***

Butterfly conservation focuses on protecting butterfly species and their habitats, which are vital indicators of a healthy ecosystem. Urban areas can play a key role through the concept of a "butterfly-friendly city," where green spaces, parks, gardens, and roadside verges are managed to provide nectar-rich plants, native wildflowers, and shelter for butterflies. These cities reduce pesticide use, create pollinator corridors, and encourage community involvement in planting and monitoring..

Nature Town & Cities

Nature Towns and Cities is a coalition—led by Natural England, the National Trust, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and partners—aiming to transform urban living through nature. It seeks to give more people access to green and blue spaces within a 15-minute walk and enable more children to play in nature on their doorstep.

CABA (the Catchments Based Approach)

A community-led, collaborative framework for managing water environments at the river-catchment scale across England and Wales. It brings together a wide range of partners—including environmental NGOs, local authorities, government agencies, landowners, businesses, and community groups—to share evidence, develop joint catchment plans, and deliver integrated actions that improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, reduce flood risk, and support climate resilience.

4.4 Local initiatives

The continued decline in biodiversity has prompted several local and regional initiatives that seek to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity through both development and land management practices. Many of these seek landscape scale restoration of habitats to ensure that ecosystems are resilient. The City Council seeks to support these through both policies and projects to ensure that opportunities are

realised on our land holdings, and we deliver biodiversity improvements through our statutory functions, operational services and community influence.

Natural Cambridgeshire (Local Nature Partnership) Doubling Nature Vision

Natural Cambridgeshire is a partnership of leaders from businesses, local authorities, the health sector, farming, wildlife and environmental organisations that exists to champion, influence and enable the fulfilment of the Doubling nature vision

Cambridge Nature Network

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Local Wildlife Trust and Cambridge Past Present and Future with support from local Councils and other key landowning partners. The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focussed on the best of the remaining habitats within 10km of the city and key opportunities and locations for creating new habitats and associated linkages. Through collaboration with landowners and communities it represents an ambitious but achievable vision for local nature recovery.

Draft South Cambridgeshire Climate & Nature Strategy 2026–2030

South Cambridgeshire District Councils vision to empower the district to lead in climate action, enhance environmental stewardship, protect and restore nature, and build resilience for communities in the face of escalating climate impacts. Its key principles focus on embedding climate and nature objectives throughout the council's work, leveraging partnerships, and prioritising actions that deliver co-benefits—benefiting both nature and people—while enabling sustainable economic growth and improving wellbeing

Cambridge University Biodiversity Action Plan

Representing considerable land holdings across the city, this plan seeks to deliver a significant and measurable improvement in the biodiversity of the University of Cambridge estate, and the Greater Cambridge area more generally, in a manner that educates and inspires an appreciation of the natural environment, and that encourages interventions, research and innovation to enhance and protect biodiversity for future generations.

Wicken Fen Vision

The National Trust's Wicken Fen Vision is an ambitious, 100-year plan to create a diverse landscape for wildlife and people stretching from Wicken Fen to the edge of Cambridge. By restoring natural processes, careful management of water and grazing will allow the land to evolve a mosaic of habitats for a wide variety of abundant wildlife. People will be able to enjoy access and recreation opportunities across a beautiful, tranquil natural fenland landscape, with opportunities for volunteering, education, and interpretation.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The LNRS is a legally mandated framework under the Environment Act 2021, aimed at reversing nature decline in one of England's most nature depleted regions. Spearheaded by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (responsible authority) in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, Natural Cambridgeshire and local (supporting) authorities, the strategy sets biodiversity priorities, maps existing and potential habitats, and identifies key areas and species for ecological restoration.

Meadow and urban forest planting at Cherry Hinton Hall

4.5 Cambridge City Council role

We manage more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites are designated and managed predominantly as nature reserves, for their wildlife value and form part of the key Cambridge Nature Network, whilst others provide valuable predominantly recreational open space for residents and visitors to enjoy. Whatever the primary purpose and size of these spaces, combined they provide a huge potential for increasing the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats within the city and their contribution to the wider Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Therefore, we have an obligation and opportunity to ensure that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, provide good examples of habitat management and creation and hopefully influence other landowners to do the same.

Watercourses

We manage approximately 23 kilometres of awarded watercourses, including some of our precious chalk streams, by ensuring management is sensitive to biodiversity, whilst providing our statutory drainage functions, we can protect such iconic species as otter, water vole, kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We have developed the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project to deliver and monitor evidence based restoration work to inform future investment. We also manage a significant stretch of the main riverbank through the city. Wherever possible we are seeking to ‘naturalise’ previously engineered banks such as at Stourbridge Common, creating new backwaters and wetland such as on Logan's Meadow LNR and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as at the weir at Byron’s Pool LNR and ‘The Rush’ fish pass at Sheep’s Green LNR.

Common land

We are custodians of our precious common land and oversee the historic grazing management practice that retains flood meadow landscapes and iconic cattle grazing in the heart of the city. These grasslands form a key part of the network of Cambridge spaces and offer potential for enhanced management to benefit biodiversity, urban drainage and capture carbon emissions.

Urban forest

Through implementation of our Urban Forest Strategy (2026 – 2036), we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provides both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Streets trees provide vital shade for

communities as well as habitat and ‘stepping stones’ for species living in or moving through the built environment.

Property estate

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. How we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work.

Community action and volunteering

Through our Community Service, Community Engagement Team we offer support to local site Friends Groups, providing opportunities for volunteering in our parks and open spaces, and work closely with local community groups including On the Verge promoting new wildflower meadows and Action for Swifts, with swift box provision such as on Queen Ann Terrace car park and at Edgecombe Flats.

We provide local schools with natural green spaces for valuable environmental education opportunities enabling pupils to explore, experience and value nature close to home.

As a local authority we are often a key partner in many local initiatives and projects with links to community groups. By promoting biodiversity through raising awareness in communities we can ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance, and appreciate nature are realised.

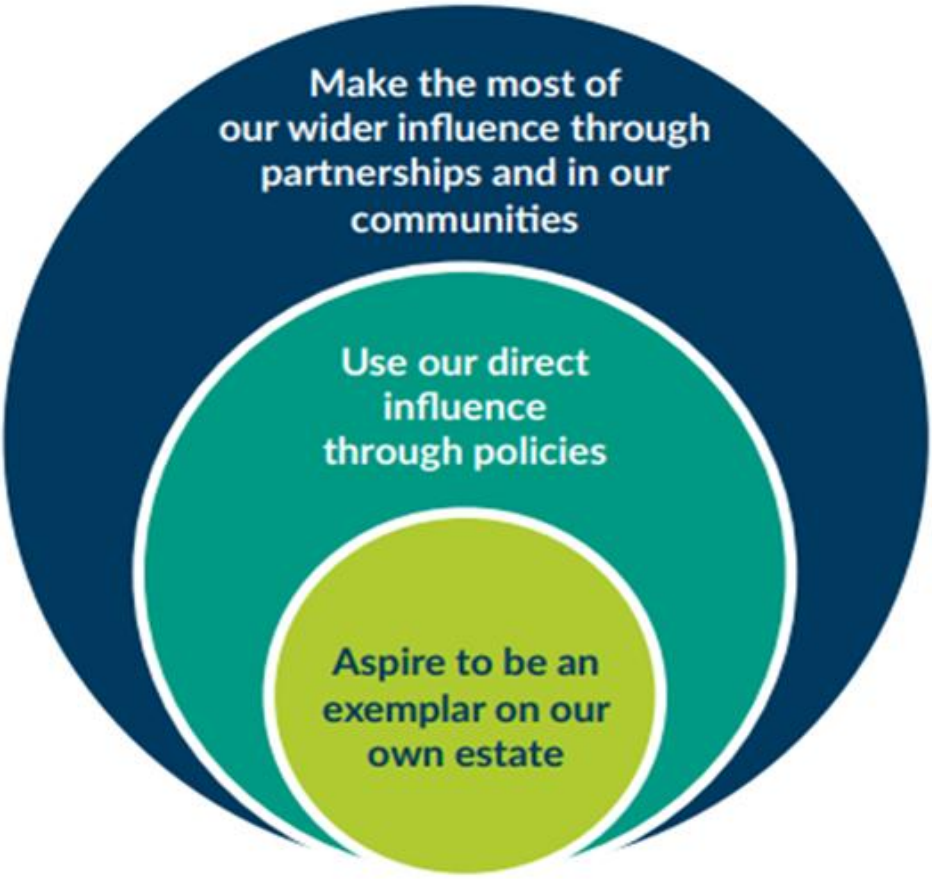


Figure 1. Our role in local nature recovery

4.6 Biodiversity in Cambridge

The geological and landscape setting

There are three National Character Areas (NCA) around Cambridge, each with distinctive geological features which dictate the landscape character and biodiversity contained within them.

