Appendices

Appendix 1. **National Legislation**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 (last updated July 2021)

The revised NPPF was updated on 20 July 2021 setting out the Government's planning policies for England and the process by which these should be applied. The policies within the NPPF are a material consideration in the planning process. The key principle of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with sustainable development defined as a balance between economic, social and environmental needs.

Policies 174 to 188 of the NPPF address conserving and enhancing the natural environment, stating that the planning system should:

- Contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services; and
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity.

Furthermore, there is a focus on re-use of existing brownfield sites or sites of low environmental value as a priority, and discouraging development in National Parks, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest, the Broads or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty other than in exceptional circumstances.

Where possible, planning policies should also "promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 sets out key legislation after the UK's exit from the European Union. With the largest changes to green regulations in decades, the Act includes the establishment of an Office for Environmental Protection, targets on air pollution, water quality and biodiversity, and the enshrinement of the 25 Year Environment Plan in law. The Act also makes provisions for a mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity for all developments covered by the Town and Country Planning Act, and it also introduces a statutory requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduced requiring local authorities to:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
- Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides legal protection to natives UK species and enhances the protection of SSSIs. In addition to affording protection to some species, The Act also names species which are considered invasive and require control. Section 14 of the Act prohibits the introduction into the wild of any animal of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in, and is not a regular visitor to, Great Britain in a wild state, or any species of animal or plant listed in Schedule 9 to the Act. In the main, Schedule 9 lists non-native species that are already established in the wild, but which continue to pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats, such that further releases should be regulated.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is secondary legislation which puts into domestic law the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC). These Directives contain rules for the protection of habitats and species, the proper management of habitats and preventing exploitation of species. The Regulations ensure that the UK will continue to meet international commitments under the Bern Convention and the Bonn convention.

Schedule 2 offers protection to a number of notable species such as great crested newts, hazel dormouse, otter, and all bat species. Schedule 2 protects these species from deliberate capture, death, or injury as well as disturbance both to themselves and their breeding sites or resting places.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Many of the species covered by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, along with a host of others not afforded additional protection, are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC Act 2006) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list (including 56 habitats and 943 species) has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England and draws upon the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) List of Priority Species and Habitats.

The S41 list should be used to guide decision-makers such as local and regional authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their normal functions – as required under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006. The duty applies to all local authorities and extends beyond just conserving what is already there, to carrying out, supporting and requiring actions that may also restore or enhance biodiversity.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The CRoW Act (2000), as well as implementing the "right to roam", also contains changes for nature conservation updating aspects of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 such as strengthening punishment for killing, injuring or disturbing protected species, and extending the regulations to cover reckless behaviour as well as intentional acts against protected species.

Section 74 of the act contains a list of habitats and species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, which falls in accordance with the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Policy documents (national, regional and local)

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) and Cambridge Local Plan (2018) - currently being updated to the Greater Cambridge Shared Local Plan

South Cambridgeshire District Council adopted their Local Plan in 2018, with the overall environmental objectives of: "contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, prudent use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy".

Key policies include:

Policy NH/4, which prevents developments from occurring that result in the loss, deterioration or fragmentation of irreplaceable habitats, and outlines that new developments must aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity.
Policy NH/5, which sets out protection for sites of biodiversity or geological importance; and
Policy NH/6, which encourages proposals that reinforce, link or create new green infrastructure in line with the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011).

Cambridge City Council also adopted their Local Plan in 2018, with a small selection of key policies including:

Policy 4: Green belt - new development in the Green Belt will not be approved except in very special circumstances, in line with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy 7: River Cam - development proposals that are situated along the River Cam should where possible enhance the natural resources of the river and provide opportunities for re-naturalisation of the river; and Policy 31 f: Any flat roofs should be a green or brown roof, as part of a key measure in Cambridge's climate change adaptation policy.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are preparing a Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which will set out plans for infrastructure, new homes and economic growth in the region over the next 20 years.

Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)

Published in January 2022 this document provides guidance on how biodiversity should be addressed through the planning process. The document provides technical guidance to ensure that the biodiversity policies set out in the Local Plans are effectively implemented. The document provides accessible, accurate and up-to-date guidance on the planning regulations surrounding biodiversity, including relevant national legislation. It sets out the information that should be submitted with planning applications to demonstrate how development proposals meet the councils' requirements. The Supplementary Planning Document is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications in both Council areas.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

DEFRA produced the Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services with the strategy mission defined to: "halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people". The first two action areas include developing an integrated landscape-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea, and to "put people at the heart of biodiversity policy". The actions themselves are supported by numerous grants, campaigns and competitions.

