Agenda

Cabinet

Monday
5 October 2026
at no earlier than* 7pm

The Guildhall
St Peter’s Place
Canterbury
CT1 2DB

*Please note at 7pm there will be a representation from the public session with the Cabinet prior to the commencement of the meeting. It will last for a maximum of 20 minutes

Membership of the Cabinet

Alan Baldock (Chair)
Charlotte Cornell
Chris Cornell
Mel Dawkins
Pip Hazelton
Connie Nolan
Paul Prentice (from 1st October 2026)

Quorum: 4 councillors

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1. Members of the public may speak at meetings of the Cabinet so long as the item has not already been heard at the Overview Committee. They must contact Democratic Services by 12.30pm the working day before the meeting to register to speak.

2. The venue for the meeting is wheelchair accessible and has an induction loop to help people who are hearing impaired.

3. Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever non-disruptive methods you think are suitable. If you are intending to do this please mention it to the Democratic Services Officer and do not use flash photograph unless you have previously asked whether you may do so. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press please contact the Press Office).

Please note that the Chair of the meeting has the discretion to withdraw permission and halt any recording if in the Chair's opinion continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting. Reasons may include disruption caused by the filming or recording or the nature of the business being conducted.

Anyone filming a meeting is asked to only focus on those actively participating but please also be aware that you may be filmed or recorded whilst attending a council meeting and that attendance at the meeting signifies your agreement to this if it occurs. You are also reminded that the laws of defamation apply and all participants whether speaking, filming or recording are reminded that respect should be shown to all those included in the democratic process.

Persons making recordings are requested not to put undue restrictions on the material produced so that it can be reused and edited by all local people and organisations on a non-commercial basis.

If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the press and public then, in conjunction with this, all rights to record the meeting are removed.

<u>Notes for the Representation from the Public session</u>

1. Members of the public must live or work within the district and they must contact Democratic Services to register to speak prior to 12.30pm the working day before the meeting.

2. Representations will be limited to three minutes, and called in order, at the discretion of the Chair.

3. No discussion will follow the representations, Cabinet Members may later refer to issues raised if they are pertinent to that meeting's agenda. The Chair may give an indication if an issue raised will be considered for discussion at a future meeting.

4. This section of the meeting will be recorded and live streamed but will not be minuted as it does not form part of the formal meeting.

5.The information contained within this agenda is available in other formats, including Braille, large print, audio cassettes and other languages.

Contact: Democratic Services 01227 862 009, democracy@canterbury.gov.uk

Agenda

Page (s)

1 Apologies for absence

2 Declaration of any interests

TO RECEIVE any declarations for the following in so far as they relate to the business for the meeting:-

a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)
b. Other Significant Interests (OSI)
c. Voluntary announcements of other interests not required to be disclosed as DPIs or OSIs, i.e. announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:
    - Membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
    - Where a councillor knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
    - Where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position.

[Note: an effect on the financial position of a councillor, relative, close associate, employer, etc; OR an application made by a councillor, relative, close associate, employer, etc, would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI].

3 Announcements

To receive any announcement from the Leader or Cabinet Members.

4 Public participation

Members of the public may speak on an agenda item in Part A, for a maximum of three minutes, provided that notification has been given to Democratic Services by 12.30pm on the working day before the day of meeting.

To find out more visit this webpage.

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2026 7 - 17

TO CONFIRM as a true record.

6 References from Committees 18 - 24

TO NOTE the minutes of the Overview Committee on 10 September 2026

Part A - Items to be considered with public participation

7 Draft CIL Action Plan 2026 25 - 63

TO CONSIDER the report from Peter Davies, Joint Chief Executive

8 Canterbury District Community Safety Partnership - Report back on 25/26 and Delivery Plan 26/27 64 - 93

TO NOTE the report of the Director of People and Head of Locality

9 Right to Grow - report back to Cabinet 94 - 102

TO CONSIDER the report of the Director of Place and Head of Transport and Environment

10 Provision of toilets on Herne Bay seafront 103 - 117

TO CONSIDER the report of the Director of Place

Part B - Items for consideration with no public participation

These items have already been considered at the Overview Committee with public participation. Therefore, there is no further public participation for the items listed in Part B of the agenda.

