

# Biodiversity Duty

First Report

Time period covered: 1 January 2025 to 1 January 2026  
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## a. Introduction

This document forms the first report of Canterbury City Council's duty to delivery of biodiversity under the [Environment Act 2021](#). The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 was amended under the Environment Act 2021 to better reflect the importance and need to protect biodiversity. The new and more comprehensive wording reads *"from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective"*.

Under this amendment, local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report outlining where operations across the authority are delivering on biodiversity and the outcomes of [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) (BNG).

Under the Environment Act 2021 and as a local authority, Canterbury City Council must create a report and respond to this biodiversity duty by:

1. Considering what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agreeing policies and specific objectives based on its consideration.
3. Acting to deliver these policies and achieve the objectives specified.
4. Deliver and monitor BNG as a mandatory requirement.

In 2018, the government published the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), highlighting that they would be strengthening the biodiversity duty. This was to include a mandatory development and monitoring system for BNG, ensuring that developers now leave associated habitats for wildlife in a better condition than before the development began.

In 2023, the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) was published, building upon the 25 Year Environment Plan and establishing government plans for significantly enhancing nature recovery by working cohesively and spatially with landowners, communities and businesses. This notably concerned the halt to the decline in species abundance and to protect 30% of UK land and sea by 2030.

Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to consider and report on actions outlined the Environment Act 2021 based on the timescales given. This includes reporting on BNG. A mandatory 10% BNG has been implemented on all major developments. Under Canterbury City Council's Draft Local Plan to 2042/43, Policy DS25 states all major developments must demonstrate and deliver a minimum of 20% BNG.

Public authorities have a corporate responsibility to generate the biodiversity report and therefore this first consideration outlines all department policies, objectives and evidence of considering, protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

The following documents contain biodiversity actions as well as policies and objectives to which Canterbury City Council has taken/is working towards. The proposed reporting schedule is set in Table 1:

Report	Reporting Period	Publication date
First consideration	Up to December 2024	December 2024
First Report	January 2025 – January 2026	March 2026
Second report	February 2026 – February 2031	April 2031

Table 1: Reporting timeline

## b. Information about Canterbury District

*From the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020):*

Canterbury City Council is a district authority in the county of Kent, covering an area of 309 square kilometres (119 square miles) and includes a part of the Kent Downs National Landscape (previously known as AONB). The National Landscape forms the eastern part of the North Downs stretching from the London/Surrey border in a widening ribbon of rolling countryside to meet the sea at the cliffs of Dover. It makes up around a third of the district, forming the gently rolling chalklands south of the city of Canterbury.

The district has a population of 157,400 with a population density of 509 people per square kilometre. Urban development is mainly concentrated within the three defined urban areas consisting of the city of Canterbury (in the centre) and the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay (in the north). Between these settlements, development is characterised by many smaller villages which have largely retained their historic settlement patterns; although in some cases suburbanisation has occurred, resulting in the expansion and formation of larger villages including Sturry, Blean, Hersden and Chartham. The rural environment of the district enhances the quality of life enjoyed by both urban and rural residents and the diverse landscape including coast, marshes, ancient woodlands, river valleys, orchards, farmland and rolling chalk is an important asset.

# 1. Policies and Objectives

## 1.1. Policies

As the local planning authority, Canterbury City Council has a duty to protect the local environment and biodiversity through planning policy and the implementation of housing and development. The council’s consultation on its Regulation 19 draft Local Plan started on 23 March 2026. The existing Local Plan was adopted in 2017 and for the most part is used to demonstrate and evidence the council’s response to the biodiversity duty. In Table 2, you will find policies drawn from the 2017 Local Plan that either indirectly or directly fulfil the biodiversity duty. Indirect policies are those which are likely to benefit biodiversity as a secondary and/or incidental outcome, whereas direct policies are those which are inherently designed to produce biodiversity outcomes in the first instance.