To the north and west is (NCA 88) Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Clay lands. A broad gently undulating lowland plateau with shallow rivers, and notably the Great Ouse and Nene, which broaden as they reach the Fens. The area is dominated by intensive arable farming. There is an underlying clay geology which is overlain by glacial deposits of chalky boulder clays which add great character to the ancient woodlands in the area.

To the south and east is (NCA 87) East Anglian Chalk. Characterised by smooth rolling chalkland hills with large irregular field enclosed by low-lying hedgerows. Much of the area is under cereal production but important semi-natural habitats include lowland calcareous grassland and the chalk streams which are under significant threat from modification, pollution and abstraction.

Further north and east of the city, and with a narrow corridor alongside the River Cam, is (NCA 46) The Fens. Characterised as an expansive low-lying wetland landscape. Woodland cover is sparse, and the open fields are bounded by drains and river systems which provide an important ecological network. An important area for biodiversity with several internationally recognised areas of nature conservation value.

Within the City of Cambridge, it is possible to see the influence of each of these regions on the habitats and species that are present. Directly to the south-east of the city are chalky grasslands with exposed chalk (such as East Pit in Cherry Hinton). To the north and east are areas which have characteristics of fenland with reedbeds and drains (such as Wilbraham Fen). To the west, and running right through the heart of the city, are riverside meadows and pastures which are characteristic of the semi-natural habitats of the clay lands (such as Grantchester Meadows and Midsummer Common).

The ecological setting

Statutory and non-statutory designated areas

Within Cambridge there are a range of areas designated for their nature conservation value. These include statutorily designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are of national significance for the biodiversity and geological features they

support. The statutory sites also include LNRs which are of statutory local significance for both people and wildlife.

Non-statutory sites include County Wildlife Sites (CWS), which represent some of the most important habitats in Cambridgeshire. Within the city itself are a suite of City Wildlife Sites (CiWS) and Protected Road Verges (PRVs). These areas do not meet national or County criteria for statutory designation, but they do meet important criteria at a local level and contain many locally significant habitats and species.

The habitats and species at these locations are varied but typically reflect the wider landscape with woodlands, chalk grasslands and rivers and streams. Some are designated for the species they support, such as water vole. Some habitats and species within Cambridge are listed as Habitats of Principal Importance and Species of Principal Importance, or Priority Habitats and Species. These are listed on the NERC Act (2006) and represent some of the most valued habitats and species in the UK.

Other greenspaces

Cambridge is fortunate to have a host of other greenspaces which all make a significant contribution to our biodiversity. These include country parks, such as those at Milton (just outside the city boundary in South Cambridgeshire) and Trumpington Meadows (which straddles the border with South Cambridgeshire). There are also other accessible natural greenspaces including Grantchester Meadows, Hobson's Park, and new areas of open space at Eddington and Darwin Green in north-west Cambridge.

Cambridge is a 'green' city. Beyond the formal greenspaces such as designated areas and parks, there are also numerous informal greenspaces, including community gardens and orchards, private gardens as well as college grounds, street trees and increasingly, green roofs. Tree canopy covers approximately 17.6% of the city making a significant contribution to the biodiversity resource in Cambridge.

The Cambridge Nature Network

Two priority areas of the Cambridge Nature Network directly interact with the city and surrounding countryside. The Cambridge Nature Network Priority Areas have been identified by grouping core sites based on landscape features, topography, and hydrology. Within these areas, potential extension habitats (or 'steppingstones') are proposed with a view to creating coherent joined up nature networks, which are resilient to the modern-day pressures on our biodiversity. The Cambridge Nature Network target is to achieve a 30% coverage of wildlife rich habitats within each Priority Area.

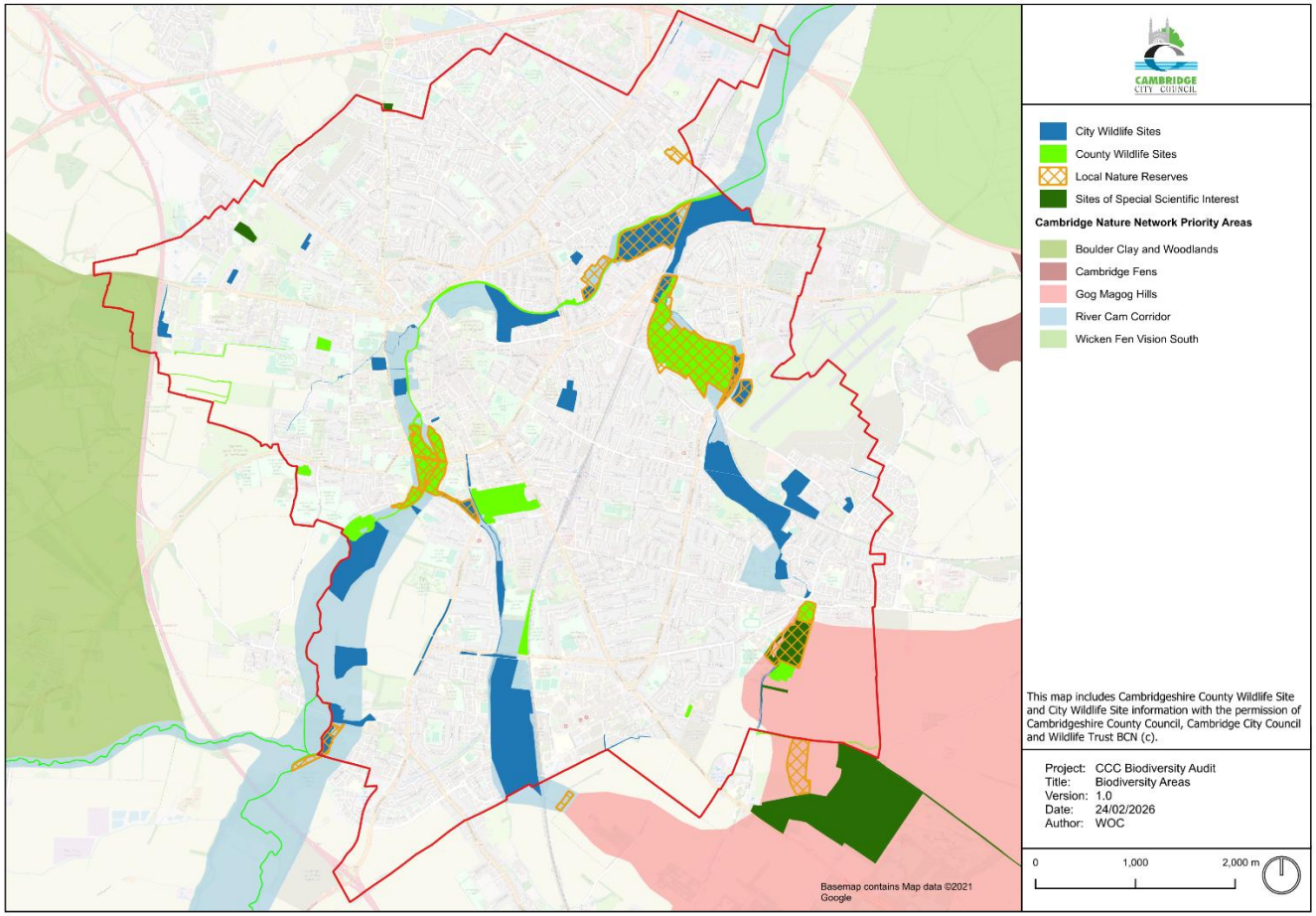
The River Cam Corridor Priority Area passes right through the heart of Cambridge following the course of the Cam. This Priority Area also includes the tributaries of the Cam which flow from the south, such as Cherry Hinton Brook and Hobson's Brook. This is a critical Priority Area within the network as it provides the connection linking other Priority Areas to the north, south, east and west. Many of these sites and watercourses are managed by Cambridge City Council so we are uniquely placed to help deliver the network through the city.

Just south of Cambridge, the Gog Magog Hills Priority Area reaches to the fringe of the city. This Priority Area is characterised by the underlying chalk with the key sites of nature conservation importance located at the Cherry Hinton chalk pit complex at this point on the edge of Cambridge. It stretches further south and east of the city with other important chalk habitats, such as the Roman Road Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

There are four other Cambridge Nature Network Priority/Opportunity Areas. Directly to the north and east are the Cambridge Fens Priority Areas and Wicken Fen Vision South Priority Area. To the west lies the Boulder Clay Woodlands Priority Area and further north is the Fen Edge Orchards and Droves Opportunity Area.

The Cambridge Nature Network has been integrated into the statutory Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Map 1 showing designated biodiversity sites and CNN / LNRS priority areas in Cambridge



Cambridge key habitats

The various sites in the Cambridge Nature Network support several core habitats with distinct species, pressures and management requirements.