11 City and Town Centre Strategies 118 - 168

TO CONSIDER the report from the Director of Place

12 Adoption of the Canterbury district biodiversity plan – a nature recovery strategy 169 - 353

TO CONSIDER the report from the Director of Place and the Head of Transport and Environment

13 Date of next meeting

14 Any other urgent business to be dealt with in public

15 Exclusion of the press and public

TO RESOLVE – That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act or the Freedom of Information Act or both.

Part C - Items likely to be considered in Private

16 Any other urgent business which falls under the exempt provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or both

Date Published: 10 July 2026

Any decision in the minutes below will come into force, and may be implemented, on the expiry of three clear working days after the publication of the decision, unless a valid request has been received by a Joint Chief Executive objecting to the decision and asking for it to be called in.

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday, 30th June, 2026 at 6.00 pm in The Guildhall, St Peter's Place, Westgate, Canterbury

Present: Councillor Alan Baldock (Chair)
Councillor Chris Cornell
Councillor Mel Dawkins
Councillor Connie Nolan

In attendance Councillor David Thomas

Officers:			
	Suzi Wakeham	-	Joint Chief Executive
	Lauren Wheeler	-	Democratic Services Officer
	Jan Guyler	-	Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
	William Hicks	-	Director for Place
	Nicci Mills	-	Director of Finance and Procurement
	Marie Royle	-	Director for People
	Adam Wright	-	Principal Property Surveyor

138 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Charlotte Cornell and Councillor Pip Hazelton.

139 **DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

140 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Colan Nolan reported positive developments regarding the twinning relationship with Reims. A recent event by the Lord Mayor with the Twinning Association was well received. This was highlighted as particularly important in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with several future projects anticipated as part of the twinning legacy.

Councillor Chris Cornell announced that representatives from PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) had recently presented a petition regarding the proposed horse and carriage operation. The issue has attracted attention on social media, and discussions have taken place with PETA, who have expressed concerns that the operation could commence during the summer. Cabinet is currently awaiting a report on the matter for consideration. Initial advice suggests that the activity is not illegal; however, introducing restrictions would require a byelaw agreed by the Secretary of State and supported by sufficient evidence of harm that meets the threshold. PETA's concerns were acknowledged, and it was noted that the Council does not wish to be considered as supporting the proposed operation. Consent to operate on Council-owned land would not be granted.

141 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was one speaker registered to speak on agenda item 8.

142 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2026**

The minutes of the 9 June 2026 were agreed as a true record by general assent.

143 **REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEES**

The minutes from the Overview Committee on 11 June 2026 and the Companies Advisory Committee on 17 June 2026 in the agenda supplement were noted and the comments were discussed at the relevant agenda item.

144 **CANENCO GOVERNANCE - APPOINTMENT OF NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Councillor Alan Baldock, Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance introduced the report that seeks agreement that provision is made for the appointment of two independent Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) to the Canenco Board and provide delegated authority to named officers to make necessary changes to the Articles of Association to enable these appointments and undertake recruitment to these roles.

There were three options for Cabinet to consider within the report:

1. Make the recommendations to Cabinet as set out on page 1 of this report to facilitate the increase in Directors from 3 to 5 and enable the recruitment and appointment of two Independent Non-Executive Directors ideally with expertise in waste and recycling services, local government procurement rules and contract management with delegated authority to a named officer to undertake various steps.
2. Make alternative proposals on the composition of the Board and the recruitment and remuneration framework.
3. Maintain the status quo, keep the articles as they are and the Board comprising of 3 Executive Directors who are Council officers.

The Cabinet discussed the report including the following points:

- Members discussed whether Councillors should be involved in the recruitment and governance
  process. Officers considered that Councillors should not participate in interviews or hold director positions on the Board to maintain the company's independence and arm's-length relationship with the Council.