### 1.1.1. Indirect

2017 Local Plan	
Policy	Detail
<b>CC11</b> Sustainable Drainage Systems	Provide or enhance wetland habitat and biodiversity where possible
<b>DBE2</b> Renewable Energy	Demonstrate that there is no significant impact on the landscape setting, habitats, biodiversity, wildlife or designations such as the AONB, AHLV, Ramsar, SACs or SPAs’
<b>DBE3</b> Principles of Design	The conservation, integration, extension, connection and management of existing natural and historic features including trees, hedgerows, pathways and boundaries to strengthen local distinctiveness, character, habitats and biodiversity
<b>OS6</b> Green Gaps	Prevention of settlement coalescence and protection of the countryside
<b>OS7</b> Herne Bay and Whitstable Green Gap	Prevention of settlement coalescence and protection of the countryside
<b>OS9</b> Protection of Existing Open Space	Development must not cause ‘material harm to the contribution the protected open space makes to the visual or recreational amenity of the area’
<b>OS10</b> Loss of Open Space	Development which would involve the loss of open spaces and play areas provided as part of new residential developments which contribute to the visual or recreational amenity of the area will be refused.
<b>OS11</b> Outdoor Space Provision	New housing development shall make provision for appropriate outdoor space, including semi-natural areas, strategic urban parks and green corridors, amenity greenspace etc
<b>QL12</b> Potentially Polluting Development	When granting planning permission for development which could potentially result in pollution, the City Council will impose conditions or seek agreements to ensure subsequent mitigation measures are undertaken’

Table 2: Indirect 2017 Local Plan policies

### 1.1.2. Direct

2017 Local Plan	
Policy	Description
<b>DBE8</b> Public Open Space	Create opportunities for wildlife habitats and corridors where appropriate
<b>LB1</b> Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and planning decisions should have regard to its setting
<b>LB2</b> Areas of High Landscape Value	Development will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would impact on or protect nature conservation interest
<b>LB4</b> Landscape Character Areas	Development will promote maintenance, enhancement, and restoration of biodiversity as appropriate
<b>LB5</b> Sites of International Conservation Importance	Sites of international nature conservation importance must receive the highest levels of protection. No development will be permitted which may have an adverse effect on the integrity of an SAC, SPA or Ramsar site
<b>LB6</b> Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Planning permission will not normally be granted for development which would materially harm the scientific or nature conservation interest, either directly, indirectly or cumulatively, of sites designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) for their nature conservation, geological, or geomorphological value
<b>LB7</b> Locally Designated Sites	Any application affecting locally important sites will be expected to demonstrate enhancement measures to benefit biodiversity
<b>LB8</b> Landscape Scale Biodiversity Networks	Avoid the fragmentation of existing habitats and support the creation of coherent ecological networks through both urban and rural areas. Protect opportunities for improving connectivity of habitats in strategically important Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
<b>OS13</b> Riverside Strategy	River Stour corridors in Canterbury City will be protected from development to enable its future use and contribution towards the riverside corridor
<b>LB9</b> Protection, Mitigation, Enhancement and Increased Connectivity for Species and Habitats of Principal Importance	All development should avoid a net loss of biodiversity/nature conservation value and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain

2017 Local Plan	
Policy	Description
<b>LB10</b> Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland	Development should be designed to retain trees, hedgerows and woodland that make an important contribution to the amenity of the site and the surrounding area, and which are important to wild flora and fauna

Table 3: Direct 2027 Local Plan policies

### 1.1.3. Local Plan supporting documents

The documents below were used for the 2017 Local Plan evidence base, which relate to the environment and underpin the Local Plan policies.

2017 Local Plan Evidence Base	
Document and significance	Date
European Landscape Convention – compliance with ‘local distinctiveness’ and a need to consult widely with local people to ascertain views	N/A
Natural England – North Kent Plain National Character Area profile	2012
North Downs National Character Area profile	2013
Kent Downs AONB Management Plan	2014 - 2019
Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook	2005
The Landscape Assessment of Kent	2004
The draft Canterbury District Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment	Updated 2012
Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan	2010
Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value	N/A

Table 4: 2017 Local Plan evidence base documents

The draft Local Plan uses the most up to date documentation for the evidence base, meaning many of the above documents for the new Local Plan have now either expired, been updated or replaced.

