

**East Hampshire District Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2024 -2025**

**Reporting Period:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

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*Shortheath Common SSSI*

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## Executive Summary

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened biodiversity duty requiring public authorities to consider how their functions can conserve and enhance biodiversity. This report outlines how East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) has met this duty during the first reporting period (12 February 2024 to 31 December 2025).

During this period, EHDC has embedded biodiversity considerations across its core functions, particularly in planning, land management and partnership working. The Council has implemented mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), supported by updated processes, guidance, staff training and monitoring tools to ensure effective delivery.

EHDC has continued to protect designated sites through its development management role and participation in strategic mitigation schemes. The Council has also contributed to the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, helping to identify priorities for habitat restoration and nature recovery within the local area.

A range of projects have been delivered on Council-owned land and in partnership with local organisations with further consideration planned to be given on how best to enhance biodiversity on other Council owned or managed green spaces. Alongside this work there has been grant funding for community-led initiatives such as tree planting and habitat restoration and creation. The Council has also demonstrated leadership through initiatives such as the Rights of Rivers motion.

While progress has been made, further work is needed to strengthen a coordinated, long-term approach. A key priority is the development of a Biodiversity Strategy to guide future action alongside the Council's Climate and Environment Strategy.

Looking ahead, the Council will focus on strengthening planning policy, delivering measurable biodiversity gains, expanding habitat restoration where opportunities exist, supporting community engagement and improving biodiversity related monitoring and reporting.

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# 1. Introduction

**1.1** Public authorities in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. The strengthened ‘biodiversity duty’ introduced by the Environment Act 2021 marked a step change in addressing biodiversity loss both nationally and locally. As a public authority, East Hampshire District Council must:

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

**1.2** This report outlines East Hampshire District Council's approach to protecting biodiversity and meeting its biodiversity reporting duties for the period **12th February 2024 to 31st December 2025.**

**1.3** Government guidance specifically requires Local Authorities to publish biodiversity reports which contain:

- a summary of the action the Council has taken to comply with the biodiversity duty
- the actions the Council has carried out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations
- details of biodiversity net gains delivered or expected
- how the Council plans to meet biodiversity net gain obligations in the next reporting period
- how the Council plans to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period
- any other information the Council considers appropriate.

**1.4** It is widely recognised that government at all levels must work together to halt biodiversity loss and make it a priority. The Council is already undertaking a number of workstreams that demonstrate how East Hampshire District Council is addressing the biodiversity crisis.

**1.5** Although East Hampshire District Council does not currently have a specific Biodiversity Strategy, the development of such a strategy is identified as an objective within the Council’s adopted Climate Strategy 2024-2029.

## Profile of East Hampshire and its Natural Environment

**1.6** The District of East Hampshire is located on the eastern edge of Hampshire bordering the counties of Surrey and West Sussex. The district covers a total of 199 square miles containing 39 parishes with a population of over 125,700. It is predominantly rural, with four main urban centres at Alton, Petersfield, Whitehill and Bordon and Horndean.

**1.7** East Hampshire has a uniquely complex geology and is influenced by two climatic zones. As a result, the open hilltops and rolling chalk downlands of the South Downs, the dramatic wooded scarp slopes of the hanger woodlands, the meandering plains of the river valleys and the lowland heath areas, provide some of the most beautiful and varied countryside in the UK. In turn, East Hampshire is one of the most diverse areas in Hampshire for wildlife with an array of habitats that support species, some of which, are extremely rare and represent significant strongholds for Britain and Europe.

**1.8** The most important habitats in the district for biodiversity are heathland, ancient and semi-natural woodland on chalk and upper greens and unimproved chalk grassland and the Rother, Wey and Meon River systems.

Many areas containing these habitats are protected under different designations. Designated sites in the district include:

- The East Hampshire Hangers - designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as they represent one of the best areas in the UK for mixed woodland on alkaline soils associated with rocky slopes and beech forests on neutral to rich soils.
- Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA) –internationally recognised for supporting significant populations of birds associated with lowland heath, including the nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which cover around 5% of the district's area, with Woolmer Forest accounting for 1293 ha. Woolmer Forest is unique in the UK in supporting natural populations of all 12 British amphibians and reptiles.
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are non-statutory designated sites which support a variety of habitat types and species. 580 SINCs have been identified and designated within the district<sup>1</sup> which cover an area of 6172 ha. This equates to around 12% of the total district area. The area covered by statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites combined

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<sup>1</sup> Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre's Annual Monitoring Report for 2024/2025, December 2025

within the district totals 9027 ha which represents over 17% of the total district area.



