

Cambridge City Council

November 2025

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

Contents

Introduction

What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?

Our role in nature recovery

Section 1: Our policies, objectives and actions for biodiversity

- 1.1 Our strategies and policies for biodiversity
- 1.2 Our visions and objectives for biodiversity
- 1.3 Our partnerships for biodiversity
- 1.4 Our delivered actions for biodiversity (2022 – 2025)
- 1.5 Management of Local Wildlife Sites

Section 2

- 2.1 Our future actions for biodiversity (2026 – 2031)

Section 3

- 3.1 Our Biodiversity net gain (BNG) progress

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.

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 policies 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.
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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 Local 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 stumpy habitat trials	City Services, Anglia Ruskin University, Friends 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
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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

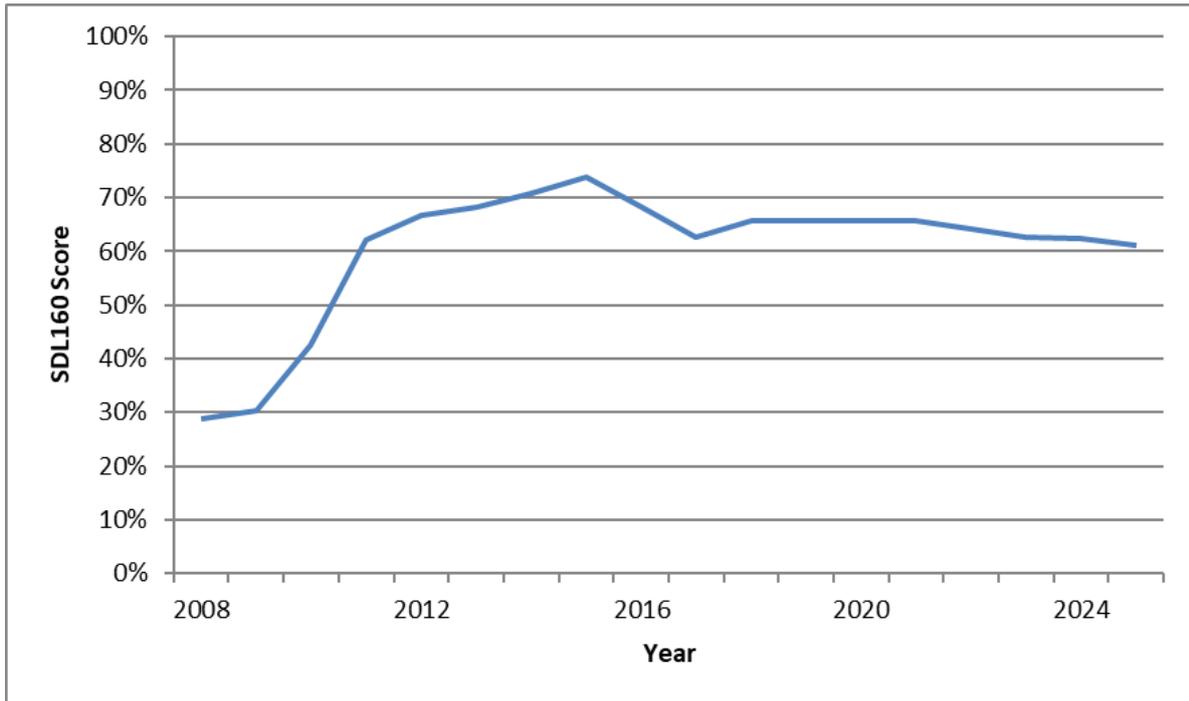
Local Wildlife Sites (including 3 designations: County Wildlife Site, City Wildlife Sites & Protected Road Verges) are non-statutory designations for areas identified locally as having high biodiversity value, supporting important species or habitats at a city or County scale.

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%



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.

‘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	Proposed adoption by December 2026

		BNG delivery to guide sustainable	
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, Water Resources East (WRE)	Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions	Feasibility 2026, deliver 2027

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	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create ‘Bigger, better, more joined up’ habitats across the CNN	Ongoing

	Down, Natural Cambs, Cambridge Sports Lake Trust		
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	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites. Work with partners to deliver WINEP and other investment in	2026 - 2028

	Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Cambridge chalk streams	
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 delivery ward-based community action	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Community Groups	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting Parish scale delivery of the LNRS. Selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington	2026 – 2030 programme to enable 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 – <i>celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm</i>	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	City Services, Community	Innovative education and / or	2026 - 2030

support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	Services, artist and communities	habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	
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).

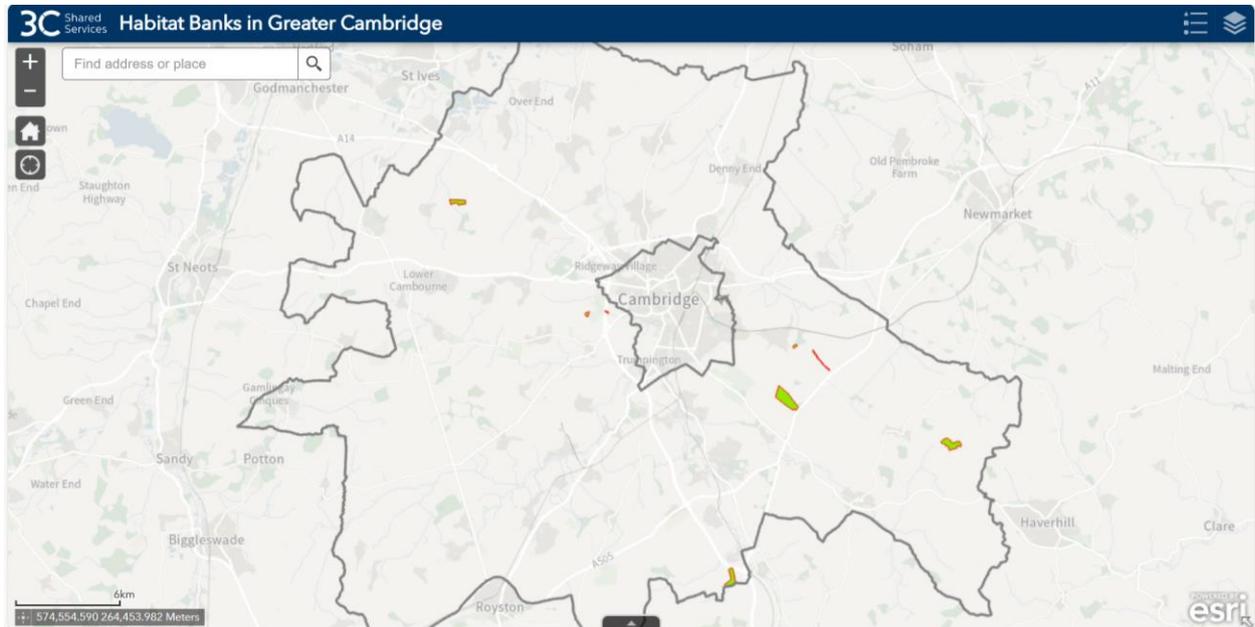
In Greater Cambridge, we have also facilitated the creation of **8** [offsite advance habitat creation offset](#) sites which cover a total land area of approximately **200** hectares. These sites are either already listed on DEFRA's [Biodiversity Register](#), or are in the process of finalising the 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
Camb's 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	TW1 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