### 1.1.4. Draft Local Plan 2026/27 to 2042/43

Further to the 2017 Local Plan, extensive research, analysis and consultation has gone into producing the draft Local Plan. Based on the Local Development Scheme, the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan consultation was launched on 23 March 2026. Table 5 outlines some of the flagship policies from the draft Local Plan:

**Draft Local Plan**

Policy	Detail
<p><b>SS1</b> Environmental Strategy Policy</p>	<p>The network of green and blue infrastructure - including open spaces, woodland and water features such as sustainable drainage systems - in the district, which provides important habitats, valued landscapes and spaces for recreation and which supports our health and wellbeing, will be protected, maintained and enhanced. Developments should provide multi-benefit connections or corridors between habitats, considering ecological connectivity and pollinators, as well as accessibility and usability by people, in line with Policy DS25. The council will work with its partners to support and sustain the full recovery of the Stodmarsh Nature Reserve designated site and to meet its targets for water quality and improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Qualifying major development across the district will need to incorporate measures to deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, while qualifying non-major development will need to deliver a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain in line with Policy DS25. Proposals must have regard to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the council will work with partners to implement the Strategy.</p> <p>New developments of over 300 homes should incorporate a minimum of 20% tree cover across the site, in line with Policy DS25, and all developments should incorporate new trees and hedgerows in areas of appropriate landscape character, to help restore and enhance degraded landscapes, screen noise and pollution, provide recreational opportunities, help mitigate climate change and contribute to floodplain management.</p> <p>The council will work with partners to implement the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the designated Kent Downs National Landscape.</p>
<p><b>DS13</b> Sustainable Design</p>	<p>All proposals for development should integrate green and blue infrastructure and accessible open space into the layout, utilising multi-functional benefits such as enhancing biodiversity and flood mitigation.</p>
<p><b>DS20</b> Habitats of international importance.</p>	<p>Development with an adverse effect on the integrity of SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites will not be permitted.</p>

**Draft Local Plan**

Policy	Detail
<p><b>DS21</b> Habitats and landscapes of national importance.</p>	<p>Proposals for major developments within the Kent Downs National Landscape will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Proposals within the Kent Downs National Landscape and, where appropriate, its setting should further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the designated area, including tranquillity and dark skies, and be sensitively and sustainably located.</p> <p>The policy links to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and supporting documents. It also protects SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, Marine Conservation Zones and irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees and protected and priority species, and priority habitats.</p>
<p><b>DS22</b> Habitats, landscapes and sites of local importance.</p>	<p>Proposals for development likely to have an adverse effect, either directly or indirectly, on Local Wildlife Sites; Local Nature Reserves; or Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites will only be permitted where the justification for the proposals clearly outweighs any harm to the intrinsic nature conservation and/or scientific value of the site.</p> <p>Within the designated Green Infrastructure Spaces, as defined on the Policies Map, or sites provided as Biodiversity Net Gain in connection with planning permissions, only proposals that protect or enhance these spaces and their function will be permitted.</p>
<p><b>DS25</b> Supporting biodiversity recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On new developments of over 300 homes, a minimum of 20% tree cover.</li> <li>• The protection and possible expansion of notable ecological features.</li> <li>• The needs of pollinators are considered.</li> <li>• A need to reduced fragmentation and improved connectivity.</li> <li>• Green and blue infrastructure.</li> <li>• Developers must demonstrate and deliver a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain on qualifying major development, and 10% biodiversity net gain on qualifying non-major development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DS26</b> Landscape character.</p>	<p>Proposals for development should demonstrate that they are informed by, and are sympathetic to, the landscape, and where appropriate seascape, character of the locality. Proposals will be expected to take every opportunity to reinforce, restore, conserve or improve, as appropriate, the landscape character of the area in which development is proposed</p>