*Natterjack toad habitat at Woolmer Forest SSSI*

## 2. Our Policies, Objectives and Actions

**2.1** East Hampshire District Council has taken proactive steps to meet its statutory biodiversity duty. The district's key policies, strategies and guidance in relation to biodiversity are listed below. Details are also provided on the actions the Council has completed, or those that are on-going during the reporting period, either alone or in partnership with others, which benefit biodiversity. In addition to current and completed actions to deliver the biodiversity duty, the report also explains how the Council intends to fulfil the biodiversity duty over the five years following the end of the first reporting period. These plans are identified as having a 'future' status in the list below.

### **Policies and Strategies**

#### **2.2 East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy adopted July 2014**

The adopted Joint Core Strategy includes policies that focus on habitat protection and biodiversity enhancement. All development in the EHDC must comply with the policies relating to biodiversity:

- **Policy CP21 Biodiversity:** Requires development to avoid harm to designated sites, priority habitats, and species, and promotes biodiversity enhancement through habitat creation and restoration.
- **Policy CP22 Internationally Designated Sites:** Requires development to demonstrate that it will not affect the ecological integrity of SPAs, SAC or Ramsar sites within the district or the wider area.
- **Policy CP28 Green Infrastructure:** Requires development to maintain, manage and enhance the network of new and existing green infrastructure in the district.

### Status – Complete/Current

## 2.3 East Hampshire Draft Local Plan 2021-2040

In line with the on-going cycle of plan making and review, the current local plan is being updated to ensure it reflects and aligns with latest changes in environmental law, national policy and guidance. As part of this work new biodiversity/natural environment policies have been drafted that will protect and enhance biodiversity in line with the Council’s strengthened biodiversity duty and cover any new environmental changes and requirements since the previous Joint Core Strategy was adopted. The following draft policies are included in the draft Plan:

- **NBE2: Biodiversity, geodiversity and nature conservation**
- **NBE3: Biodiversity Net Gain**
- **NBE4: Wealden Heaths European SPA and SAC sites**
- **NBE5: Thames basin heaths special protection area**
- **NBE6: Solent Special Protection Areas**
- **Policy: Protection and Enhancement of Watercourses**
- **NBE9: Water Quality impact on the Solent International Sites**
- **NBE12: Green and Blue Infrastructure**
- **NBE13: Protection of natural resources**
- **DM1 The local ecological network**
- **DM2: Trees, hedgerows and woodland**

### Status – Future

**2.4 Council Strategy 2024-28**

The council has made a commitment through its Council Strategy to help develop a conserved and enhanced natural environment. This is one of five priorities under the Environmental Sustainability chapter.

**Status - Current**

**2.5 Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029**

East Hampshire District Council adopted its Climate and Environment Strategy to set out the Council’s strategic priorities to respond to the climate change emergency declared in 2019. The Strategy has five strategic aims with one of these being centred on the natural environment with the following objectives:

- To protect, enhance and restore important habitats and species in East Hampshire so that they can better respond to the challenges of climate change and other pressures.
- To facilitate the planting of 120,000 trees across East Hampshire and encourage further planting to develop and provide a sustainable tree canopy within the district.

A Strategic Delivery Plan accompanies the Strategy which provides an indicative outline of where focus will be targeted to deliver the Climate and Environment Strategy over its 5-year length. Projects related to the natural environment have been identified and programmed over the next few years, including the development of a Biodiversity Strategy:

Objectives	Project	Project timeframe (short term: 2024–26 medium: 2027–2030 long: 2030–35)	Potential impact on CO2 district (high, medium and low)	Potential impact on CO2 EHDC (high, medium and low)
5.1 To protect, enhance and restore important habitats and species in East Hampshire so that they can better respond to the challenges from climate change and other pressures.	5.1.1 Develop a Biodiversity Strategy which will outline our approach to the council’s enhanced biodiversity, which includes Biodiversity Net Gain	Short and medium	Low	Low
	5.1.2 Ensuring strong protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the adoption of the local plan policies			
5.4 To facilitate the planting of 120,000 trees across East Hampshire and further encourage planting to develop and provide a sustainable tree canopy within the district.	5.4.1 To identify land across East Hampshire for tree planting to deliver against EHDC’s tree planting initiative of 120,000 trees	Short and medium	Low	Low
	5.4.2 To work with stakeholders such as HCC and SDNPA, Tree council to align tree planting ambitions and projects.			
	5.4.3 Understand the role EHDC has with carbon sequestration			

**Status – Current/Future**

## **2.6 Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire was published on 8 December 2025 and is a new statutory spatial plan created under the Environment Act 2021 to coordinate nature recovery across the county. It aims to reverse the decline of nature across Hampshire by identifying the most important places for biodiversity and the best opportunities to restore habitats.