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

CCC/MKA Biodiversity Audit (2020)

The Biodiversity Audit, released in conjunction with this Biodiversity Strategy, is a report calculating a baseline estimate of biodiversity across several statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites owned by Cambridge City Council. Habitat and condition maps provide the data on the existing value of sites, with opportunities for enhancement and alterations to management regimes also provided. Sites were assessed using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (Crosher et al., 2019b) with the intention of providing measurable biodiversity gain in the future.

Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (The Lawton Report, 2010)

The Lawton Report (2010) is an independent review of wildlife sites across England, with the key aim of assessing whether these sites are capable of responding and adapting to climate change. Professor Lawton reached this conclusion: "England's collection of wildlife sites are generally too small and too isolated, leading to declines in many of England's characteristic species. With climate change, the situation is likely to get worse... We need more space for

nature". The report outlines 24 recommendations to improve the situation, with key themes of "more, bigger, better and joined".

25 Year Environment Plan 2018

The 25 Year Environment Plan published by DEFRA outlines long term government actions that prioritise environmental health in agriculture, fishing, land use and other areas. One of the six key areas identified for further action include "Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes", under which the development of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and the opportunity to reintroduce native species are outlined. Through the NRN, the goal is to provide half a million hectares of additional wildlife habitat to provide linkages and promote connectivity between existing protected areas. Ensuring environmental net gain in housing and infrastructure developments is also discussed as a key method of achieving economic growth whilst providing measurable improvements for the environment.

The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review 2021

The Dasgupta Review was prepared by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta and released in February 2021. The review's critical message is that nature can no longer be ignored within economic decisions, and that human demands vastly outpace the capacity of the natural environment to provide the "goods and services" required. In direct relation to ecology, the review discusses the importance of biodiversity in increasing the stability of ecosystem functioning, and that the loss of biodiversity reduces the productivity of communities and their ability to produce biomass. The review also outlines a fundamental flaw in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), highlighting its lack of consideration of the depreciation of natural capital, and the economic costs of these losses.

Appendix 2

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***
Bramblefield's	***Moderate – declining***
West Pit	***Good - stable***
Logan's Meadow	***Moderate - improving***
Mill Road Cemetery	***Moderate - stable***
Hobson's Park	***Moderate – improving***

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

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.

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.

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.

Appendices

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 presence of bare ground and a diverse structure.	Keep reedbed open and reduce scrub encroachment.

Appendices

Habitat	2020 Condition and direction of travel	2025 Condition and direction of travel	Reasons for change if any	Proposed actions in new management plans
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.

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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
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				
Woodland	2020: Good – improving. Whilst previously recorded	2025: Moderate – declining.	The woodland has declined in condition due to a lack of	Potential for woodland management is resources available.

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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
	as scrub, the overall condition compared with 2005 appears to be improving.		understorey/vertical structure and deadwood.	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
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

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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
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.
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.

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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 (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				
Woodland	Moderate – stable. Conditions reported in 2005, particularly with regard to ground flora indicate a strong	Moderate – stable/improving. The woodland is largely the same as recorded in 2020. The condition assessment is one point away from	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
	nutrient influence from the River Cam.	reaching good condition		
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 2020, continued management should allow this grassland to also be classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland*.	N/A	Continued appropriate management should allow grassland to also be classified as *g2c other calcareous grassland*.

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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
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	

Appendix 3 Biodiversity Duty Report

Published November 2025

Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025) and Action Plan (2026 – 2031)

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Introduction

What is Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, including all living organisms, the genetic differences within species, and the ecosystems they form. It covers:

Species diversity – the range of different species.

Genetic diversity – variation within species.

Ecosystem diversity – different habitats and ecological processes.

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What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?

The statutory Biodiversity Duty was first introduced by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act in 2006 which required that:

'***Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity***'.

In 2021, the Environment Act (Section 102 and 103) strengthened this duty by amending Section 40 of the NERC Act and by requiring all public authorities in England to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

As a public authority and local planning authority, the government guidance requires Cambridge City Council (CCC) to:

- Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration.
- Act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives.

To evidence the above we are required to publish a Biodiversity Report to communicate what we are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive changes that have been made. The first reporting period must end by 1st January 2026, and the report must be published within 12 weeks (by the end of March 2026).

This report follows the government guidelines and covers actions undertaken in the period from adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 through to November 2025.