Draft Local Plan	
Policy	Detail
<b>DS27</b> The Blean Woodland Complex.	The council will support projects that restore, enhance, expand and connect the valued woodland habitat of the Blean Woodland Complex, as defined on the Policies Map, and will work with partners to help achieve these objectives including rewilding, natural regeneration and wider landscape restoration, where appropriate.
<b>DS28</b> Publicly Accessible Open Spaces and Sport	Proposals for development which include provision of new on site open space must ensure that new open spaces meet the specified quality standards including: (a) Be designed as part of the green infrastructure network, contributing to local landscape character, connecting with local routes and green corridors for people and wildlife as well as providing multi-functional benefits such as addressing surface water management priorities. SuDS can only be counted towards open space provision where they are appropriately integrated into the design, accessibility and function of the open space provision, and where they form a small proportion of the overall semi natural open space
<b>Policy DM11</b> - Residential design	Gardens should contain integrated composting facilities and appropriately placed measures to increase biodiversity such as bird/swift bricks or boxes, bat boxes, bee hotels and/or hedgehog highway routes in fences, where possible.
<b>Policy DM12</b> - non-residential design	Boundary treatments, including hedgerows, should be provided where appropriate, regarding local townscape/landscape character. Planting schemes should include native species and encourage biodiversity.

Table 5: Draft Local Plan policies

### 1.1.5. Draft Local Plan evidence base

These documents are the key ones being used as the evidence base for the draft Local Plan (2025) which relate to the environment and underpin the Local Plan policies.

2017 Local Plan Evidence Base	
Document and significance	Date
Natural Environment and Open Space Topic Paper	March 2026
Draft Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy - A Nature Recovery Plan	January 2026
Draft Canterbury District Nutrient Mitigation Strategy	February 2026
Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018 -2031)	2018
Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy Updated Action Plan	March 2026

2017 Local Plan Evidence Base	
Document and significance	Date
Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan Review	2010
Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy	November 2025
Adopted Canterbury district Open Space Strategy 2025-2040	2025
Canterbury District Tree Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy	2024
AHLV Review for Local Landscape Designation	2021
Canterbury District Protected Open Space Review	2022
Canterbury Open Space Assessment Report	2022
Green Gaps and Local Green Spaces Review	2021
Canterbury District Pollinator Action Plan	2023
Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal	2020
Local Landscape Designations - Review and Recommendations	2021
Intersection of the updated Canterbury District LCA and Biodiversity Appraisal and planning policies	2021
Canterbury Riverside Strategy - 2023 - 2028	2023

Table 6: draft Local Plan evidence base documents

## 1.2. Objectives and actions

Canterbury City Council has developed several adopted and unadopted strategies, some of which are supplementary documents to the Local Plan. These documents set out strategic visions for the management of land under the council's ownership, as well as how the connectivity across the district may be improved.

Objectives and actions	
Functions	Detail
Corporate Plan	<p>Canterbury City Councils Corporate Plan (2024-2028) uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to develop understanding around the plans ambitions. Ambitions set out within the 'Greener' section of the plan focusing on biodiversity include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Roll out citizen science (air, rivers, sea, soil),</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase protected green space.</i></li> </ul>
Emergency Declaration	<p>In 2023, the Canterbury City Council declared a ecological emergency, committing the council to take considered action across the large scope of operations to ensure biodiversity is upheld and protected. The biodiversity declaration read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This Council declares its recognition of the global biodiversity emergency and the local impact this could have on the communities and businesses we serve.</i></li> </ul>