Grasslands

Cambridge grasslands range from small areas of rare species-rich lowland calcareous grassland to wide expanses of species poor amenity grasslands, which are widespread throughout the city. Significant grassland habitats are present along the Cam corridor and these run through the centre of Cambridge including Sheep's Green, Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common. These areas, with their grazing cattle, give Cambridge its unique rural character. Coldham's Common provides further large areas of grassland with a mix of amenity grassland through to more species diverse neutral and calcareous grasslands. There have been significant additions to the species-rich grassland resource in recent years with the creation of Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Park to support local developments.

Priority grassland types within Cambridge include:

- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland meadows

Woodland

Woodlands are uncommon in Cambridgeshire with very few areas of ancient woodland remaining. Areas of naturally regenerated woodland are present throughout the city however and include Byron's Pool in Trumpington and the Bird Sanctuary, The Spinney and Limekiln Road LNR, all situated in Cherry Hinton. Several areas of wet woodland occur, primarily at Paradise and Logan's Meadow LNR.

Priority woodland types within Cambridge include:

- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Wet woodland
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Sheep's Green contains wood pasture habitat which comprises mature trees set within semi-natural grassland habitats. This combination of habitats, and particularly the veteran and ancient pollard willows, is important for numerous invertebrates including the scarce musk beetle. These woodlands and mature trees also provide roosting and

foraging habitats for a range of bat species, such as common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat

Hedgerows and scrub

Old and mature hedgerows are uncommon in the city with a few remaining examples at King's Hedges and Cherry Hinton. There are significant areas of scrub habitats, particularly around Coldham's Common and Barnwell within the designated sites at these locations.

Priority hedgerow and scrub habitats within Cambridge include:

- Hedgerows

These old hedgerows and scrub habitats provide important habitats through the city and particularly for bird species which use them for breeding during the spring and summer months and for foraging and cover in the autumn and winter months.

Wetlands and watercourses

The River Cam corridor contains a variety of wetland habitats, including wet grasslands, reedbeds, and the chalk streams which form tributaries to the Cam. The chalk streams around and within the city are very scarce habitats of international importance. Other wetland habitats occur away from the River Cam and these include ponds, lakes, and ditches.

Priority wetland habitats within Cambridge include:

- Reedbeds
- Ponds
- Rivers (including Chalk Streams)

The River Cam presents one of our most important wetland habitats, and, combined with its tributaries, forms a network of habitats through the city. To the northeast Teversham and Wilbraham Fen are biodiversity 'hotspots', which are home to a wealth of specialist birds, invertebrates and other species which reside in the reedbed and wetland habitats there.

Our wetland habitats are home to eels, kingfisher, grey wagtail, otter and water vole. Water voles have suffered significant national declines as a species but Cambridgeshire, and Cambridge in particular, remains a stronghold. They thrive in the slow-flowing, well-vegetated ditches found through the city.

Urban

Urban habitats dominate the city and often offer surprising opportunities for wildlife. There are pockets of habitats for species to thrive, including gardens, allotments, and street trees. Increasingly the built environment is purposefully designed to accommodate biodiversity with integrated bird and bat boxes and green roofs.

Priority urban habitats within Cambridge include:

- Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land

The David Attenborough Building on the New Museums Site is an example of how biodiversity can work with the built environment. Here green roofs provide habitats high above street level, and swifts nest in boxes that are built into the towers. Swifts are charismatic birds that form part of the backdrop to a Cambridge summer with squadrons of screaming birds swooping through the streets and nesting within the cracks and crevices of the buildings. Similarly, House Martins use buildings as nesting sites, for example at Addenbrookes Biomedical campus and in the gatehouse at King's College. The buildings of Cambridge also host breeding peregrine falcon, which can regularly be seen surveying the city from the spires of King's College Chapel.

Many species of bat roost in the buildings in the city, and some are specialists that will typically only roost in buildings. This includes serotine bat which can be seen hawking and swooping for prey over Nightingale Recreation Ground. As you move towards the edge of the city where the gardens tend to be bigger you are more likely to encounter other important species such as song thrush, or even part of the thriving urban badger population.

- Gardens

Collectively private gardens form the biggest land use within the city and are therefore vital in providing green space and tree canopy cover. Multiple ownership means that the individual biodiversity value of these spaces varies greatly but there is potential to greatly increase biodiversity value through relatively simple changes to management or initiative such as creating hedgehog highways to link gardens. Studies have shown that sensitively managed gardens can support a wide range of species that are often declining in the wider farmland landscape. The installation of garden ponds can benefit many species include amphibians, particularly when associated with other habitats such as long grass and wood piles that provide areas to forage and shelter.

The cultural setting

Cambridge is a place of naturalists and conservationists and has been for many years. We have perhaps one of the most studied natural histories of any city. It is possible to trace this history through just one plant in the city. The Butterbur patch which grows alongside the River Cam at Paradise LNR was first recorded in that location in the 1600s by the notable botanist John Ray. It has been recorded in that location ever since, its flowers appearing in early spring before the leaves.

Cambridge is home to many individuals, trusts, societies, groups, and institutes with nature conservation at the heart of what they do. Some groups have been well-established in the city for considerable periods of time, such as the Cambridge Natural History Society which has been studying the biodiversity of the area for over 164 years. Other more recently established organisations such as the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, a collaboration of the University and conservation organisations, have a world-wide reach far beyond the perimeter of the city. Whilst these groups are varied and diverse, they each have a shared goal to conserve and promote biodiversity. Collectively they present an enormous opportunity for successful collaboration to help Cambridge lead the way in the world as an example of how biodiversity and communities can co-exist and thrive together in a city geography.

4.7 Local threats and pressures

As with many other urban areas there are pressures and threats in Cambridge which degrade and deplete our biodiversity resource. To understand the opportunities and threats to biodiversity in Cambridge we commissioned the Biodiversity Audit and the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Report. These reports also identified several threats and pressures which are specific to our local area. The key pressures on biodiversity within Cambridge include:

- Habitat loss: Direct loss of biodiverse habitats and the species they support
- Habitat fragmentation: Removal of the links between areas resulting in smaller, less resilient habitats
- Habitat degradation: A deterioration in the condition of the habitat, such as reduction in species diversity

The key local causes of these are:

- Urbanisation: This can result in direct habitat loss and fragmentation. It could also lead to a degradation of habitats, for example from the effects of artificial light. Other indirect effects include poor air quality from increasing traffic. Nitrogen from exhaust fumes can over time increase nutrients in greenspaces and alter the composition of these habitats.
- Recreational pressure: As the population grows there is increasing demand on our greenspaces. Many habitats and species in the city are sensitive to disturbance. Impacts include trampling, or disturbance and nutrient deposition from the increasing popularity of dog walking in the city. Dog fouling deposits nutrients in sensitive habitats and this can change the vegetative composition of the area. Dogs off leads can have significant effects on ground nesting birds or disturbance of other animals such as mammals.
- Hydrological change: The Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project identified hydrological change as a major driver for negative impacts on our chalk streams and rivers. This includes channel modification and over-abstraction for domestic, agriculture and commercial use depleting aquifers leading to low flow and poor water quality. These result in habitat loss and degradation.
- Lack of appropriate habitat management: Many of our habitats require some form of human intervention to check ‘succession’ where they mature into less diverse habitats which support a smaller number of species. Examples include periodic coppicing (cutting to near ground level) of scrub and woodland to increase light to the ground or adjoining watercourses and promote new dense growth for bird nesting. Or grazing to prevent scrub encroaching onto rarer grassland habitats.

There are also wider causes, such as climate change which has the potential to alter habitats and species populations, thereby making them more scarce or isolated. These threats and pressures do not recognise the boundaries that we impose as humans. They pass through natural pathways, such as river catchments, and consequently their solutions will lie outside the city too. This requires us to work with stakeholders across a greater area across administrative boundaries

5. Biodiversity Audit

As part of the development of the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we established a baseline of habitat types and their condition for the key natural green spaces in our ownership so that we could plan and monitor management and enhancements to deliver a measurable gain in biodiversity. To quantity this we used the Biodiversity Metric tool developed by Natural England in partnership with DEFRA, It uses the size, type, and condition of habitats as a proxy for their importance and value for nature (Crosher *et al.,* 2019b).

The full 2020 baseline Biodiversity audit is available in Appendix 2

To inform the midterm review and revised site management plans we undertook a sample habitat condition audit on 14 of the original core sites including LNRs, Commons and Mill Rd Cemetery.

Table1 showing 2025 combined habitat condition and direction of travel

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	Moderate - stable
Stourbridge Common	Poor – stable
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	Moderate - stable
Barnwell East	Moderate - stable
Barnwell West	Moderate - declining
Paradise	Good - stable
Byron's Pool	Moderate – declining
Nine Wells	Moderate - stable
Midsummer Common	Poor - stable
Bramblefields	Moderate – declining
West Pit	Good - stable

Logan's Meadow	Moderate - improving
Mill Road Cemetery	Moderate - stable
Hobson's Park	Moderate – improving

Conditions sometimes varied across habitats on each site and a more detailed breakdown is available in Appendix 3.