- The proposed approach was consistent with relevant regulations, guidance and arrangements commonly used for Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCOs).
- While Councillors are not prevented from applying, they would not be considered to be sufficiently independent and guidance advises that members should not be Board members due to the risk of conflicts of interest arising by wearing two hats as councillors and a director.
- The possibility of Councillors attending Board meetings as observers was discussed and officers confirmed this point would be checked. However it was noted that it could compromise the necessary distance between the council and the LATCo and that it is important that the Board has the ability to do its business in private.
- The value of NEDs was recognised in providing independent challenge, scrutiny, commercial expertise and strategic oversight. Independent directors acted as “critical friends” and bring valuable external perspectives to support effective decision-making and governance.
- Concerns were raised regarding the proposed remuneration level for NEDs and whether it would attract suitably experienced candidates.
- Officers advised that benchmarking had been undertaken against comparable organisations, although remuneration levels vary significantly depending on the size and complexity of the organisation.
- It was agreed that the s151 officer would review and agree remuneration levels and ensure they were appropriate for attracting candidates with the required skills and experience.
- The anticipated time commitment that included attendance at regular Board meetings and associated preparatory work was noted.
- Subject to approval of the proposals, recruitment would proceed as quickly as possible.
- Cabinet members supported the introduction of independent NEDs and the proposed governance changes, recognising the potential benefits for accountability, oversight and the long-term effectiveness of the company.

It was then proposed, seconded and when put to a recorded vote RESOLVED that:

1) The Articles be amended by a Members Special Resolution to increase the Canenco Board from 3 to 5 Directors to allow the appointment of two Independent Non-Executive Directors.

2) The proposed Recruitment and Remuneration Framework is approved

3) Two Independent Non-Executive Directors be recruited and appointed to the Canenco Board, subject to the S151 Officer’s approval, in accordance with the proposed Recruitment and Remuneration framework, ideally candidates would have experience of working in one or more of the following areas; the waste and recycling industry, local government procurement, local authority governance, audit, risk and assurance and regulated service delivery.

4) Delegated authority be given to Jan Guyler, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer to undertake the following:
a) Conduct a recruitment process in accordance with the Recruitment and Remuneration framework to identifying and appoint suitable independent candidates.
b) Sign the relevant Special Resolutions to amend the Articles as set out in this report, on Cabinet’s behalf.

c) Submit the Special Resolution to Companies House within 15 days of the special resolution.

Record of the voting:
For (4): Councillors Baldock, Chris Cornell, Dawkins, Nolan
Against (0)
Abstained (0)

Reason for the decision: To provide additional expertise to the Board of Canenco including experience in the waste and recycling industry, procurement and contract management, etc but with some flexibility provided to allow consultation with the S151 officer on the issue of remuneration if required.

145 **POOR PRIEST'S HOSPITAL AND MARLOWE KIT LEASE RENEWAL**

Paul Turner, Chief Operating Officer (Marlowe Theatre) spoke directly before the item.

Councillor Chris Cornell, Economic Development & Regeneration introduced the report that seeks agreement:
a) that the Head of Property & Regeneration be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the draft Heads of Terms (Appendix 4) and to agree the final terms of the lease in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration, the Cabinet Member for Council Services, Culture & Heritage and the Service Director Finance & Procurement (s151 Officer).
b) to authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into any legal documentation necessary to complete the lease.

There were three options for Cabinet to consider within the report:

1. Do nothing
2. Market for disposal at full market value
3. Dispose at less than best consideration to The Marlowe Trust

The Cabinet discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- Cabinet considered the options proposed in relation to the heritage building that aimed to support its long-term future and contribution to the city's cultural offer.
- The proposal included a six-year peppercorn rent arrangement, transitioning to a turnover based annual rent review arrangement from year six to enable investment in the building and allow the operating organisation to focus on delivering community initiatives, expanding cultural benefits (particularly for young people) and supporting opportunities for wider engagement, rather than operating on a commercial basis.
- Members welcomed the commitment that the proposed lease structure, redevelopment of the site, enhanced facilities and the creation of a new community and cultural hub would bring, whilst Council ownership of the asset was retained.
- The business case demonstrated:
    - A clear vision for the future use and operation of the building.
    - Robust governance and trustee arrangements, supported by long-term financial planning and risk assessment.