Objectives and actions	
Strategies	Detail
Canterbury City Council Climate Change Action Plan (2021 – 2030)	<p>This action plan highlights the link between climate and biodiversity. The plan focuses on adapting to climate change by building resilience into council owned green spaces. This may be achieved via our direct services but also through planning functions. A key action to support the achievement of net zero emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Introduce new land management practices across our open spaces aiming to maximise their ability to remove carbon and optimise their biodiversity and resilience value.</i></li> </ul>
Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018 – 2031)	<p>The strategy takes a multifunctional and cross boundary approach to green infrastructure planning and considers biodiversity, recreation and active travel, water resources, woodlands, landscape character and health and wellbeing in formulating priorities and actions. The green infrastructure strategy will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Protect and enhance biodiversity, enabling landscape-scale biodiversity gains which cross local authority boundaries, as well as delivering net gain through development.</i></li> </ul>
Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018 – 2031) - Updated Action Plan 2026 to 2031	<p>An updated action plan provided for the Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2018 that supports the delivery of both Canterbury City Council's adopted Local Plan 2017 and the Corporate Plan. The action plan considers initiatives relating to biodiversity, recreation and active travel, water resources, woodlands, and landscape character. This Action Plan covers the period from 2026-2031.</p>
Canterbury City Council Open Space Strategy (2025 to 2040)	<p>This Strategy focuses on protecting and improving existing open space within the council's ownership. It considers both the quality and value of the districts open spaces, regarding all features ranging from amenity / recreation to biodiversity. The vision of the Open Space Strategy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To develop an interconnected network of diverse, high quality open spaces which contribute to biodiversity, habitats and the needs of local people to help raise the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the Canterbury district.</i></li> </ul>
Canterbury District Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy (2024 – 2040)	<p>This strategy assesses the resource of trees, woodlands and hedgerows across the whole of Canterbury district. It sets out the direction of travel for the district and sets priorities and actions.</p>

Objectives and actions	
Canterbury Riverside strategy (2023 – 2028)	<p>This strategy is an accompanying document to the City Council’s Open Space Strategy. It focuses on protecting and enhancing the biodiversity, amenity value and sustainability of Canterbury’s Great Stour corridor. The vision for the strategy states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Canterbury’s riverside will be a clean, safe, accessible and coherent place – a joy to wander, a sustainable transport corridor for walkers and cyclists – a confident place that reflects the city’s proud heritage and complements its important and diverse biodiversity.</i></li> </ul>
Canterbury District Pollinator Action Plan 2023 - 28	<p>Canterbury City Council has developed this Pollinator Action Plan to help protect all pollinator populations in the district. Together with our partners and stakeholders we aim to protect and improve habitats for this threatened group of insects by changing the way that we manage the land that we own and control, and by empowering everyone who lives and works in this district to act as well.</p>
Whitstable Harbour Strategic Plan (2024)	<p>This strategy aims to actively manage the harbour in a way which is responsive to climate change, enhances the environment and promotes the health and biodiversity of our local waters. It also assesses how harbour operations can be managed to actively increase marine biodiversity.</p>
Draft Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy – A Nature Recovery Plan (2026-2042/43)	<p>In response to the Kent’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), Canterbury City Council produced a local Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan. Working with the Open Space and Biodiversity Group to build of holistic view of Canterbury’s biodiversity, the Biodiversity Plan focuses more on actionable and targeted biodiversity improvements within the district, engaging with local communities, farmers, businesses and other important stakeholders. Protected site strategies and species conservation strategies are also considered to develop a robust Biodiversity Plan.</p> <p>This strategy has been developed in response to the ecological emergency declaration by the council in 2023 and acts as a supporting document to the new Local Plan. It outlines 32 actions to help the council, organisations, businesses and communities can work together to restore and recover nature locally across the Canterbury District.</p>

<b>Objectives and actions</b>	
<b>Working groups and partnerships</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Open Spaces and Biodiversity Group (OSBG)	This formed group meets on a multi-annual basis, or when required to develop the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan but also to raise issues regarding biodiversity around the district. The meetings are attended by council officers, councillors, community group representatives and partners such as KWT and RSPB.
Canterbury Riverside Group	This stakeholder group meets on a bi-annual basis to review the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity, amenity value and sustainability of Canterbury's river corridors. The meetings are attended by council officers, parish councillors, community group and local business representatives, and statutory bodies such as the EA. The group's work is steered by the Canterbury Riverside Strategy.
Northeast Kent Marine Protected Area (NEKMPA)	The NEKMPA is a partnership including the local authorities of Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Kent County Council, Natural England, Environment Agency, Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority, Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners, Southern Water and Kent Wildlife Trust.
North Kent Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy (Bird Wise North Kent)	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the 'Habitats Regulations') set out how local planning authorities must deal with planning applications that have potential to impact on Special Protection Areas and other European protected sites. In response, Bird Wise North Kent is a partnership of local authorities and conservation organisations, working together to mitigate disturbance to birds that winter between Dartford and Whitstable.
East Kent Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy (Birdwise East Kent)	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the 'Habitats Regulations') set out how local planning authorities must deal with planning applications that have potential to impact on Special Protection Areas and other European protected sites. In response, Bird Wise East Kent is a partnership of local authorities and conservation organisations, working together to mitigate disturbance to birds that winter between Whitstable and Sandwich Bay.