Our role in nature recovery

Management of streets and open spaces

Cambridge City Council manages more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites, such as our 12 Local Nature Reserves, are designated and managed primarily for nature and form part of the core 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. 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 encourage other landowners to do the same.

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 water vole,

kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We are also riparian owners of 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 Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as the weir at Byron’s Pool LNR and ‘The Rush’ fish pass at Sheep’s Green LNR.

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 and capture carbon emissions.

Through implementation of our tree strategy, we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provide both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Street trees provide habitat and ‘stepping stones’ for species living in or moving through the built environment.

Management of our estate

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall, and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. Decisions on how we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide huge opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work. Energy efficiency Investment towards net zero will contribute to reducing the impact of climate change on the natural world, whilst increased water efficiency measures and rainwater capture will reduce abstraction pressure on the chalk stream aquifer.

Community Empowerment

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

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.

Planning and Growth

Through our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service we shape and implement policies that guide sustainable development seeking to protect, restore and enhance nature across administrative boundaries.

Section 1: Our policies, objectives and actions for biodiversity

In 2019 we declared a Biodiversity Emergency in recognition of the global loss of biodiversity and the local impacts this could have on the communities and business we serve.

To address this, we have recognised and incorporated the importance of conserving and enhancing local biodiversity across numerous strategies, policies, partnerships and actions.

1.1 Our corporate and partnership strategies and policies for biodiversity

Relevant strategies are summarised below, followed by further information on 4 key strategies:

Strategy or policy document	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Internal strategies	
Cambridge City Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027)	Sets out our 4 key priorities including: Priority 1: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies
Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)	Our key biodiversity document that includes our vision, objectives and actions to meet the biodiversity emergency declaration and Biodiversity Duty.
Tree Strategy (2016 – 2026)	Sets out policies and actions to manage the City tree stock, plus increase and diversify tree canopy for the benefit of people and nature.
Climate Change Strategy (2021 – 2026)	Includes actions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.
Cambridge Local Plan (2018)	Includes hierarchical policies to ensure development protects and enhances biodiversity.
Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	Provides technical guidance on how to comply with Local Plan policies to protect and enhance biodiversity.
Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (a 20 year plan for Greater Cambridge Area)	Includes a key theme of 'Biodiversity and Green Spaces' and proposes polices to protect and enhance biodiversity and

	improve the network of green spaces in Greater Cambridge.
External / partnership strategies	
Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recover Strategy (LNRS)	A proposed regional statutory plan that identifies local biodiversity priorities and maps areas for habitat restoration.
Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature' Vision for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Our Local Nature Partnership vision for doubling the current area of wildlife rich habitats by 2050.
Cambridge Nature Network vision	Sets out a shared vision for nature recovery in and around the city for collective delivery by partners.
BIG Chalk	A shared vision for supporting nature recovery projects across the chalk and limestone landscapes of southern England.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) - BNG Strategy	Commits to a minimum 20% BNG across the transport programme covering on and offsite delivery.

1.2 Our visions and objectives for biodiversity

Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)

'Our vision is that over the next 9 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, 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 part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and beyond. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces close to 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.'

To deliver this vision we have been delivering on 7 strategic objectives:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2025 and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2050

2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network

3. To promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions

4. To ensure that biodiversity is considered by all council service functions and projects

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 establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city

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

1. **Biodiversity mainstreaming:** This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that our actions minimise 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.
2. **The core:** This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in the city. 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.
3. **Nature in your neighbourhood**: This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through 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.

Natural Cambridgeshire 'Doubling Nature' Vision

'Natural Cambridgeshire' is the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. 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:

'Our Vision is that by doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will become a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper'

The key objective is to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and green space from 8.5% to 17% by 2050.

Cambridge Nature Network

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire Local Wildlife Trust (BCN WT) and Cambridge Past Present and Future with support from the City Council and other key landowning partners.

'Our vision is for Cambridge to have significant areas of downland, fens, meadows, waterways and woodlands around it, where nature can recover and thrive and where people can experience a wilder countryside and nature on their doorstep.'

The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focused 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. The Cambridge Nature Network has steered our actions over the past 5 years and forms a critical part of the emerging statutory LNRS.

Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The LNRS is a spatial strategy mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It identifies locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits including carbon sequestration, flood risk mitigation, accessibility to green space to promote social well-being.

The LNRS covering Cambridge City is being developed by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), who are the government appointed 'Responsible Body' working with our Local Nature Partnership (Natural Cambridgeshire) and Cambridgeshire County Council.