  - ❖ The positive impact of the proposed undervalue lease on the organisation's ability to secure external funding.
  - ❖ Appropriate safeguards for the Council through lease provisions, rent review mechanisms and protections for the Council as the asset owner.
- Appreciation was expressed for the work undertaken by the Marlowe Theatre and all parties involved in developing the proposal over several years.
- Officers highlighted the scheme's alignment with the Council's Cultural Strategy, Corporate Plan and wider regeneration objectives.
- It was noted that failure to approve the proposal could place significant external funding at risk and leave uncertainty regarding the future investment and maintenance of the building.
- Questions were raised regarding the inclusion of renewable energy measures, particularly solar panels, within the redevelopment plans.
- Solar installations had not been included within the current project due to cost constraints, although future installation remains under consideration as part of longer-term sustainability plans.
- Members requested that future climate-related improvements and opportunities for community-supported sustainability initiatives be explored further.
- The project provided a blueprint for similar opportunities in the future following the General Disposal Consent process.

It was then proposed, seconded and when put to a recorded vote RESOLVED:

a) that the Head of Property & Regeneration be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the draft Heads of Terms (Appendix 4) and to agree the final terms of the lease in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration, the Cabinet Member for Council Services, Culture & Heritage, the Joint Chief Executives and the Service Director Finance & Procurement (s151 Officer).

b) to authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into any legal documentation necessary to complete the lease.

Record of the voting:
For (4): Councillors Baldock, Chris Cornell, Dawkins, Nolan
Against (0)
Abstained (0)

Reason for the decision: The council can enable significant capital investment in the property, safeguarding its future for the next 50 years, and enable the delivery of significant social, economic and environmental outcomes for the city.

146 **SOUTH EAST WATER STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

Councillor Alan Baldock, Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance, introduced the report that asks Cabinet to consider whether Canterbury City Council should lead or co-lead the establishment of a South East Water Stakeholder Group. It draws on discussions with Wealden District Council, which coordinates the Southern Water Stakeholder Group, and on recent engagement with South East Water.

There were three options for Cabinet to consider within the report:
1. To establish a South East Water Stakeholder Group comprising of nominated representatives from all local authorities within the South East Water regional areas.
2. To adapt our response in light of Kent County Council involvement with their proposal to scrutinise South East Water.
3. To do nothing

The Cabinet discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- The Council had limited formal powers over water companies and regulators but could play an important role in coordinating local authorities, stakeholders and lobbying efforts to encourage improvements in service delivery and infrastructure investment.
- Discussions had taken place with neighbouring authorities to determine levels of interest and participation before detailed arrangements are established.
- A collaborative approach would strengthen the Council's voice and ability to advocate for residents.
- Reference was made to proposals being developed at county level to increase public scrutiny of water companies. Cabinet agreed it was appropriate to continue progressing the Council's own arrangements while awaiting further details.
- Members agreed that the primary focus of the proposed group should be in relation to water supply resilience, infrastructure delivery, customer service and operational performance due to ongoing concerns about recurring disruptions, the adequacy of infrastructure maintenance, and the impact on residents affected by service failures.
- The geographical scope of the group was discussed with the benefits of engaging all local authorities served by South East Water.
- Future arrangements would remain flexible enough to adapt to changes arising from Local Government Reorganisation.
- Consideration would be given to the resourcing of the proposed work and the extent to which participating authorities may contribute to administration and governance arrangements.
- Members supported the establishment of a collaborative stakeholder group focused on South East Water, involving local authorities and other relevant organisations, and agreed that officers should engage with affected councils to develop the proposal and strengthen collective representation of local concerns.
- A further update to Cabinet would be provided in three months.

It was then proposed, seconded and when put to a recorded vote RESOLVED:

To establish a South East Water Stakeholder Group comprising of nominated representatives from all local authorities within the South East Water regional areas.

Record of the voting:
For (4): Councillors Baldock, Chris Cornell, Dawkins, Nolan
Against (0)
Abstained (0)

Reason for the decision: To address ongoing issues with South East Water at a senior level.