6. Biodiversity Strategy

Cambridge City Council recognises the global biodiversity emergency and the local impact this will have, and is having, on the city and communities we serve. Therefore, in 2019 we pledged to provide leadership and to ensure that we work with all sections of the community, including schools, community groups, university colleges, businesses and residents to reverse the decline in biodiversity and deliver measurable net gain within Cambridge and the wider sub-region. Within this section we have defined our vision and objectives and set out our proposed actions to enable us to achieve this.

'Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity compared with the 2020 Biodiversity Audit baseline, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to nature rich greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.

Our aim is to put biodiversity at the forefront of everything that we do. By maximising opportunities for collaboration, we are working in partnership with residents, businesses, and institutions, and building upon existing strategies for climate and trees, to achieve this goal.

We will promote the principles set out in the Lawton Report: bigger, better, more joined up. This will require improvements and enhancements to our core sites in the city to create a biodiverse blue and green thread through the heart of Cambridge. We will see a healthy river and tributaries flowing through their natural floodplain habitats. Areas of existing grasslands will be improved, former wetland features will be restored, and new ones created. This network will help to restore healthy populations of iconic species such as otter, eel, and water vole.

Beyond this core area we will strive to create a city that is more permeable for nature. We have made a commitment to enhance our own estate to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity. And we have also made a commitment to engage and enable others in the city to do the same. Building upon our core network this will help to join the dots and connect people to nature, creating a city where birdsong and buzzing invertebrates can be heard and experienced by everyone, everywhere who lives, works, visits and studies in Cambridge.

The biodiversity emergency is intricately linked with the climate emergency. Many of the proposed actions set out below will also serve to alleviate the climate emergency. The actions set out within our climate change strategy will contribute to resolving the biodiversity emergency. Therefore, our updated Climate Change, Urban Forest and Biodiversity strategies will work together to ensure we do maximise our effort to tackle these threats.

Our strategic objectives are:

1. **To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031, compared with the 2020 baseline, in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030**

2. **To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition, wherever feasible, and that by 2031 no Council-managed LNR, Common or County Wildlife Site remains in poor condition without a management plan in place. Thus enhancing habitat and species resilience to a changing climate and contributing to the Cambridge Nature Network and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

3. **To engage and promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting and empowering coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions through embedding Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework strategies and principles, with particular focus on wards with high social disadvantage or poor access to natural green space**

4. **To ensure that biodiversity protection and enhancement is considered by all council service functions and projects in line with our statutory Biodiversity Duty**

5. **To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs**

6. **To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.**

7. **To work with partners to establish long term, species and habitat monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city and publish an annual report on progress**

To meet the objectives, the proposed actions have been grouped within three themes:

Biodiversity mainstreaming: This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do as a council, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that biodiversity considerations are integrated into business cases, procurement and asset management decisions and provide practical guidance and training to service managers to support this. Thus, ensuring our actions minimise negative impacts on biodiversity as well as seek opportunities to enhance it. We will aim to develop cross-cutting strategies and solutions between all services that promote biodiversity and focus on nature-based solutions.

Our ambition is to consider the intrinsic value of conserving and enhancing biodiversity, as part of everything that we do. We will take steps to ensure that we review the effects of our activities and decisions on biodiversity and that, wherever feasible, we can be working to promote and enhance the biodiversity of the city. We will take our objectives concerning biodiversity policy and consider them within all other areas of our work, for example our housing, transport, and economy.

We recognise that biodiversity not only has intrinsic value and beauty but also provides our life support system, whilst further contributing to all our lives in Cambridge by generating economic, community, health and well-being benefits.

The mainstreaming approach will also help us to explore sustainable nature-based solutions across the city. This means we can use nature to help us solve some of the

biggest issues that face us today including climate change, water and flood management or atmospheric pollutants from vehicles. This process will recognise and value nature as an asset that delivers multiple benefits to us.

The core: This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in Cambridge. This includes reviewing and updating management plans for our most important nature conservation areas and working with partners to ensure a coherent and resilient nature network through Cambridge and beyond.

The Lawton Report encourages 'bigger, better and more joined up' habitats. The aim of this theme is to focus on our core sites, many of which are situated within the Cambridge Nature Recovery Network. Here we aim to focus on 'bigger and better' by improving biodiversity management of our core greenspaces, and wherever possible making more space for nature at these locations.

Many of these sites fall within the Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy, our work here will help us make a meaningful contribution to these initiatives to deliver a joined up and resilient biodiversity network. The City Council will work to achieve enhanced habitat condition in these core locations to contribute to Natural Cambridgeshire's vision to double nature.

Nature in your neighbourhood: This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through empowerment and collaboration with communities, businesses and institutions. The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all, regardless of where in the city people live, their income, or their housing type.

The biodiversity emergency is too big a problem to solve alone. In this theme we have developed actions which require a collaborative approach to the problem and to help encourage nature on your doorstep. Many of the actions relate to how people interact with nature in Cambridge, and we will provide the means and inspiration to help facilitate and encourage positive steps to be taken at a local level. We have developed actions to promote collaborative working in the city, drawing on the wealth of biodiversity expertise that we are fortunate to have in Cambridge. Other actions provide communities with the information or resources they need to help biodiversity in their neighbourhood. We will continue our commitment to existing initiatives, such as our hedgehog highways and neighbourhood canopy projects.

Our aim is to encourage engagement with nature to ensure that it is pervasive throughout the entire city. It is vitally important that we work hard to ensure that our key sites of nature conservation are protected and managed effectively. However, we

need to go beyond these islands of biodiversity and work to create greater connectivity for nature. Within this theme we are focussing on the Lawton's Report 'more joined up'.

We will work with communities to develop ward-based nature priorities, aligned with the LNRS and Cambridge Nature Network, and we will support residents to shape and monitor local projects.

7 Action plan (2026 – 2031)

Since adoption of the strategy in 2022 we have been collaborating on actions to achieve our objectives. Appendix 5 Biodiversity Duty Report summarises our key activities under our 3 themes and celebrates successes to date.

Moving forward to achieve our vision and objectives we will continue to collaborate with partners to deliver the following action plan (2026 – 2031) and monitor our collective outcomes. An annual review of this plan based on monitoring evidence and community feedback will identify actions that are delivered, delayed or require amendment and propose new projects or actions to meet our objectives.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming *'Consider and embed nature in everything we do'*

Actions	**Lead & Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS. Continue representation on LNRS delivery steering group	City Services, Natural Cambridgeshire, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions within the city and beyond	Adopted December 2025 – Delivery and monitoring Plan 2026 Delivery – 2026 - 2031
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust, evidenced biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and BNG delivery to guide sustainable development	Proposed adoption by December 2026

Adoption and implementation of Urban Forest Strategy (2026 - 2036)	City Services, Community Services	Management, protection, planting of and engagement with the urban forest	Adoption March 2026 – Delivery 2026 – 2036
Ensure CIP and other City Council developments achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with published long-term management and monitoring in place.	2026 -2031
Implement Environmental Management System to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City operation hub and activities	City Services	Improved environmental performance across City Service	March 2026
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services, Water Resources East (WRE)	Reduced abstraction from aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions	Explore Feasibility and performance metric in 2026, deliver 2027 - 2031
Continue to deliver Herbicide Reduction Plan	City Services, property Services	Continue herbicide free maintenance of our public realm advocate through Cambridge Matters and social media for residents, business and institutes to follow suit	2026 - 2031

Actions	Lead & Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Continued support of Cambridge Nature Network	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, Cambridge Ahead, National Trust, RSPB, East Cambridge Farming Cluster	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create 'Bigger, better, more joined up' habitats across the CNN	2026 - 2031
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Complete ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species. Deliver at least one habitats condition improvement (as defined by DEFRA Condition Assessment) in each site by 2031	2026 - 2031
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers of Local Wildlife Sites to bring into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management, monitored annually by CPERC	2026 - 2031
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs. Continue representation on County Wildlife Site Panel	City Services	Secure protection and enhanced management of qualifying sites	2026 -Cowley Road drain CiWS, Church End LNR and Fulbourn Rd LNR
Adopt and deliver new Management Plan	City Services	New management plans embedded to	13 sites reviewed in

Reviews for LNRs and Commons		ensure favourable habitat condition	2025 to be consulted, adopted and delivered in 2026 to 2031
Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions and implement on all sites by 2031	Review in 2025 / 2026 Implement 2027 -2031
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, East Cambridge Farmers Cluster	Enhanced grassland management of key sites to improve habitat condition	Consult in 2026, trial in 2027, if successful deliver from 2028 - 2031
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project (GCCSP)	City Services, South Staffs Water, Cam Catchment Partnership, Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites across City and Sith Cambs. Work with partners to deliver WINEP and other investment in Cambridge chalk streams	2026 - 2028
Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	City Service, GCSPS, CPERC	Continue support through Service Level Agreement and representation on the Steering Group	2026 - 2031