The LNRS was prepared by Hampshire County Council, but EHDC was an active partner in its role as a Supporting Authority. EHDC represented other local authorities on the LNRS Steering Group and regularly attended the ‘Local Planning Authority Working Group’ meetings and workshops. Through this the Council reviewed and provided input into draft versions of the Report and the associated mapping over the two years it took to produce.

The LNRS contains a statement of biodiversity priorities, a local habitat map and a measures map identifying targeted actions for nature recovery. The Strategy is a material consideration in planning which means the Council must have regard to it when preparing local plans and deciding planning applications. As a result, the council can be a significant contributor to the delivery of the Strategy and in turn nature recovery within the district. The Council will therefore use the LNRS to:

- Guide mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to locations where it will deliver the most ecological benefit.
- Provide an evidence base to understand which places are important for conserving and enhancing biodiversity.
- Help identify areas suitable for nature-based solutions, e.g. flood mitigation, climate adaptation and water quality improvements.
- Support strategic plan making by showing priority habitats, species recovery needs, and opportunity areas for restoration.

### **Status – Current/Future/Complete**

## **2.7 East Hampshire Air Quality Strategy**

EHDC currently carries out monitoring of air quality which it publishes annually on the Council website. This has shown within the district that currently air pollution is compliant with legal limits. Therefore, the Council is required to publish an Air Quality Strategy rather than an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to provide targeted actions to improve air quality.

Work has begun to produce an Air Quality Strategy for East Hampshire, with a draft report having been produced during the reporting period.

### Status – Future

#### **2.8 East Hampshire District Council Biodiversity and Planning Guidance (2021)**

This document provides guidance for planning applicants on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the East Hampshire Planning Authority area so that biodiversity is addressed appropriately through the planning process.

### Status – Current

#### **2.9 Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Sites Strategies**

When complying with the Council’s strengthened Section 40 NERC Act Biodiversity Duty the Council must consider relevant strategies, which include Species Conservation and Protected Site Strategies. These are new strategies introduced with the Environment Act and will be produced by Natural England. The Council will be required to consider what opportunities it may have to the delivery of such strategies.

During the reporting period no such strategies relevant to the district have yet been developed. An emerging Heathland Protected Sites Strategy is being developed which will:

- improve the conservation and management of protected sites, and
- manage the impacts of plans, projects, or other activities on those sites.

It is considered likely such a Strategy developed within the next reporting period will include the Wealden Heaths Protected Sites within the District.

### Status – Future

## **3. Our Actions**

Below is a list of key actions that the Council has completed, alone or in partnership, which have benefited biodiversity over the reporting period:

#### **3.1 Rights of Rivers Motion (Nov 2025)**

Within the District of East Hampshire there are a number of important water courses that support high quality biodiversity, including the River Rother, the

River Meon, the River Wey and tributaries of the River Itchen. Each of these rivers faces increasing pressures from pollution, over-abstraction, habitat degradation and climate change.

As a result of these growing threats the Council resolved to formally recognise the Rights of Rivers at a full Council meeting on 27th November 2025, drawing inspiration from the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers. These include but are not limited to:

- The right to flow – unimpeded, seasonal and natural
- The right to perform essential functions within the ecosystem
- The right to be free from pollution and contamination
- The right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers and other freshwater sources
- The right to native biodiversity and restoration of ecological integrity
- The right to regeneration and restoration from environmental harm

On the back of this motion the council resolved to:

1. Acknowledge the intrinsic rights of rivers within the jurisdiction of East Hampshire District Council.
2. Work with community groups, river trusts and environmental experts to identify and support the legal and practical recognition of these rights.
3. Embed river rights principles into council policies, particularly those concerning planning, development, land use, water quality, water management, and biodiversity.
4. Advocate to national and regional bodies, including the Environment Agency, to adopt river rights frameworks and enhance protections for our chalk streams and freshwater ecosystems.
5. Support local initiatives and citizen monitoring efforts that protect and restore river health, such as citizen science water testing, riparian buffer planting, natural flood management, creating wildlife corridors and sustainable agriculture partnerships.
6. Support public engagement to raise awareness of the importance of chalk streams and rivers to support Hampshire's Natural and Cultural Heritage.
7. Request that the Environment Agency publishes an annual "State of the Rivers" report to track progress in protecting river ecosystems and rights, in collaboration with local environmental organisations.