As a supporting authority, we have contributed to the development of the LNRS through representation on the Steering Group and at technical workshops and approving the draft document for consultation. We have advocated for inclusion of the existing Cambridge Nature Network (CNN) vision within the LNRS to ensure existing plans and projects are recognised, celebrated and link to the wider ambitions.

Key objectives identified for Cambridge City within the draft LNRS include:

Theme	Objective	Action
Ecological Connectivity	Enhance and expand chalk downland, fens, meadows, and woodlands within the CNN	Prioritise habitat creation and enhancement across CNN corridors
Chalk Stream Restoration	Restore stream flow, water quality, and habitat	Implement restoration works on urban chalk streams

Urban Forest	Increase and diversify tree canopy building on the successful Cambridge Canopy Project	Coordinate protection and planting across public and private land

A Public consultation on the draft LNRS ran from July to September 2025 and the subsequent revised documents are awaiting final Supporting Authority approval before submission to the Secretary of State, planned for late December 2025.

1.3 Our partnerships for biodiversity

We recognise that nature recovery cannot be delivered without working in collaboration with others. The table below summarises some of our key partnerships for nature.

Key partnerships and groups	Relevance to our biodiversity work
Natural Cambridgeshire	Helping steer sustainable development, nature recovery and community engagement with nature and coordinating an annual Actions for Nature Report
Cambridge Nature Network	Through the Steering Group we help guide strategic decisions, joint funding bids and project delivery, including the annual Cambridge Nature Festival
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)	Through the steering group and a service level agreement we support the work of the centre to collate, validate and supply habitat and species data across the County.
Cambridge Conservation Forum	Strengthen links and developing collaborations across the diverse community of conservation practitioners and researchers based in Cambridge
Cambridge Conservation Initiative – Urban Nature	A collaborative partnership which brings together the biggest names in international biodiversity conservation with the University of Cambridge and local conservation practitioners.
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Wildlife Site Partnership	We guide selection and monitoring of public and private Local Wildlife Sites to protect and enhance these critical habitats and the species they support
BIG Chalk	Both the Cambridge Nature Network and Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Projects are recognised project partners sharing knowledge and expertise with the wider partnership
Local Friends and community groups	We consult and offer support and guidance to numerous, passionate, diverse groups across the city to protect, enhance and celebrate our chalk streams, commons, parks, community orchards and gardens.

1.4 Our actions for biodiversity (2022 – 2025)

Through implementation of the above strategies with our partners, we have collectively delivered many actions for nature over the reporting period. These are summarised in the table below under our 3 Biodiversity Strategy Themes.

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

Action	Services & Partners	Outcome
Updated project 'Climate Change Rating Tool' to include a Biodiversity Assessment	All services	All corporate projects and programmes are assessed as to how they may impact or could enhance biodiversity prior to approval
Herbicide Reduction Plan for phased transition to cease herbicide use on our estate	City Service, Pesticide Free Cambridge,	Ceased use of herbicide across all council owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas in March 2024
Ceased the use of Peat in all landscape schemes	City Services, City Homes	Reduced demand for unsustainable harvesting of rare peat habits and associated carbon emissions.
City Services Operatives Biodiversity Training	City Services, BCN Wildlife Trust, Cambridge University / colleges	Delivered 3 bespoke training events alongside university college gardening teams to increase understanding and skills around Biodiversity, grassland and watercourse management
Great Crested Newt Pond Restoration at Bar Hill Crematorium	City Services, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Amphibian & Reptile Group	2 Great Crested Newt breeding ponds restored under Natural England license
Delivering 20% BNG on all our developments	City Investment Partnership	16 sites have delivered or secured minimum 20% BNG
Development of Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan	GCSPS	'First Conversation' consultation in 2020, 'First Proposals' consultation in 2021, January 2025 update of the Loal Plan timetable to submit Local Plan by December 2026.
Adopted Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	GCSPS, SCDC, City Services	Adopted in 2022 to ensure planning applications meet best practice and comply with Local Plan policies