Table 7: Canterbury City Council biodiversity actions and objectives

### **1.3. Other Strategies**

Other strategies within the county of Kent that are relevant to biodiversity in the Canterbury district and have been referenced in Canterbury City Council documents include:

- Kent Nature Partnership's Biodiversity Strategy
- Kent Plan Bee
- Kent Plan Tree
- Local Wildlife Sites system

As well as the strategies cited in 1.2, Canterbury City Council has produced several management plans for protected sites within the district. These include the following documents with associated designations:

- Long Rock Management Plan (SSSI, SPA, SAC, Ramsar, LNR)
- Curtis Wood Park Management Plan (LNR)
- Tankerton Slopes Management Plan (SSSI, SPA, SAC)
- Reculver Country Park Management Plan (SSSI)
- Gorrell Nature Reserve Management Plan (LWS)
- Westgate Parks Management Plan
- Green Gap Improvement Plans

### **1.4. Summary of actions taken**

Canterbury City Council has strengthened its duty to protect and enhance biodiversity through the following actions.

The council has reviewed all representations to the previous Regulation 18 draft Local Plan consultations and continues to include policies in the draft Local Plan which require Biodiversity Net Gain above the statutory minimum 10%. Regulation 19 draft Local Plan Policy DS25 requires 20% Biodiversity Net Gain on qualifying major development, and 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on qualifying non-major development. This responds to evidence from the 'State of Nature in Kent' report (2021) on the pressures on nature, particularly from developers, and local evidence.

Alongside this, the council has produced a draft Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Strategy that sets out a long-term vision for nature recovery. The strategy complements the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy and includes a district-focused 32-point action plan, district-wide habitat and species mapping, and a visualised nature network. It is an important strategic document for the council and provides evidence for the draft Local Plan and sits alongside the Green Infrastructure Strategy. A suite of strategies sits below it, and this suite includes additional targeted actions that combine to protect and enhance biodiversity. All are implemented and monitored by the council's Environment Team and their external partners.

The Environment Team works closely with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership to deliver habitat management and community volunteering across key sites. Recent work includes

improved woodland management at Curtis Wood and Larkey Valley Wood, the creation of protected skylark nesting plots at Reculver Country Park, winter tree planting in coastal areas and delivery of several biodiversity grant projects. This relationship with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership will continue to play a central role in implementing the strategy.

In 2024, the council launched its small biodiversity grant scheme to fund and support community-led projects that enhance local habitats and engage residents and volunteers across the Canterbury district. Seven grants were awarded in the first year and eight in 2025/26. Funded projects have included installation of bird, bat, swift and owl boxes as well as bug and bee hotels, creation of butterfly and pollinator habitats, tree planting, garden and forest school improvements and pond restoration and creation. In late 2025, the council launched a memorial biodiversity initiative enabling loved ones to contribute towards biodiversity projects across the district.

The council has also supported statutory protection for important habitats. In 2025, Old Park and Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve were designated as Local Wildlife Sites, ensuring long-term safeguarding of their ecological value. In the same year, the council launched “The Canterbury Hedge,” a major hedgerow-planting initiative delivering nearly 16 km of continuous hedgerow from the boundary with Swale in the west to the eastern boundary with Thanet. This project will enhance ecological connectivity, provide new wildlife habitat and support the recovery of a wide range of species.

## 2. Future Actions

Canterbury City Council has produced an extensive list of emerging actions that have been developed as a response to the ecological emergency declaration and the draft Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan. These are set out in the Table 7 and future actions will be monitored in future reports. The strategy builds on work already achieved and being done by voluntary groups and community organisations across the district.