## Status – Completed/Current/Future



*River Wey at Headley*

### **3.2 Protecting Internationally Designated Nature Conservation Sites from Development:**

The Council is involved with several schemes to ensure harm associated with new development to internationally important sites is appropriately mitigated against. These are sites that have been designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Hab Regs) for their habitats and/or species interests. Several such designated sites lie within or close to the district boundary. Mitigation schemes the Council is involved with include:

- Whitehill and Bordon Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Scheme for the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA). EHDC, acting as the competent authority under the Hab Regs, ensures that recreational pressure from new development on the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Shortheath Common SAC is appropriately mitigated.
- Bird Aware Solent Scheme provides mitigation for new housing within 5.6km of the Solent coastline to mitigate against increased recreational disturbance

impacts on the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA. Parts of the 5.6km buffer area includes areas within the parish of Rowlands Castle.

- The East Hampshire Catchment and the Itchen Catchment are two river catchments within East Hampshire that drain towards the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar and the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Itchen SAC. As a result, EHDC is signed up to a number of nutrient neutrality mitigation sites where the purchase of mitigation credits is available to avoid impacts on these internationally important designated sites. The Council is also a part of the Solent Mitigation Partnership.

### Status – Current/Future



*Lowland heathland, Hogmoor Inclosure SANG*

### 3.3 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Mandatory BNG commenced in Feb 2024 for major development and April 2024 for minor development. EHDC's development management process was updated to ensure planning applications could be determined in compliance with the statutory obligations once they came into force.

Actions taken include:

- producing an amended Local Planning Application Requirements document to include details on BNG requirements for relevant planning application

submissions. Similarly, a dedicated BNG webpage was created on the EHDC website to provide guidance and support.

- providing guidance for staff who validate planning applications so that only planning applications with the correct BNG information are validated. Additional internal meetings have taken place between relevant Council areas to support the implementation of BNG at the Council.
- holding internal training sessions for the Development Management Team and similarly for Planning Committee Members.
- securing the purchase of the BNG software tool Mycelia to provide support for the implementation of BNG. Mycelia is used to help the Council to validate, assess, monitor and report on BNG.
- completing a call for BNG sites through the updates to the current Local Plan in order to try and develop a suite of off-site BNG provision and habitat banks for BNG within the district.

**3.4** Ahead of the reporting period and BNG becoming mandatory, EHDC appointed the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) to carry out an assessment for biodiversity net gain opportunities within Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) across the district (including within the South Downs National Park). The project aimed to assist developers in finding ‘easy’ BNG sites that also supported strategic nature recovery ahead of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy being published.

The project did this by exploring whether it would be possible for developers to approach willing SINC owners to investigate opportunities for BNG within their SINCs. The results of this work were published in September 2024. Feedback from SINC landowners suggested that the ‘set up’ costs associated with using such land as off-site BNG habitat banks (on which developments could offset their biodiversity loss) made bringing forward relatively small sites or sites on which the number of BNG units that can be sold is likely to be low, was not viable. The number of BNG units that could be sold by improving the management of SINCs was likely to generate a low number of BNG units because they already supported important habitats.



*Species-rich chalk grassland*

**3.5** Details of the biodiversity gains resulting, or expected to result, from Biodiversity Gain Plans (BGP) that have been approved over the reporting period are shown in **Appendix 1**

### **Status – Completed/Current/Future**

#### **3.6 Biodiversity Enhancement Projects - Community Grants**

East Hampshire District Council provides a number of grants and funding that support charities, voluntary and community organisations. A number of these grants support projects that benefit biodiversity. During the reporting period the following grants were provided to a variety of different schemes, including pond creation and restoration, tree planting, pollinator habitat creation, school nature areas, bug hotels and equipment to support habitat management:

- Grow Up! Community Fund
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Community Funding
- The Community Climate Action Fund (CCAF)

- Councillor Community Grant Scheme

### Status – Completed/Current/Future

## Partnership Working

### 3.7 South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan

The Council supported the previous plan for the management of the South Downs National Park (SDNP), which ran until 2025. A new Management Plan for the National Park was drafted during the reporting period which the Council provided input to. The new plan runs from 2026 – 2031 and was adopted in early 2026.