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Action	**Partners**	**Outcome**
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Completed ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species
Open Mosaic Habitat (Brownfield) Creation trials at Bramblefield's LNR	City Services, Cambridge University	Ongoing project continued with 3 new substrate mounds installed and studied.
Invertebrate banks and stumpery habitat trials	City Services, Anglia Ruskin University, Friend's of St. Thomas Park	Ongoing project being studied, with 8 new habitats installed.
'No Fence' Collar Trials	City Services, Licensed graziers	Positive demonstration of new technology that supports adopting conservation grazing on key sites
Logan's Meadow Wetland	City Services, CPCA, Friends of Logan's Meadow	Over 1 hectare of new urban wetland habitat created
Cambridge Nature Network - Green Recovery Fund delivery	City Services, CNN, Natural England	Over 20 partnership projects delivered. 7 City Services projects included: Sheep's Green LNR Veteran Willow Restoration and community engagement, Logan's Meadow LNR community tree planting, 'Artscaping' in Bramblefield's LNR, Stourbridge Common LNR habitat improvement, Commons grassland restoration trials
Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project	City Services, CPCA, City Services, Hobson's Conduit Trust, Anglia Ruskin University, Keele University, SCDC, Anglian Water, South Staffs Water, Environment Agency	Secured funding to deliver 6 evidence driven, case study restoration and demonstration sites. Engaged over 50 Citizen Scientist in baseline and ongoing monitoring
Coldham's Brook enhancements, Abbey Ward	City Services, Abbey People South Staffs Water	500m of in-channel habitat restoration with volunteers, 2 interpretation panels installed

Dog Control Orders to reduce disturbance to breeding birds	City Services	Seasonal Dogs on Lead Orders in place for 6 Local Nature Reserve (2023)
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy	CPCA, City Services, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Natural Cambridgeshire, Natural England, all neighbouring Local Authorities	Draft plan approved at CPCA Board, due for submission by December 2025, subject to 'Supporting Authority' Approval
Woodland Management Plans for Byron's Pool and Nine Wells LNRs	City Services, Forestry Commission (FC)	Plans consulted and approved by FC for phased delivery between 2025 and 2027
Hobson's Park County Wildlife Site designation	City Service, County Wildlife Site Panel, BCN WT	35.7 hectare of recently created grassland and wetlands designated for their value to breeding birds
Introduced conservation grazing at Netherhall School chalk slope	City Services, OTV, Netherhall School, Local grazier	1.5 hectare of chalk grassland under favourable management
Byron's Pool Fish Pass enhancement	City Services, Wild Trout Trust, Environment Agency	Fish pass redesigned to better guide fish around the weir

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

Action	**Partners**	**Outcome**
Supported the Cambridge Citizen UK Young Person's Assembly	Community Services, City Services, Kings College, Cambridge Citizens - UK, local schools	Decision makers heard from young people about their concerns for local biodiversity and pledged to act
Cambridge Canopy Project	City Services, Community Services, Nature Smart Cities	Developed a business model for the incorporation of more green infrastructure solutions in towns and cities. Launched the i-Tree Eco project and the Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign.
Happy Bee Streets	City Services, Community Services	Active groups on 14 streets across 8 wards

Declaration of Butterfly Emergency in 2024, Cambridge Butterfly Trail	City Services, Butterfly Conservation (BC)	Creation of Cambridge Butterfly Trail covering 30 green spaces across the city and surrounds.
Hedges for Kings Hedges	City Services, Community Services, Trees are Good, Tree for Cities	Volunteers planted 100 m of new mixed native hedge and fruit tree planted in the ward parks. Included a fruit tree grafting workshop.
Free Trees for babies' scheme	City Services	878 trees donated over the reporting period to increase canopy cover. This has been running for over 30 years to incentivise tree planting in the city.
Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign	City Services, Community Services	Residents claimed 309 trees and shrubs over the reporting period to reduce inequality in canopy cover across wards.
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, CNN	City-wide month-long festival running for 3 consecutive years. Multiple organisations delivering a month of over 100 free events for all ages. Voted as one of the best free festivals in 2023 by the i-news.
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree	City Services, Community Services, Community Fund for Lottery	23 artist-led workshops in 20 different spaces in the City. 8 public events attended by an estimated 6,000 people. x5 public walks and talks on the cultural and biodiversity significance of veteran trees in Cambridge City. x4 workshops for landowners and members of the public on how to manage veteran trees sustainably. Charter for sustainable veteran tree management being created.
Environmental Improvement Program	City Services	28 biodiversity focused projects delivered on parks and public realm across the city including new meadows, stumperies, bird and bat boxes
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit	City Services	Promotion of our toolkit inspired a local community to design, consult and deliver enhancement to St Thomas Park, Queen Edith's ward
S106 funded park enhancement schemes	City Services	Five Trees Park meadow and tree planting, Jesus Green stumpery, 700m^2 'pictorial meadow' at Parkside Pool to provide pollinator 'steeping

		stone' through the urban environment
Environmental Education Spaces	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Licenses in place for 2 City owned spaces delivering access to nature for local pupils
Community Engagement Team Biodiversity Assembly / School visits	Community Services	Approximately 35 school session held over the reporting period
Investment in new Cut and Collect machine	City Services	Enhanced management of long grass and meadow areas across our parks and road verges
Hobsons Conduit Bioblitz	City Services, Hobsons Conduit Trust	3 x Annual community event recording wildlife along the brook over 24hrs

1.5 Condition of Cambridge Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (including 3 designations: County Wildlife Site, City Wildlife Sites & Protected Road Verges) are non-statutory designations for areas identified locally as having high biodiversity value, supporting important species or habitats at a city or County scale.