147 **CONTRACTS PERFORMANCE FY 2025/26**

Councillor Baldock, Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance, introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Charlotte Cornell, Cabinet Member for Council Services, Culture & Heritage that detailed the annual performance for April 2025 to March 2026 on the following contracts: Waste Collection and Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Associated Works, Public Conveniences cleansing & maintenance, and Building Cleaning.

A summary was provided by officers and Cabinet discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- Service activity levels had increased across a range of areas, including waste collection and environmental enforcement activities.
- Missed bin collections had reduced compared with the previous year, which demonstrated improved performance, although efforts continued to minimise missed collections wherever possible.
- The introduction of the new communal food waste collection service was successful; implementation had been delivered on schedule and was operating effectively.
- Further details were provided on grounds maintenance performance and the management of public conveniences, including measures taken to address vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- The complexity and scale of the services provided was noted and included the significant number of properties serviced each week, and the increased demand placed on operational teams.
- It was reported that incidents requiring service response, including fly-tipping, graffiti removal, clinical waste collections and beach cleansing activities, had increased, resulting in higher workloads for operational teams.
- Members emphasised the importance of removing graffiti promptly. Officers confirmed that service-related costs, including those associated with graffiti removal, are reported publicly where appropriate.
- Comparative performance data was reviewed. The authority continued to perform broadly in line with other local authorities.
- Members commended the Council's environmental enforcement work, particularly the successful prosecution of fly-tipping offences, and highlighted the important contribution of evidence provided by residents in supporting enforcement action.
- Cabinet welcomed the overall positive performance trends and commended the continued hard work by officers.

Cabinet NOTED the report.

148 **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE 2025/26 ON ALL SOCIAL HOUSING KPIS**

Councillor Connie Nolan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement & Inclusion introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Pip Hazelton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning that provided a summary of performance for the Housing (tenancy and facilities management) services for the 2025-26 period. The report also included information on the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan.

Cabinet were asked to note the contents of the 2025-26 Housing Performance KPI update; performance will be reported to the Resident Engagement Panel.

There were two options within the report for Cabinet to consider:
Option 1 – Approve the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code Self-Assessment and Improvement Report.
Option 2 – Make recommendations for changes to the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code Self-Assessment and Improvement Report

The Cabinet discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- An update on housing service performance and progress against commitments agreed with the Regulator of Social Housing was provided.
- Scorecards and the Service Improvement Plan supported the embedding of service improvements, tackling root causes, meeting consumer standards and governance reforms.
- Work was ongoing to address areas not yet fully compliant.
- Measures relating to property acquisitions continued to support the protection of the Council's social housing stock and it was acknowledged that properties continue to be sold under the Right to Buy.
- Members noted significant progress in stock condition surveying, with most of the housing stock now assessed to inform future investment planning.
- Officers advised that a review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan is in progress, which would incorporate updated stock condition data and support the development of a longer-term asset management capital investment plan for the next 5-10 years.
- Feedback from resident engagement activities had been incorporated into service improvements, and performance data would be made publicly available to increase transparency on the council's website.
- Progress in reducing void property turnaround times was noted; this remained an area of focus for further improvement.
- There were some concerns regarding contractor performance, and officers confirmed that improvement work was ongoing and contractors were responding positively.
- Tenant engagement activity was reported to be strong, with positive feedback received and new approaches being introduced to increase participation, including enhanced community events over the summer and door-knocking initiatives to try and reach as many tenants as possible in the event areas.
- Members noted that complaint volumes had increased, this reflected improved reporting and engagement by residents.
- The analysis of complaint data was used to identify trends, improve communication, and to address recurring service issues at an earlier stage and ensure consistent delivery across all areas.
- Further work was underway to improve complaint handling, including additional staff training, greater resilience within teams responding to complaints, enhanced quality assurance of responses, and a stronger focus on demonstrating empathy and learning from mistakes.

The report was NOTED.

It was then proposed, seconded and when put to a recorded vote RESOLVED:

To approve the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code Self-Assessment and Improvement Report.