### Status – Current/Future

### 3.8 Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

The Council has a Service Level Agreement with HBIC, who are the local environmental records centre for Hampshire. Through this funding, HBIC provides essential data on habitats and species within the district. The data is used to inform nature recovery projects and the planning process by identifying the locations of protected and notable species, as well as important and designated habitats.

HBIC also manages the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) system on behalf of East Hampshire District Council and other local planning authorities in Hampshire. Based on surveys undertaken by HBIC over the reporting period, including sites requested to be surveyed by EHDC, 7 new SINC in the District have been designated. These will receive protection through local planning policy.

### Status – Current/Future

### 3.9 NatureSpace Great Crested Newt (GCN) District Level Licence (DLL)

In September 2025 the Council joined the NatureSpace Great Crested Newt district level licence scheme. The scheme benefits great crested newts through large-scale habitat creation and long-term management and monitoring of GCN habitats in targeted areas. The scheme aims to increase the number of high-quality, clean water ponds connected by suitable terrestrial habitat for newts thereby creating a network of favourable habitats. Under the scheme,

developers make a payment towards this offsite habitat creation, which is delivered by the Newt Conservation Partnership.

Training has been provided to all Development Management staff on the GCN DLL scheme and how it should be implemented through the planning system.

### Status – Current/Future

#### 3.10 Supporting Catchment Based River Restoration – The Rotherlands Connections Project

The Council is a joint landowner of Rotherlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and has been working in partnership with the Western Sussex Rivers Trust and Petersfield Town Council (PTC) to support habitat improvements for the LNR. These habitat improvements will, in turn, help improve and enhance the River Rother which flows through the site. The Rotherlands Connections Project, led by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust in partnership with EHDC and PTC, will focus on improving biodiversity, water quality, and public access to the LNR. The project secured funding of around £350,000 in June 2025 to carry out this work. The delivery phase of the project started in Autumn 2025 and will run until Spring 2028 followed by three years of post-project monitoring.

### Status – Current/Future

#### 3.11 Management of Road Verges of Ecological Importance (RVEI)



*Common cudweed, found on heathland and acid grassland*

The Council is responsible for the grassland management of a number of road verges across the district on behalf of Hampshire County Council (HCC). Some of these road verges have been identified as being important for the botanical species they support and have been designated as RVEIs. Notable species found include Violet Helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*), Green-flowered Helleborine (*Epipactis phyllanthes*), Small flowered catchfly (*Silene gallica*) and Common cudweed (*Filago vulgaris*). The Council cuts these road verges under a relaxed mowing regime, typically just once in late summer or autumn to enable the wildflowers these road verges support to flower and set seed.

### Status – Completed/Current/Future

**3.12 Management of East Hampshire District Council’s Estate**

Liss Riverside Railway Walk Local Nature Reserve

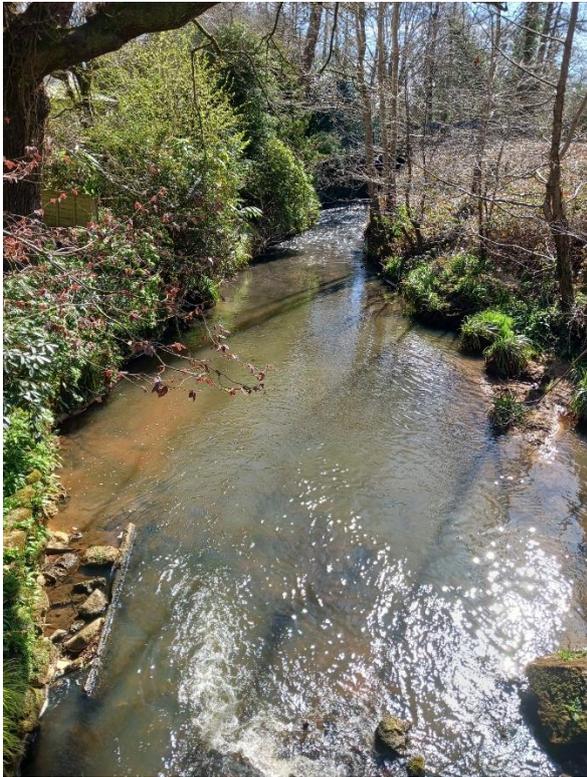
Liss Riverside Railway Walk is a Local Nature Reserve supporting broad-leaved woodland, scrub, and grassland along the path of a disused railway line and the River Rother. It is owned by EHDC and Liss Parish Council (LPC) and a Biodiversity Management Plan of the site was commissioned in 2023. Management objectives for the site aim to:

- Maintain and enhance the woodland habitats.
- Naturalise and enhance the River Rother and its banks.
- Maintain and increase the ecological value of the grassland habitats.
- Create an aesthetically pleasing, wildlife rich landscape for visitors to enjoy and encourage recreational use and community engagement

EHDC employs a contractor to help with this work and is working with LPC and their local volunteer group to help with habitat management activities on site.

Liss Riverside Railway Walk is mapped within the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) as an area of opportunity to improve biodiversity and therefore habitat management works will help deliver part of the LNRS.

**Status – Current/Future**



*River Rother through Liss Riverside Railway Walk*

## Buriton Pond

The Council owns Buriton Pond, a large pond at the heart of the village along with Pond Green, an area of open space grassland to the north of the pond. In 2024, the Council commissioned work which was used to inform a management plan for the site. This focused on recommendations for enhancement of the pond to improve the habitat value and wildlife potential of the pond. As a result of this, a series of works were undertaken in 2024 – 2025 including:

- removing non-native carp fish from the pond.
- investigating how to reduce leaf litter entering the pond.
- installing silt traps; and
- removing more than 200 cubic metres of silt from the pond.

The work was funded through the Council's Grow Up! Campaign which, amongst other aims, seeks to use Government money to re-connect people with the countryside and provide education and volunteering opportunities to residents. Further works are planned to improve the wildlife potential of the site.

Buriton Pond is mapped within the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) as an area of opportunity to improve biodiversity, and therefore the works have helped the Council deliver part of the LNRS.

### **Status – Current/Future**



*Buriton Pond*

Further consideration will be given to how biodiversity can be enhanced in more green spaces owned/managed by the Council.

### 3.13 Publicity/Community Engagement



#### Help hedgehogs have a happy hibernation

At this time of year, hedgehogs are hibernating until the spring. If you see one out and about, it's probably getting a snack and a drink before heading back to sleep.

Hedgehogs survive the winter by using up the fat stores they've built over the spring and summer. Eating enough nutritious and fatty foods like beetles, worms and other invertebrates during those months is vital. If there's not much of that in your garden, supplementary feeding can help. The Wildlife Trusts website has guidance on the best food to leave for hedgehogs.

The RSPCA has tips on how you can make your garden hedgehog friendly.

Make your garden hedgehog friendly



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Regular biodiversity related news is included in the Council's Green Steps bulletins. Green Steps is a monthly email bulletin for residents interested in protecting the environment in East Hampshire. Articles related to biodiversity within the reporting period have included:

- information on National Tree week
- Information on funding for tree and hedge planting
- Information on Swift Awareness Week
- News on a local beaver reintroduction site
- Information on local dawn chorus and guided nature walks

**Status – Completed, current and future**

*Example of a Green Steps Bulletin post*

## 4. Future Actions

East Hampshire District Council recognises that, while progress has been made, further work is needed to deliver a coordinated and long-term approach to biodiversity recovery. The following priorities will guide action over the next reporting period.

A key priority is the preparation of a Biodiversity Strategy, which will set out a clear vision, strategic priorities and measurable objectives. This will align with the Council's Climate and Environment Strategy and the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and establish a framework for monitoring and reporting progress.

The Council will continue to strengthen the integration of biodiversity within the planning system, with a focus on effective delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This includes improving validation, assessment and monitoring

processes, supporting off-site habitat provision, and ensuring the emerging Local Plan reflects current policy and legislative requirements.

Delivering nature recovery at a landscape scale will also be prioritised. The Council will use the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to target habitat creation and restoration, alongside continuing to support tree planting and habitat connectivity initiatives.

The Council will pursue opportunities to achieve further biodiversity enhancements of its own estate alongside actioning new and existing management plans of its wildlife sites. Where possible the Council will also look to increase community involvement in site stewardship.