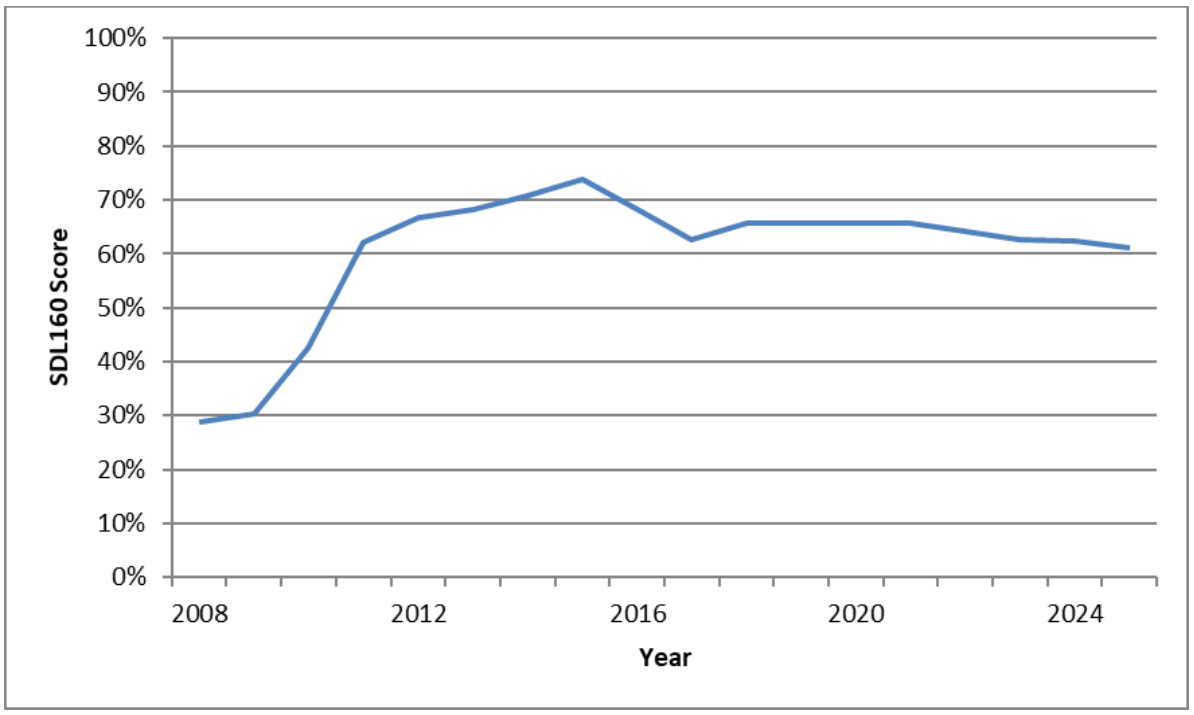
These sites can be on both private and public land. Through our annual monitoring to central government, we report on how many are in favourable management to support the habitats and species for which they are recognised.

Cambridge City Local Wildlife Sites in positive management (public and private)

Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	44
Total number of Local Sites	72
% of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	**61.1%**

Appendices



Results over time, SDL160 scores 2008 – 2025

Cambridge City Council (CCC) owned and/or managed sites only
Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	29
Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed)	32
% of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	**90.6%**

Section 2: Our future actions for biodiversity (2026 – 2031)

In 2026 we will review and consult on our Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Tree Strategy.

Proposed updated actions have been included in the table below, grouped by theme. Please note these may be subject to change following consultation, prior to formal adoption.

Appendices

'Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, 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 high quality natural 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'.