	Action	Lead and Partners	Term	Estimated Cost and Source
<b>Strategic Policy Working</b>				
BA1	Acknowledgement of the Declaration of an Ecological Emergency in the new Corporate Plan to promote the value and importance placed on our local biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, as well as the public benefits it delivers across the district and across services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Completed	N/a <sup>ii</sup>
BA2	Consult on the draft Biodiversity Plan for the Canterbury District (a Nature Recovery Plan) to audit current biodiversity position and to unite current environmental strategies including promoting access to nature where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> <li>Planning Policy team</li> </ul>	Short By February 2026	N/a
BA3	Champion the Local Plan Reg 18-19 policies, DS25 securing the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain at 20% for qualifying major developments, and DS27 - The Blean Woodlands complex.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>Planning Policy Team</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short By March 2026	N/a

	Action	Lead and Partners	Term	Estimated Cost and Source
BA4	Undertake a strategic review of landowners' and farmers' willingness to deliver biodiversity actions and present results in the form of a "Willingness Map."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> <li>Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)</li> </ul>	Medium	N/a
BA5	Delivery of strategies: Pollinator Action Plan, Tree and Woodlands Strategy, Open Space Strategy, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2017).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>Planning Policy Team</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short	N/a
<b>Partnership Working</b>				
BA6	Support the Kent Downs National Landscape's enhanced duty to further the aims of the National Landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> </ul>	Short	CCC £5,000 p.a.
BA7	Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Medium to Long	N/a
BA8	Work in partnership to promote biodiversity opportunities along the Great River Stour and explore the concept and establishment of a possible Great Stour Regional Park (Stour Valley Restore).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Medium to Long	External - £1.5m S.106 - £50,000*
BA9	Support partnership opportunities for landscape-scale works within the Wantsum Channel, connections to The Blean and Pegwell Bay E3 initiative, and Canterbury to Coast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Medium	N/a

	Action	Lead and Partners	Term	Estimated Cost and Source
BA10	Partner with Foreshore Services on marine biodiversity and environment related initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager / Foreshore Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short to Medium	N/a
BA11	Seek opportunities to promote the management of the transport network, walking and cycling and public rights of way for habitat conservation, including the opportunity for green bridges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager / Foreshore Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Medium	N/a
BA12	Support initiatives and projects promoting the health of all our waterways and ensuring nutrient neutrality, including working with Natural England to support their restoration of Stodmarsh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager / Foreshore Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short to Medium	N/a
<b>Delivery</b>				
BA13	Support Tree Officer in promoting and delivering the Canterbury Hedge and tree planting initiatives across the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> </ul>	Short	CCC - £17,500 (Y1 and Y2)
BA14	Support biodiversity and community outputs delivered by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) by doubling volunteer task days on council owned sites and increasing KSCP's support / training for Friends of Groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> </ul>	Short	CCC - £5,000 p.a.

	Action	Lead and Partners	Term	Estimated Cost and Source
BA15	Facilitate the positive land management and the delivery of biodiversity outcomes at the Old Park and Chequers Wood, and surrounding land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> <li>Friends of Old Park &amp; Chequers Wood</li> </ul>	Medium to Long	CCC – tbc s.106 – tbc* CIL - tbc
BA16	Grant aid the delivery of new biodiversity projects - £15,000 per annum – to further nature recovery across the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Complete	CCC - £15,000 p.a.
BA17	Maximise opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain delivery on Canterbury City Council sites with associated 30 years conservation covenants / funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short to medium	CCC - £15,000 (Y1 and Y2)
BA18	Support Contracts and CANENCO's delivery of biodiversity positive grounds maintenance through provision of training and increased awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>Contracts Manager</li> <li>Canenco manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short to medium	N/a
BA19	Support opportunities across the district for habitat creation/defragmentation through natural regeneration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> </ul>	Ongoing	External - £5m s.106 - £0.5m*
<b>Community Working</b>				
BA20	Establishment and management of new Community Gardening/ Biodiversity initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Medium	N/a