Nature in your neighbourhood *'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'*

Actions	Lead & Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Seek support and agree actions to embed Natural England Green Infrastructure principles to achieve Nature City Accreditation	City Services, Community Services, CNN, CCF Community Groups, Business	Strengthened partnership, shared leadership, community engagement, external recognition, increase funding opportunities	2026 Self-assessment. Build Partnership, seek Foundation Accreditation.
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit (publish 2021) promotion	City Services, Community services	Inspire communities to codesign and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement.	Seek to deliver at least 3 parks improvements per annum . 2026 - 2031
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS delivery ward-based community action	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Community Groups	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting city wide, ward scale delivery of the LNRS.	2026 – 2030 programme to enable communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions locally
Butterfly Friendly Council (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC including adopting ecological sensitive lighting principles on core sites	2026 - 2027

Cambridge Elm diversity Project – *celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm*	City Services, Community Service, BCN WT	Establish a 'community nursery' of local Elm species for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2031
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services,	Establish a 'community nursery' of local cultivars for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2031
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure management and replacement planting for willow pollards	2026 - 2031
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, Community Services, CNN	Month long programme of free and low-cost events to connect people with nature	Support events and promotion in 2026, seek funding 2026 - 2031
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource, explore partnership working to support the 'Go Green in 15' initiative.	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site	2026 - 2031
Environment Improvement Programme (EIP) project selection criteria / prioritisation	City Services	Seek to allocate future budget to projects that meet strategic biodiversity and urban forest objectives.	2026 - 2027

'Wild about Art' projects – continue to support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	City Services, Community Services, artist and communities	Innovative education and / or habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	2026 - 2031
Urban Nature Conservation Evidence	City Services, Cambridge Conservation Initiative, Cambridge Conservation Forum	Facilitate research trials on our urban conservation actions to build a shared evidence base	2026 – Closed Churchyard grass cutting trials and monitoring invertebrate use of climate resilient non-native trees

8 References

Draft Cambridge City Council Urban Forest Strategy

Draft Cambridge City Council Climate Change Strategy

Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Draft South Cambridgeshire District Council Climate & Nature Strategy

Cambridgeshire County Council Biodiversity Strategy

Cambridge Nature Network

Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Report

9 Glossary of Terms

Amenity Grassland – Frequently mown, species-poor grassland.

Biodiversity – Variety of living organisms.

Biodiversity Duty – Statutory requirement to enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity Emergency – Recognition of rapid decline.

Biodiversity Metric – DEFRA tool to calculate biodiversity units.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Measurable improvement in biodiversity.

Blue Infrastructure – Water-based ecological features.

Calcareous Grassland – Chalk/limestone grassland.

Chalk Streams – Rare freshwater habitats.

Climate Resilience – Ability to withstand climate impacts.

Connectivity – Joined habitats enabling species movement.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 – Protects key species and habitats.

CRoW Act – Right to roam and strengthened protections.

Dasgupta Review – Review on economics of biodiversity.

Deadwood – Standing or fallen decaying wood providing habitat.

Designation – Formal recognition of biodiversity importance.

Distinctiveness – Rarity/value score in biodiversity metric.

Ecological Succession – Natural habitat change over time.

Ecosystem Services – Benefits provided by nature.

Environment Act 2021 – Major UK environmental legislation.

Garden Biodiversity – Ecological value of private gardens.

Green Infrastructure – Network of natural/semi-natural areas.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Joint spatial plan for future growth.

Habitat Condition – Measure of ecological quality.

Habitat Creation – Establishing new habitats.

Habitat Enhancement – Improving existing habitats.

Habitat Fragmentation – Breaking up connected habitats.

Lawton Report – Recommends ‘bigger, better, more joined-up’ nature.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Statutory strategy for nature recovery.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – Statutory designation for local biodiversity sites.

Measurable Net Gain – Quantified biodiversity improvement.

National Planning Policy Framework – National planning policies.

NERC Act 2006 – Defines Priority Habitats and Species.

Neutral Grassland – Grassland on neutral soils.

Pollard – Traditional tree management.

Priority Habitats & Species – National conservation priorities.

Protected Road Verge – Verge designated for conservation.

Recreational Pressure – Ecological impacts of high public use.

River Restoration – Reinstating natural river processes.

Semi-natural Habitat – Human-influenced yet biodiverse habitat.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest – National statutory designation.

Strategic Significance – Biodiversity Metric value booster.

Urban Forest – All trees in an urban area.

Veteran Tree / Veteranisation – Trees with biodiversity-rich features.

10 Appendices

Appendix 1	National Legislation
Appendix 2	Biodiversity Audit (2020 – 2025)
Appendix 3	Cambridge City Council, core biodiversity site habitat condition audit 2025
Appendix 4	2026 Draft Biodiversity Strategy Mid Term Review Consultation Responses
Appendix 5	Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025)

ENDS

Appendix 3

Cambridge City Council, core biodiversity site habitat condition audit 2025

The following provides a summary of the changes highlighted in the biodiversity audits between 2020 and 2025. A total of 14 sites we reassessed in 2025. Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans have been developed for these locations.

Overall themes

An attempt has been made to provide an overall condition for each site, and the direction of travel, taking a view across all the habitats and conditions at that location. These overall conditions are based on judgement and do not necessarily consider just extent of conditions across the site. Instead, additional weight has been placed on what are perceived to be the most important features of each site. For example, at Nine Wells the site is assessed overall as moderate – stable even though the most extensive habitat (woodland has moved from moderate to good). This is because the key habitat at this location, the chalk springs have remained stable in moderate condition. Another example is West Pit where the most extensive habitat, woodland, has declined in condition. However, this site has overall been assessed as good – stable because this is the condition of the calcareous grassland at this location, its most important feature.

The table below summarises the overall assessments for each site.

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - stable***
Stourbridge Common	***Poor – stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell East	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell West	***Moderate - declining***
Paradise	***Good - stable***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – declining***
Nine Wells	***Moderate - stable***
Midsummer Common	***Poor - stable***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – declining***
West Pit	***Good - stable***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - stable***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – improving***

Appendix 3

Of the fourteen sites that were reassessed in 2025 two are considered to be in good condition, ten are considered to be in moderate condition and two are considered to be in poor condition. The two sites in good condition are West Pit and Paradise, both with critical and rare habitats in the city (calcareous grassland and wet woodland). It is notable that the two sites in poor condition are significant and extensive locations: Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common. Whilst these sites are in poor condition their scale and prominence in the city does indicate great potential for improvement if grazing can be appropriately managed, together with recreational impacts.

Of the sites two are thought to be improving, whilst nine are stable and three are declining. The two improving sites are those which have undergone the most significant change in recent years (Logan's Meadow and Hobson's Park). The declining sites - Byron's Pool, Bramblefields and West Barnwell – have seen negative change for a variety of reasons possible maturing habitats with a lack of management, or recreational pressures in the case of Byron's Pool.

The following tables provide summaries for each key habitat type at the 14 locations across the city.

Grasslands

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - stable***
Stourbridge Common	***Poor – stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen New Bit	***Poor – stable*** ***Moderate - improving***
Barnwell East	***Poor – declining***
Paradise	***Poor – declining***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – improving***
Midsummer Common	***Poor - stable***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – stable***
West Pit	***Good - stable***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - stable***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate –stable***

This shows that the most significant areas of grassland are stable or improving. However, it also shows that sites which feature important areas of grasslands are in poor condition (Stourbridge Common, Sheep's Green, Coe Fen and Midsummer Common). These areas of poor condition are generally driven by a lack of species diversity and structure in the grasslands. This may be due to a combination of factors but improving grazing regimes and appropriate management of recreational pressures will likely improve condition.

Woodland

Appendix 3

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - declining***
Stourbridge Common	***Moderate - declining***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Poor - declining***
Barnwell East	***Moderate – improving***
Barnwell West	***Moderate - declining***
Paradise	***Good - stable***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – declining***
Nine Wells	***Good – improving***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – stable***
West Pit	***Moderate - declining***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***

The key woodland sites of Paradise, Byron's Pool, Nine Wells and West Pit show mixed results. Both Byron's Pool and West Pit woodlands are declining, but potentially for different reasons, with recreational impacts at Byon's Pool and ash dieback and invasive species impacting West Pit. Paradise and Nine Wells are both now in good condition, with Nine Wells showing improvement in condition in this monitoring period.

Scrub

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - stable***
Stourbridge Common	***Moderate - stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell East	***Good - stable***
Barnwell West	***Moderate - declining***
Bramblefields	***Poor – declining***
West Pit	***Moderate - stable***
Logan's Meadow	***Poor – declining***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - declining***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – improving***

Areas of well-established scrub at Barnwell West, Bramblefield, Logan's Meadow and Mill Road Cemetery are declining and this may be a result of lack of management resulting in maturing scrub with few clearings or glades and little regrowth and structure. However, some areas have remained in stable condition and the new areas of scrub at Hobson's Park are improving.