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

Actions	**Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS	NC, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions	Adoption: December 2025 – Delivery ongoing
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and BNG delivery to guide sustainable	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 development achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with long term management and monitoring in place.	Ongoing
Implement Environmental Management System to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City operation hub and activities	City Services	Improved environmental performance across City Service	March 2026 - ongoing
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services,	Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree	Feasibility 2026, deliver 2027

	Water Resources East (WRE)	watering and other operation functions	

The Core '*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*'

Actions	Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Continued support of CNN	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, Cambridge Ahead, National Trust, RSPB, East Cambridge Farming Cluster, CU Botanic Garden, South Cambs DC, Magog Down, Natural Cambs, Cambridge Sports Lake Trust	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create 'Bigger, better, more joined up' habitats across the CNN	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers to bring sites into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management	Ongoing
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs	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 Reviews for LNRs and Commons	City Services	New management plans embedded to ensure favourable habitat condition	13 sites reviewed in 2025 to be adopted and delivered in 2026 to 2030

Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions	Review in 2025 / 2026
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, East Cambridge Farmers Cluster	Enhanced management of key sites	Triall in 2026, if successful deliver from 2027 onwards
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. 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	Ongoing

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

Actions	**Partners**	**Outcomes**	**Timeline**
Seek support and agree actions 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	Ongoing
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting	2026 – 2030 programme to enable

delivery ward-based community action	County Council, Community Groups	Parish scale delivery of the LNRS. Selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington	communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions.
Butterfly Friendly Council (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC	2026
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 - 2030
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services, Forest Research, Tree Council,	Establish a 'community nursery' of cultivars of known provenance for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
River Cam CAN, DiversiTree legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure sustainable management and replacement planting for willow pollards, continue with engagement	2026 - 2030
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 onwards
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource	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 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 - 2030
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 – Ongoing

Section 3: Biodiversity net gain information

We deliver our local planning authority function through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC).

3.1 Actions we have carried out to meet BNG obligations

From 12 February 2024, we have been applying a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Pre-Commencement Condition to all relevant (except exempted) planning applications coming forward. This data has been captured and entered the corporate BNG tracking software (Verna's Mycelia), as well as being tracked through the corporate planning software (Uniform).

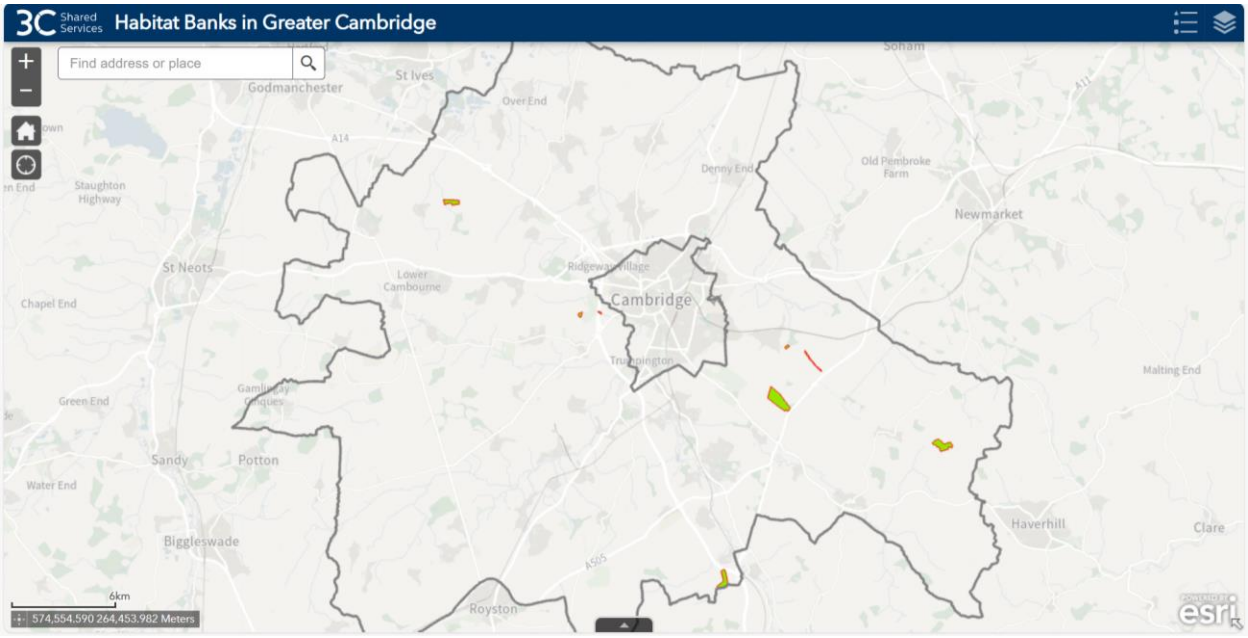
In Greater Cambridge, we have also facilitated the creation of **8** offsite advance habitat creation offset sites which cover a total land area of approximately **200** hectares. These sites are either already listed on DEFRA's Biodiversity Register, or are in the process of finalising the Section 106 Agreements and registering.