	Action	Lead and Partners	Term	Estimated Cost and Source
BA21	Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the Canterbury Riverside Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Ongoing	s.106 - £100,000* External - £100,000
BA22	Continue to support and advise Friends of Groups across the district and establish new groups where there is demonstrable need and/or demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Ongoing	N/a
BA23	Where appropriate, seek cooperation with Canterbury District Biodiversity Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>CBDN</li> </ul>	Ongoing	N/a
<b>Funding</b>				
BA24	Support Tree Officer in promoting and securing external grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>Climate Change Principal Policy Officer</li> </ul>	Short	CCC - £30,000 p.a.
BA25	Support council services and teams in developing external funding bids to bring in added resources to deliver biodiversity goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Strategy Group</li> </ul>	Short	N/a
BA26	Consider potential for partnership led external funding strategies for key initiatives / sites including: (a) Old Park and Chequers Wood, (b) The Wantsum initiative, and c) Seasalter Levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short - medium	N/a
BA27	Explore opportunities to deliver landscape scale biodiversity through the Community Infrastructure Levy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>OSBG</li> </ul>	Short	N/a

	Action	Lead and Partners	Term	Estimated Cost and Source
<b>Audit and Planning</b>				
BA28	Review the management of land owned by the council, the universities, schools, Housing Revenue Account, MoD, and hospitals, and promote biodiversity measures such as pollinators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>• Climate Change Principal Policy Officer</li> <li>• OSBG</li> </ul>	Short (assess), Medium (delivery)	N/a
BA29	Review provision of Local Nature Reserves in relation to the growing population. Complete audit and then prioritise action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>• OSBG</li> </ul>	Short	N/a
BA30	Resource the enforcement of best practice tree planting and maintenance on all development sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>• OSBG</li> </ul>	Medium	N/a
BA31	Make maximum use of the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity in planning decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>• OSBG</li> </ul>	Ongoing	N/a
BA32	Consider adaptive measures (species selection, land management / use) to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and embark on initiatives to achieve Wilder Canterbury City and Wilder Whitstable and Wilder Herne Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Environment Manager</li> <li>• Climate Change Principal Policy Officer</li> </ul>	Medium	N/a

Table 8: Canterbury City Council's biodiversity action plan

### 3. Biodiversity Net Gain information

In relation to 2025/2026, Canterbury City Council’s local planning authority has approved two applications for the discharge of biodiversity gain plans. Of these, one is discharged to gain biodiversity on-site while the other is providing off-site. The two approved applications and their biodiversity gain plan metrics are as follows:

- [CA/25/01997](#)

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>			594.52
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>			0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>			0.00
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>			34.37%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>			0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>			0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00%	1729.55	1729.55	0.00
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%	179.15	179.15	0.00

No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓  
 No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓  
 No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

- [CA/25/00962](#)

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>			0.94
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>			0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>			0.00
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>			10.04%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>			0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>			0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	10.00%	9.37	10.30	0.00
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Watercourse units</i>	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓  
 No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓  
 No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Across approved biodiversity plans, the net gain in number of units is **595.46** and the average percentage gain is **22%**, which satisfies the minimum 20% biodiversity net gain that the council’s Regulation 19 Local Plan requires of major qualifying developments.

The following chart shows the number of and net change in biodiversity units and area split by habitat type across approved plans. It also shows that there is no impact on irreplaceable habitat.

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Total habitat units	Area retained	Area enhanced	Baseline units retained	Baseline units enhanced	Area habitat lost	Units lost
Grassland	Floodplain wetland mosaic and CFGM	No	250.66	Same habitat required =	1729.554	67.02	183.64	462.44	1267.12	0.00	0.00
Grassland	Modified grassland	No	1.498	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	5.99			0.00	0.00	1.50	5.99
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	No	0.422	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	3.38			0.00	0.00	0.42	3.38
<b>Total</b>			252.58		1738.922	67.02	183.64	462.44	1267.12	1.92	9.37

Offsite biodiversity units for approved plans are being sought from a registered Habitat Bank, in this case from South Downs National Park and will be looking for 16.73 units.