Appendix 3

Aquatic habitats

Site	Overall condition assessment
Coldham's Common	***Moderate - declining***
Stourbridge Common	***Moderate - stable***
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits	***Moderate - declining***
Barnwell East	***Moderate - stable***
Barnwell West	***Poor - stable***
Paradise	***Good - declining***
Byron's Pool	***Moderate – declining***
Nine Wells	***Moderate - stable***
Bramblefields	***Moderate – declining***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – stable***

Many of the aquatic habitats, which includes ditches and ponds, across the assessed sites are in moderate condition, however a significant number are declining in condition. This decline is for a number of reasons, for example overgrazing resulting in poaching at Coldham's Common and Coe Fen. The ponds at some sites, Byron's Pool and Bramblefields have declined in condition for varied reasons such as shading or invasive species but Logan's Meadow has seen improvements due to recent restoration works and slowly maturing habitats.

Appendix 3

Site summaries

Coldham's Common Moderate - stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exceptions are the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types, and the g2a Lowland calcareous grassland is classified as g2c Other calcareous grassland. This change is not a result of changes in the habitat, instead it is the result of more rigorous grassland assessments in the newer UK Habitat Classification methodology.

The majority of the grasslands are in a stable condition, with the exception of the modified moderate and good condition, passing the majority of criteria with the exception of the playing fields which fails essential Criterion A. Some small areas of woodland south of the railway, have also declined in condition, however, this is likely as a result of updated methodologies in the Statutory Metric. The areas of scrub overall are in good or moderate condition. However, a small area is in poor condition, failing the majority of criteria. Coldham's Brook has declined in condition from good to moderate and it is likely this is a result of overgrazing and damage to the banks of the watercourse and the rigorous criteria for floristic diversity. All other habitat types are broadly in a similar condition to the 2020 audit and considered stable.

Stourbridge Common Poor – stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exception being is that the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. Overall conditions for the majority of habitats have remained stable, with only some areas of woodland declining from moderate to poor. This change is likely due to a change in the condition assessment criteria. The site does experience overgrazing and high levels of recreational pressure. Changes in management would help to improve the condition of the grassland present.

Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits Moderate - stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exception being is that the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. New Bit is also developing into wood-pasture and parkland.

Updated methodologies of UKHab and the Statutory Metric have led to changes in some habitat and condition across the site, in particular Sheep's Green. The grassland, scrub and freshwater habitats at Sheep's Green are in a moderate stable condition. However, the site does experience overgrazing and excessive trampling due to recreational pressure and should be managed appropriately to improve the conditions and grassland types present. Habitats at New Bit are overall in a stable condition, with only

the grassland improving condition from poor to moderate. Grasslands at Coe Fen remain poor. The ditches as this location are now in poor condition, failing criteria relating to species richness, duckweed and damage due to cattle poaching.

Barnwell East ***Moderate - stable***

Updated methodologies of UKHab and the Statutory Metric have led to changes in habitat and condition across the site. The calcareous grassland is at risk from vigorous invasive species including Canadian goldenrod. The scrub habitats are in good condition and improving, changes to the condition assessment methodology now mean that only mixed scrub requires a condition assessment. The woodland is also improving; it is now classified as a priority habitat and will continue to improve as it matures; invasive species management is necessary in this habitat also.

Barnwell West ***Moderate - declining***

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exception being is that the woodland has now been classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7 Other broadleaved woodland types. This is a positive change as w1f7 is a Habitat of Principal Importance.

There has been a reduction in condition of the habitats. The woodland has declined in condition due to a lack of understorey/vertical structure and deadwood. This may be a result of lack of management and impacts of browsing. Scrub has declined in condition in part due to a lack of structure and glades, with the northern parcel lacking good species diversity.

Paradise ***Good - stable***

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. Small sections of the modified grassland have been subsumed into the wet woodland habitat. All other habitats have remained at the same extent, or slightly increased in the case of wet woodland.

The wet woodland, a Habitat of Principal Importance and key feature of the site is retained in good condition, albeit with continued pressures from recreation and anti-social behaviour. The grassland clearing in the north has decreased in condition from moderate to poor which may be a result of increasing dominance of ruderal species which is decreasing the overall species richness. However, the ruderal species continue to provide resource for various species, particularly nectar and foodplants for invertebrates, which in combination with the sheltered glade environment provides good habitat.

Byron's Pool ***Moderate – declining***

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The exceptions being that the woodland is now classified as w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland rather than w1g7

Other broadleaved woodland types. This is a positive change as w1f7 is a Habitat of Principal Importance. The area of cropland in the north of the site is now classified as other calcareous grassland.

There has been a reduction in condition of some of the habitats. The woodland has declined from good to moderate condition, likely as a result of increased recreational pressure, low diversity in age structure and lack of a recognisable ground flora. The ponds have also declined from overall from good to moderate, this change is likely due to a change in the condition assessment criteria with ponds failing one or more of the following: A – water quality; C – duckweed cover, D – connectivity and F – non-native invasives. An assessment of the fish pass was not undertaken during the 2025 survey, as this beyond the scope of the assessment. However, the fish pass appears to be in a stable condition.

Nine Wells** **Moderate - stable

Habitat types and extents have remained broadly similar between 2020 and 2025. The small area of grassland in the south-west has been reclassified as modified grassland from *Arrhenatherum* neutral grassland. This change is not a result of changes in the habitat, instead it is the result of more rigorous grassland assessments in the newer UK Habitat Classification methodology.

The woodland has improved in condition from moderate to good, now having better levels of deadwood and reduced impacts from grazing. A condition assessment of the chalk streams at Nine Wells was beyond the scope of the assessment however, they appear to be in a stable or slightly improved condition thanks to recent works to improve sinuosity and flow diversity. The small area of grassland has reduced from moderate condition to poor condition, largely in part due to the changing methodologies in the biodiversity metric. The hedgerows have remained stable or improved and are now all in good condition.

Midsummer Common** **Poor - stable

There has been little change at Midsummer Common with no significant changes in habitat type or extent. The only minor change that has occurred has resulted from the translocation of grassland turves from Hobson's Park. This has created a new area of other neutral grassland. In addition some areas of bramble scrub have been cut back.

The conditions at Midsummer Common have remained stable, albeit poor. The new area of other neutral grassland is in moderate condition.

Bramblefields** **Moderate – declining

The habitats and their extents at Bramblefields have remained similar. Two notable habitats at the site have declined in condition (ponds and scrub) but the other have remained stable (with minor changes likely a result of changing condition assessment methodologies in the different biodiversity metrics that have been applied). The ponds have declined from good to moderate and this is because of the

presence of invasive species, shading and lack of open water. The scrub has declined in condition from good to poor because it has become dominated by a single species; they lack good edge habitat and some younger plants. Littering and human activity are also having impacts.

***West Pit** Good - stable*

The extents of habitats at West Pit have largely remained stable. There has been a slight decrease in coverage of woodland although this is results of a mapping error in 2020. Continued scrub clearance has occurred around the edges of the calcareous grassland at the cliff top which has led minor changes in the coverage of these habitat types. The grassland that is present on the cliff face in the south of the site has been reclassified as modified grassland, rather than calcareous grassland. This is likely due to more rigorous grassland classifications in the new UKHab methodology. This grassland lacks both the species diversity and the calcareous indicators to be considered calcareous grassland.

The key habitat at this location is the calcareous grassland and this remains in good condition. The other major habitat at West Pit is the woodland. This has declined in condition from good to moderate. Whilst this change in condition may be partly a result of changing condition assessment methodologies is it clear that the woodland has also declined in condition. The lower condition value is a result of failing criteria concerning invasive species, disease (ash dieback) which is having a significant impact on the canopy, lack of proper NVC community, lack of veteran trees and significant nutrient enrichment. The extent of the ash dieback and the risk from falling rocks makes this area particularly unsafe and it is proposed that no public access is allowed. Due to the state of the woodland, and the likely continued decline it is proposed that this area is managed with a target habitat of calcareous scrub.

***Logan's Meadow** Moderate - improving*

Logan's Meadow has undergone many changes in the past, with new habitats being created. The recent wetland creation will lead to higher condition and value habitats, currently they are lacking vegetation and structure, however this will change over time and the current assessment of condition (and habitat type to some extent) is likely not representative. The wet woodland is potentially improving in condition as are the woodland ponds that have now been established for 20 years.

***Mill Road Cemetery** Moderate - stable*

The former calcareous grassland within one of the quadrants has now been reclassified as other neutral grassland which has a lower distinctiveness. This change is not a result of changes in the habitat, instead it is the result of more rigorous grassland assessments in the newer UK Habitat Classification methodology. Otherwise, the extent and types of habitats have remained largely stable.

The neutral grassland, the key habitat feature at Mill Road Cemetery, has remained in moderate condition. The scrub has reduced in condition and this is likely to be a result of maturation of this habitat with poor edges and a lack of glades and clearings.