Record of the voting:
For (4): Councillors Baldock, Chris Cornell, Dawkins, Nolan
Against (0)
Abstained (0)

Reason for decision: There is a requirement for the HRA housing service to submit an annual report to the Housing Ombudsman and the self-assessment and improvement report set out the current position with complaints.

149 **FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORTS 2025/26**

Councillor Alan Baldock, Cabinet Member for Strategy & Finance introduced the report that summarised the provisional outturn for the General Fund Revenue Account and Housing Revenue Account for 2025/26.

Cabinet members asked questions and further detail was provided by officers; the following points were made:

- Capital programme slippage was reported across both funds, primarily due to project timing and delivery factors rather than budgetary concerns.
- Variances within service budgets were discussed, including reduced off-street parking income associated with regeneration works, which had been partially offset by improved Park and Ride performance.
- Members welcomed the continued positive performance of homelessness prevention initiatives, recognising the successful work undertaken to reduce pressures in comparison with many other authorities.
- Positive financial performance was also reported within the Council's commercial property portfolio and museum services.
- Members sought an update on the progress of the Military Road development and associated costs, and officers advised that progress was affected by nutrient neutrality requirements, however the sale was still progressing positively, and a further update would be provided in due course.
- An underspend within refuse services was attributed to Government grant funding received during the year, the level and timing of which had not been known when budgets were originally set.
- Members welcomed the strong HRA position and noted opportunities to utilise available resources to improve housing stock and support future housing and temporary accommodation provision.
- An overspend within Housing Benefits was noted, largely attributable to changes in Government grant arrangements and funding mechanisms.
- Budget assumptions relating to Housing Benefits would be reviewed as part of future budget-setting processes to improve forecasting accuracy.
- Members acknowledged that financial forecasting in some areas remained complex due to factors outside the Council's direct control but welcomed the overall positive outturn position and the work undertaken by officers to maintain sound financial management.

The report was NOTED.

150 **ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT**

Councillor Connie Nolan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement & Inclusion introduced the report that detailed the council's workforce composition and key workforce information for the year ending March 2026.

The following points were made:

- Staff have settled into new offices in St George's Lane following the relocation in September 2025.
- Investment in workforce development continued, with increased compliance training and a focus on maintaining an engaged, skilled and resilient workforce.
- Members welcomed the stabilisation of staff turnover rates, noting that the Council was performing positively compared with recruitment and retention challenges experienced by some other local authorities. Vacancy levels remained stable and that recent recruitment campaigns had successfully filled vacant posts.
- An update was requested on the implementation and impact of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, including staff passport arrangements.
- Reduction of long-term sickness absence remained a priority, with targeted support, management training and wellbeing initiatives being implemented, including mental health awareness training for managers.
- Officers highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen staff development, increase in-person collaboration and support employees through organisational change and the transition during LGR (Local Government Reorganisation).

The report was NOTED.

151 **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY - ADOPTION**

Councillor Mel Dawkins, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Pip Hazelton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning that seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Draft Housing Strategy 2026-2029.

This follows a public consultation from 21st January 2025 to 15 April 2026, the Residents Engagement Panel on 19 May, and recommendations from Overview Committee on 11 June 2026.

The Cabinet discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- An updated strategy was required to support the Regulation 19 Local Plan and future housing growth and priorities and providing context for planning and development decisions.
- The draft strategy had been informed by public consultation, including feedback from resident engagement groups and Overview Committee, with amendments made in response to comments received.
- This reflected current Government policy, local housing needs and the Council's ambitions for housing delivery.
- Members welcomed the document as a clear and evidence-based framework for addressing local housing challenges, including affordability pressures and housing need.
- Emerging housing standards and policy changes, including considerations relating to climate resilience and housing quality, had been incorporated within the strategy.

- Officers advised that delivery would be monitored through a future action plans and performance measures, linked to the adoption and implementation of the Regulation 19 Local Plan.
- Cabinet welcomed the strategy as an important framework to guide future housing provision and support wider work on housing need, homelessness and rough sleeping. It was noted that a separate strategy on homelessness and rough sleeping was currently being consulted on.