These BNG Offset sites are where developers can purchase BNG credits to mitigate habitat loss from developments taking place in Greater Cambridge. For our work facilitating the creation of these sites, we won the Planning for the Natural Environment category at the June 2025 Planning Awards.

Through the negotiation and creation of Section 106 Agreements, we have put in place a chargeable monitoring regime for the offsite BNG Providers to cover the costs of LPA monitoring of BNG on their recovery sites by our ecology team.

GCSP have also agreed **twelve** Section 106 Agreements for onsite delivery of BNG and as of October 2025 approximately **125** planning applications for which the mandatory BNG Condition has been applied for onsite BNG.

BNG offset provider sites in Greater Cambridge



3.2 BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans you've approved

The BNG resulting or expected to result from these collected activities both on and offsite is difficult to quantify at present as we have just begun to receive offsite reports and the process for collating and tracking onsite BNG is still emerging, but we can report that as of September 2025 the offset providers in Greater Cambridge have provided 177 BNG Units to developers in order to offset damage to the natural environment as a result of development.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has through the set-up of these offset sites enabled the creation of new habitats and thus new opportunities for biodiversity to thrive here.

BNG unit sales from offset sites created in Greater Cambridge

BNG Provider/Agent	Site	BNG unit sales as at 09/10/2025
Cambs County Council	Lower Valley Farm	64.46
Wildlife Trust BCN	Flack Field, Fulbourn	19.62
Groundworks	Devana Centre	7.4
The BNG Partnership	Boxworth	85.99
Cheffins	Coploe Hill,	0 (S106 being finalised)
Cambridge Past Present & Future	Coton Reserve	0 (S106 being finalised)

Total Units	**-**	**177.47**

We are in concept stage of developing a watercourse offsite BNG credit option at pour Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve in Newnham to ensure that any offsite watercourse habitat requirements resulting from development can be delivered to the benefit of local habitats and communities.

Section 106 Agreements which include BNG Provision in Greater Cambridge

App No	Site Address	Decision	Ward	District	Type	Deed Date
21/00660/FUL	Land Adj 129 - 131 Ditton Fields Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	05/11/2021
22/01384/FUL	Beech Farm Church Street Harston Cambridgeshire CB22 7NR	Granted	Harston & Comberton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	23/02/2023
22/02088/FUL	Bourn Golf Club, Health and Fitness Club Toft Road Bourn Cambridgeshire CB23 2TT	Granted	Caldecote	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/11/2022
22/05549/OUT	TWI Granta Park Great Abington Cambridgeshire CB21 6AL	Granted	Linton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/01/2024
23/01335/OUT	Land East Of Ermine Street Caxton Cambridgeshire	Granted	Caxton & Papworth	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	26/07/2024
23/04233/FUL	Fitzwilliam College Storeys Way Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB3 0DG	Granted	Castle	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	09/08/2024
23/04590/OUT	Land South Of Coldhams Lane Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Cherry Hinton	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	31/01/2025
23/04687/FUL	Barnwell Local Centre Barnwell Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB5 8RG	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	26/11/2024
23/04952/FUL	19 - 35 Regent Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 3AS	Granted	Market	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	18/12/2024
24/01080/OUT	Land At Green End/Heath Road Gamlingay Sandy SG19 3JZ	Granted	Gamlingay	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	10/04/2025
24/01354/FUL	137 And 143 Histon Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 3HZ	Granted	Arbury	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	06/03/2025
24/03285/OUT	Land Southwest Of Lanacre 86 Chrishall Road Fowlmere Cambridgeshire SG8 7RY	Granted	Foxton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	31/07/2025

3.3 How we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

We will continue to support applicants and habitat bank providers through the planning system with the provision of expert advice from our team of three full-time in-house ecologists and the systems and process that we have put in place to record and report on BNG.

To track, monitor and report on our BNG data, we have purchased a specialist software package (Verna's Mycelia), which will be used to collate data from other corporate systems

(Uniform, Exacom) to provide greater detail of BNG delivery in future Biodiversity Duty reports.

Our draft shared Local Plan proposes that all Major development in Greater Cambridge must provide a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG), unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021, to be provided onsite where this is feasible and effective. If adopted, we will implement this policy to ensure that our large developments deliver above mandatory 10% net gain. Where this requires offsite delivery, we will ensure that sites support the emerging LNRS.

ENDS