***Hobson's Park** Moderate – improving*

The extent of the 2025 survey was significantly larger than the 2020 survey with several additional areas assessed. In addition to this, several habitats included within the scope of the 2020 survey had been removed and/or were inaccessible during the 2025 survey due to the development of Cambridge South station, mostly along the eastern boundary. An area previous classified as *g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland* is now classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland* due to the calcareous grassland indicator species present. The condition of this grassland has also changed from 'good' to 'moderate'. However, this is likely to reflect the change in condition assessment criteria rather than an actual decline in the condition of the grassland. The grassland appears to be significantly more species-rich than previously. Other grassland areas remain in the same condition or were excluded from either the 2020 or 2025 surveys.

An area assessed as woodland in the 2020 surveys has been assessed as scrub to reflect the true nature of the habitat currently present. The 2020 woodland condition was 'poor' and would remain 'poor' if the woodland condition assessment had been applied in 2025, with a score of 22 points. However, the current scrub habitat has been assessed as being in 'moderate' condition.

The hedgerow surrounding the allotments and the line of trees along the western boundary have improved in condition from 'poor' to 'moderate'. Hobson's brook has also increased in condition from 'moderate' in 2020 to 'good' in 2025.

Appendix 3

Table of condition changes at each site

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Coldham's Common				
Other calcareous grassland (East)	Poor declining because of recreational management and scrub encroachment around the rifle butt	Poor - stable	Whilst the species composition and structure have largely remained the same the 2023 version of UKHab methodology has more rigorous selection criteria for grassland types, meaning this grassland now qualifies as g2c other calcareous grassland.	
Other calcareous grassland (The Triangle)	Moderate/good stable due to ongoing sympathetic management	Moderate - stable	Increased scrub encroachment.	Rotational clearance to reduce scrub encroachment in grassland areas.
Other neutral grassland	Moderate declining. Formerly more indicator species recorded in this area, potential overgrazing	Poor - stable	Stable condition however grassland has low floristic diversity and fails essential Criterion A.	Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas.
Arrhenatherum neutral grassland	Moderate declining. Formerly more indicator species recorded in this area, potential overgrazing	Moderate - stable	N/A	Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas.
Modified grassland	Poor stable. Pitches under regular management with close mowing, grassland dominated by tall fescue with heavy grazing	Moderate/ good condition improving	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	On going management as appropriate for amenity areas. Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas.
Line of trees	Good condition stable	Good condition stable	N/A	On going management as appropriate
Other broadleaved woodland	Moderate or good improving due to maturation of areas of planting	Moderate or poor declining.	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	On going management as appropriate
Native hedgerow with bank or ditch	Moderate condition and stable with regular management	Moderate condition stable	N/A	On going management as appropriate
Native species-rich hedgerow with trees	Good condition and stable	Good condition stable	N/A	On going management as appropriate.
Mixed scrub	Good declining due to over maturation in parts	Moderate/ good condition declining	The areas of scrub overall are in good or moderate condition. However, a small area is in poor condition, failing the majority of criteria.	On going management of scrub as appropriate. Reduce scrub encroachment in grassland areas
Reedbed	Poor stable	Moderate condition and improving	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the reedbed has improved in condition. The reedbed passed the majority of the criteria, failing only	Keep reedbed open and reduce scrub encroachment.

Appendix 3

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
			presence of bare ground and a diverse structure.	
Ditch (Coldham's Brook)	Good condition and improving, formerly banks of nettles but now increasing in floristic diversity	Moderate condition and declining	The watercourse has declined in condition likely as a result of increased damage from cattle and its floristic diversity which failed exceed 10 sp / 20m.	Chalk stream project objective to improve light along the watercourse.
Ditch (East Main Drain)	Poor stable	Poor stable	N/A	Scrub clearance to improve light and floristic diversity along watercourse.
Stourbridge Common				
Grassland	Poor declining condition	Poor condition and likely stable	N/A	Grazing strategy to be developed. Creation of scrapes in grassland areas. Increase structural diversity of grassland.
Woodland	Good condition which is likely stable	Moderate condition and declining	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Lines of trees	Good condition and stable	Good condition and stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Scrub	Moderate condition and likely stable	Moderate condition and stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Ditch	Poor declining condition	Poor and likely stable	N/A	Ditch is dry for long periods, aspiration to create more hollows or channels along water line
Coldham's Brook	Moderate condition and likely stable	Moderate condition and stable	N/A	Invasive management, scrub clearance to improve light and floristic diversity along watercourse.
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits				
Grassland (Sheep's Green)	Poor and likely to be declining.	Moderate / poor and likely to be in a stable condition.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Grazing strategy to be developed.
Woodland (Sheep's Green)	Moderate stable.	Poor declining.	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Scrub (Sheep's Green)	Moderate stable.	Moderate stable.	The majority of the scrub patches are in a similar condition to the 2020 audit, as they lacked a well-developed edge.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Freshwater habitats (Sheep's Green)	Moderate declining.	Moderate and likely in a stable condition.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Consideration to incorporate new waterways across grassland. Enhance and new ditch works adjacent to Darwin College, bank reinforcements at Laundress Green, naturalisation of banks near Snob's brook.
Grassland (Coe Fen)	Poor- declining.	Poor –stable.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Grazing strategy to be developed.

Appendix 3

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Ditches (Coe Fen)	Moderate – improving.	Poor – declining.	These ditches fail on criteria relating to species richness, duckweed and damage due to cattle poaching.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Appropriate grazing strategy to be developed.
Grassland (New Bit)	Poor condition which is likely to be stable	Moderate condition and likely to be improving	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric. However, grassland had improved floristic diversity. Grassland is developing into wood pasture and parkland.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Grazing strategy to be developed.
Scrub (New Bit)	Poor condition which is likely to be stable	Poor stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Ditch (New Bit)	Poor condition which is likely to be stable	Poor stable	N/A	
Vicar's Brook (New Bit)	Moderate condition which is likely to be stable	Moderate stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Barnwell East				
Grassland (calcareous)	Moderate – declining. More diverse swards are present as described in 2005, but invasive species remain present at similar levels, with early growth scrub also apparent.	Poor – declining. The calcareous grassland has been re-classified to an alternate habitat type due to differences in UKHab methodology. The condition remains poor, invasive species presence remains a problem throughout.	Invasive species presence, poor structure and lack of diversity.	Invasive species management.
Grassland (modified)	Poor – declining. Low species diversity.	Good – improving. The condition has increased since 2020, largely due to increased species diversity.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric, as well as higher recorded species diversity.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Scrub	Good – stable. Areas of scrub within the centre of the site are as described in 2005, with several glades and varied structure	Good – stable. Changes in methodologies lead to only mixed scrub requiring a condition assessment, it remains in good condition. The areas of other scrub types remain in similar conditions to that of 2020.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Consideration to removing areas of scrub.
Pond	Good – stable.	Moderate – stable. The only criterion failed relates to presence of invasive species.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Potential for desilting.
Woodland	Moderate – improving. Characteristics of the understorey indicate the development of a woodland character.	Moderate – improving. The condition will continue to improve as the woodland matures and understory develops.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Barnwell West				

Appendix 3

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Woodland	2020: Good – improving. Whilst previously recorded as scrub, the overall condition compared with 2005 appears to be improving.	2025: Moderate – declining.	The woodland has declined in condition due to a lack of understorey/vertical structure and deadwood.	Potential for woodland management is resources available. Non-priority work across the city.
Freshwater Coldham's Brook	2020: Moderate – stable. Conditions in and along Coldham's Brook are largely as described in 2005.	2025: Poor – improving. Whilst the condition is now lower than recorded in 2020, the recent improvements to flow and habitat in Coldham's Brook will likely lead to an uplift in condition over time.	Poor due to a lack of aquatic plant species diversity and a lack of aquatic plant species structure. This is largely driven by high levels of shade.	Open canopy around the brook to allow for greater diversity of aquatic plant species.
Freshwater East Cambridge Main Drain	2020: Poor – stable. Conditions in and along Coldham's Brook and East Cambridge Main Drain are largely as described in 2005.	2025: Poor – stable. The condition of this drain is very similar to that recorded in 2020, and will likely remain so.	N/A	Retain as is for drainage purposes and for fern communities on banksides.
Scrub (south)	2020: Good – stable. Where present, conditions largely as described in 2005.	2025: Moderate – declining. The scrub will require management to improve condition, if left as is it will likely be subsumed into the adjacent woodland.	Poor structure.	Potential scrub management if resources available. Non-priority work across the city.
Scrub (north)	2020: Moderate – declining. Reduction in extent.	Poor – declining. Without management to encourage additional species diversity and diversity of age, this habitat will likely remain in poor condition.	Poor species diversity and structure.	Potential scrub management if resources available. Non-priority work across the city.
Paradise				
Grassland	2020: Poor/moderate condition which is likely to be stable.	2025: Poor condition, declining, potentially as a result of tall ruderal and herbs becoming dominant.	Increased prevalence of tall ruderal species in the grassland to the north likely to be contributing to a low species diversity.	Ongoing cutting regime.
Woodland	2020: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	2025: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	N/A	Ongoing woodland management programme.
Pond	2020: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	2025: Good condition which is likely to be stable.	N/A	Manage surrounding scrub and woodland to allow continued light to pond.
Aquatic marginal vegetation	2020: Good condition which is likely to be stable	2025: Moderate condition, declining, potentially as a result of drying and scrub encroachment.	Encroachment from scrub and low water levels resulting in lower condition.	Manage surrounding scrub and woodland to reduce encroachment.
Byron's Pool				
Grassland (other neutral)	Moderate stable	Moderate stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Grassland (other calcareous)	N/A	Moderate improving	Area of grassland was originally the cropland in the north of the site and had previously been seeded, it has developed well into calcareous grassland.	Ongoing management as appropriate. Use green hay in meadow