Partnership working will remain central, with continued collaboration with organisations such as the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre, River Trusts and neighbouring authorities. The Council will also expand community engagement, building on initiatives such as Green Steps to raise awareness and support local action.

Through these actions, the Council will strengthen its contribution to halting biodiversity loss and supporting nature recovery across the East Hampshire area.



*Ancient coppice woodland with bluebells*

## Appendix 1 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Reporting Feb 2024 – 31 December 2025

Table 1: Eligible planning permissions granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring biodiversity net gain

<b>Consented applications requiring net gains</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Total number of planning permissions granted that require biodiversity net gain in the reporting period	33	Not applicable
Total number of planning permissions granted in the reporting period where an exemption to the biodiversity net gain condition applies	581	Not applicable
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period	3	Not applicable
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through on-site units only	3	100
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through off-site units only	0	0
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through statutory credits only	0	0
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site and off-site units	0	0
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site units and statutory credits	0	0
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of off-site units and statutory credits	0	0
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site, off-site units and statutory credits	0	0

Table 2: Overall expected gains and losses across all biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period

<b>Overall expected gains and losses</b>	<b>Area habitat</b>	<b>Hedgerow</b>	<b>Watercourse</b>
Total number of pre-development biodiversity units approved on-site	0.45	0.06	0.00
Total number of post-development biodiversity units approved on-site	0.57	0.46	0.00
Total net unit change in biodiversity units, on-site	0.12	0.40	0.00
Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, on-site	25.63	704.54	0.00
Total number of baseline biodiversity units approved off-site	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total number of post-intervention biodiversity units approved off-site	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total net unit change in biodiversity units, off-site	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, off-site	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total number of biodiversity units offset using statutory credits	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total net unit change in biodiversity units (including any units offset using credits)	0.12	0.40	0.00
Average percentage (%) change (including statutory credits)	25.63	704.54	0.00

Table 3: Impact on Irreplaceable Habitat

<b>Impact on irreplaceable habitat</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period where the on-site change negatively impacts irreplaceable habitats	0	0.00

Table 4: Location of off-site biodiversity units

<b>Location of off-site biodiversity units</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Number of off-site biodiversity units located inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.00	0.00
Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside LPA or NCA of impact site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA	0.00	0.00
Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside of LPA or NCA of impact site and neighbouring LPA or NCA	0.00	0.00

Table 5: Results of monitoring biodiversity gains

<b>Results of monitoring biodiversity gains where the LPA is part of the legal agreement</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans including the delivery of 'significant' on-site gains	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements and habitat delivery expectations for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements but not meeting habitat delivery expectations for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are failing to meet monitoring requirements for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans where the status of monitoring requirements is unknown for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans including the delivery of off-site gains, where the LPA are responsible for monitoring.	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements and habitat delivery expectations for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0.00

Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements but not meeting habitat delivery expectations for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are failing to meet monitoring requirements for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0.00
Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans where the status of monitoring requirements is unknown for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0.00
<b>Enforcement actions taken in the reporting period</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Number of enforcement actions taken during the reporting period associated with Biodiversity Net Gain policy	0	0.00

Table 6: Composition of biodiversity gains - areas

<b>Habitat Type - Area</b>	<b>Total biodiversity units at baseline</b>	<b>Total hectares at baseline</b>	<b>Total biodiversity units post - development</b>	<b>Total hectares post - development</b>	<b>Net change in biodiversity units</b>	<b>Net change in hectares</b>
Cropland	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grassland	0.33	0.09	0.30	0.08	-0.03	-0.01
Heathland and shrub	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lakes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sparsely vegetated land	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Urban	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.07	-0.03	0.01
Wetland	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Woodland and forest	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intertidal sediment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Coastal saltmarsh	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rocky shore	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Coastal lagoons	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intertidal hard structures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse footprint	Not applicable	0.00	Not applicable	0.00	Not applicable	0.00
Individual trees	0.07	0.01	0.25	0.07	0.17	0.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.06</b>

Table 7: Composition of biodiversity gains - hedgerows and lines of trees

Habitat type - hedgerows and lines of trees	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total kilometres at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total kilometres post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in kilometres
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Species-rich native hedgerow	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.05	0.31	0.05
Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Native hedgerow with trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ecologically valuable line of trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Native hedgerow	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.03	0.09	0.03
Line of trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Line of trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	-0.01	-0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.07</b>