Appendix 3

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Woodland	Good declining	Moderate – declining	Change is likely as a result of increased recreational pressure, low diversity in age structure and lack of a recognisable ground flora	Ongoing woodland management programme
Hedgerow	Good - improving	Good - stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate
Ponds	Good - declining	Moderate - declining	Change is likely due to a change in the condition assessment criteria	Non-native invasive and scrub management
Fish pass	Moderate - stable	Moderate - stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Nine Wells				
Woodland	2020: Conditions match the site description from the 2004 management plan (Friends of Nine Wells LNR, 2004).	2025: Good – improving. Better instances of deadwood and reduced impacts of browsing.	Improved deadwood and reduced browsing.	Ongoing woodland management programme.
Freshwater (chalk stream)	2020: Moderate – stable. Conditions match the site description from the 2004 management plan (Friends of Nine Wells LNR, 2004).	2025: Moderate – stable. Assumption based on habitat descriptions rather than condition assessments.	N/A	Ongoing management to improve flow diversity and conditions for aquatic plants. Thinning of canopy over streamheads to reduce leaf litter and sediment build up. Management of visitors and dogs to reduce negative impacts on banks and water quality.
Hedgerows	2020: Moderate and poor – stable.	2025: Good – improving. All hedgerows in good condition with few criteria missed.	Improvement over time.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Grassland	2020: Moderate – stable.	2025: Poor - stable.	Change in condition likely driven by changing assessment methodologies in biodiversity metric.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Midsummer Common				
Grassland (modified)	Poor – stable.	Poor – stable.	N/A	Update grazing regime to improve grassland structure and possibly diversity. Recreational management.
Grassland (other neutral)	N/A	Moderate – stable.	This is a new grassland type at Midsummer Common as a results of translocation from Hobson's Park.	Consider further translocation if opportunities arise.
Line of trees	Good/moderate – stable.	Good/moderate – stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Bramble scrub	Poor – improving.	N/A (no condition assessment in new metric) likely stable.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Bramblefields				
Grassland	Moderate – stable – because of recreational management	Poor/moderate – stable. The modified grassland areas remain similar to 2020. One area of other neutral grassland is now present, with a good diversity of forbs, it is in moderate condition.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.

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Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Woodland – w1f7	Good – stable	Moderate – stable. The woodland in the west of the site has good age and species diversity.	Changes in the assessment methodology are likely the reason the woodland is no longer 'good' condition.	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Woodland (central hawthorn dominated)	Moderate – declining	Moderate – stable. The central woodland has little succession and does have impacts from recreation.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Ponds	Good – stable	Moderate – declining. The ponds are becoming dominated with vegetation, limiting open water. Crassula is present in both.	Presence of invasive species, shading and lack of open water.	Invasive species removal, management to increase open water
Scrub	Good – stable	Poor – declining. Areas of scrub have become dominated by a single species; they lack good edge habitat and some younger plants. Littering and human activity are also having impacts.	Dominance of single species, physical damage and human impacts.	Ongoing management as appropriate
West Pit				
Woodland	Good – stable	Moderate – declining.	Now failing criteria concerning invasive species, disease (ash dieback) which is having a significant impact on the canopy, lack of proper NVC community, lack of veteran trees and significant nutrient enrichment.	Managed decline of woodland as ash dieback removes most of canopy. Target calcareous scrub habitat. No public access due to safety concerns.
Calcareous grassland (cliff top)	Good – stable	Good - stable	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Calcareous grassland (cliff face)	Poor - improving	Poor – stable	Recently cleared in 2020 and with annual cuts to 2025. This grassland was reclassified as modified grassland due to a lack of species richness and calcareous indicators in the sward, it now being dominated by false oat-grass.	Continued management as habitat in the form of cleared glade/slope of ecological value although it is not classified as calcareous grassland.
Scrub	Good, moderate, poor	Moderate – stable	The scrub fail criteria relating to lack of age classes and also lack of glades. This scrub passes the criteria relating to invasive species because, although they are present (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), they do not reach the 5% threshold.	Ongoing management as appropriate, including continued cutting back to keep grassland habitats open.
Hedgerows	Good - stable	Poor – probably stable Good – probably stable	One hedgerow is now classified as being in poor condition due to the fact that it fails two functional groups (damaged/nutrient enriched ground flora and presence of archaophytes and damage).	Ongoing management as appropriate.
Logan's Meadow				

Appendix 3

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
Woodland	Moderate – stable. Conditions reported in 2005, particularly with regard to ground flora indicate a strong nutrient influence from the River Cam.	Moderate – stable/improving. The woodland is largely the same as recorded in 2020. The condition assessment is one point away from reaching good condition	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate
Pond (woodland)	Poor – stable. Ponds in 2005 were newly dug	Moderate – improving. The woodland ponds are improving in condition as they mature.	The ponds have good vegetation structure, and have improved in condition since they were dug.	Ongoing management as appropriate
Scrub	Good – stable. No formal survey of this area.	Poor – declining. The mixed scrub is in poor condition; it has a lack of a well-developed edge and no clearings as well as few younger plants.	Changes in assessment methodology likely have an impact on the change in condition.	Management to increase regrowth of saplings and young plants, and reduce the density of the scrub to introduce clearings.
Mill Road Cemetery				
Calcareous grassland	2020: Moderate declining due to scrub encroachment	2025: No calcareous grassland was recorded on site. Whilst, similar species were recorded to those identified in the 2020 surveys, the criteria to meet certain types of grassland i.e. calcareous has is more precise in the updated UK Hab v2.0 definitions. This area of grassland therefore does not meet the definitions for Lowland calcareous or other calcareous grassland and has been included in the other neutral grassland below.	Change in assessment methodology.	N/A
Neutral grassland	2020: Moderate condition and likely to be stable	2025: Moderate condition and no change. The condition of this grassland is very similar to that recorded in 2020, and will likely remain so.	N/A	Ongoing management as appropriate. Long-term aspiration for grazing to improve sward.
Scrub	2020: Good condition and improving	2025: Moderate condition and declining.	Change is likely considered due to the management and the scrub maturing and not passing condition assessment criteria for developed edge (D and E) within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.	Management of scrub to improve glades or rides and to reduce the density of the scrub.
Hobson's Park				
Neutral grassland	Good condition stable.	2025: Moderate condition and stable. Habitat type changed from neutral grassland to other calcareous grassland.	Change in condition likely to result from change in condition assessment criteria.	Continued appropriate management should allow grassland to return to 'good' condition.
Neutral grassland	Moderate condition and likely to be stable	2025: Moderate condition and no change. The condition of this grassland is similar to that recorded in	N/A	Continued appropriate management should allow grassland to also be classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland*.

Appendix 3

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
		2020, continued management should allow this grassland to also be classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland*.		
Calcareous grassland	Poor condition, stable.	N/A	N/A	Not assessed in 2025 survey effort.
Scrub	Poor condition woodland and likely to be stable	2025: assessed as scrub to reflect current habitat; in moderate condition likely to be stable/improving as the habitat matures.	Change in habitat type	Ongoing management will depend on whether woodland habitat or scrub habitat desired.
Pond	Moderate condition stable	2025: remains in moderate condition and likely to be stable. Area of open water has decreased since previous assessment.	N/A	Unlikely to be able to change condition due to being connected to Hobson's brook. Although may benefit from management to reduce cover of reedmace.
Hedgerows	Poor condition stable	2025: improved to moderate condition	Improved due to hedgerow becoming more mature and passing additional criteria.	
Line of trees	Poor condition stable	2025: Improved to moderate condition	Improved due to maturing trees but also may be due to change in condition assessment criteria.	
Ditch	Poor condition stable	2025: Poor condition stable	Dry ditch at time of survey, significant amount of scrub covering the ditch as well as areas of aquatic marginal vegetation	
Honson's brook	Moderate condition stable	2025: Good condition	Passes all condition assessment criteria, may be due to location of condition assessment	