It was then proposed, seconded and when put to a recorded vote RESOLVED:

That the Draft Housing Strategy 2026-2030 be adopted.

Record of the voting:
For (4): Councillors Baldock, Chris Cornell, Dawkins, Nolan
Against (0)
Abstained (0)

Reason for decision: The Draft Housing Strategy 2026-2029 sets out the council's strategic approach to housing for the period up to local government reorganisation and leaves the new authority a sound legacy without fettering its discretion.

152 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 5th October 2026

153 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS TO BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC**

There was none.

154 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

155 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS WHICH FALLS UNDER THE EXEMPT PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 OR THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 OR BOTH**

There was none.

156 **POOR PRIEST'S HOSPITAL AND MARLOWE KIT LEASE RENEWAL (APPENDICES EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION)**

The annex was NOTED.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.23 pm

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 10th September, 2026 at 7.00 pm in The Guildhall, St Peter's Place, Westgate, Canterbury

Present: Councillor Pat Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Beth Forrester
Councillor Mike Bland
Councillor Dane Buckman
Councillor Jean Butcher
Councillor Rachel Carnac (present as a substitute)
Councillor James Flanagan
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Stuart Heaver
Councillor Tom Mellish
Councillor Peter Old
Councillor Alex Ricketts
Councillor David Thomas

In attendance Chris Cornell - Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration
Mel Dawkins - Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability

Officers:

Pippa Tritton	-	Democratic Services Officer
William Hicks	-	Director for Place
Nick Churchill	-	Senior Economic Development Officer
Martin Thomas*	-	Tree and Woodland Officer
Andrew Miller*	-	Project Support Officer (Environment)

(*present for part of the meeting)

237 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor J Stockley.

238 **SUBSTITUTE COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Carnac was present as a substitute for Councillor J Stockley.

239 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In relation to Item 6 – Adoption of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan, Councillor Buckman and Councillor Carnac made a voluntary announcement that they were members of the Open Space Biodiversity Group (OSBG).

240 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chair advised that there were two public speakers who would be heard before the relevant item.

241 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2026 were agreed as a true record by general assent.

242 **ADOPTION OF THE CANTERBURY DISTRICT BIODIVERSITY PLAN**

(Councillor Buckman and Councillor Carnac made a voluntary announcement that they were members of the Open Space Biodiversity Group (OSBG)).

(Members of the public Michelle Crowther and Thomas Crowther spoke prior to the debate.)

The Tree and Woodland Officer gave a short presentation introducing the proposed Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan. He explained that it had been developed following the council's 2023 biodiversity emergency declaration to guide nature recovery across the district. The plan had been prepared by the Open Space and Biodiversity Group, informed by public consultation, and set out a long-term vision focused on key landscape areas, habitat connectivity, partnership working and biodiversity enhancement. Cabinet was being asked to adopt the Strategy as a supporting document to the Local Plan, providing a framework to guide biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery across the district.

Councillor Dawkins, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, welcomed the proposed plan and clarified that the appendix formed part of the evidence base linked to the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with the numbering system indicating both the type of action and its intended delivery sequence.

Councillors debated the report and made comments, with clarification provided by the Tree and Woodland Officer and the Director of Place where necessary:

- Officers were thanked for their work producing the comprehensive and important plan.
- Surprise was expressed that the Broad Oak Reservoir, a significant project within the Local Plan, was not mentioned in the Biodiversity Plan, particularly given recent local water supply issues, and concerns that had been raised by parish councils, local groups and South East Water.
- It was noted that the reservoir could also have positive impacts, but it was felt that it should have been included and officers undertook to feed this back to the report author.
- Concern was expressed that the biodiversity and climate change were closely linked and that prolonged periods of drought were already impacting habitats and agriculture in the district.
- Residents often identified local authorities as contributing to biodiversity loss through maintenance practices, and staff training could help to assist this.
- The restoration of ancient ponds was welcomed, and officers were asked if the strategy would link to ongoing work with the water companies as there was a strong relationship between biodiversity enhancement, water management and measures such as riverbank habitat improvements.
- There was concern that the plan was not sufficiently integrated with the Local Plan and the relevant Local Plan policies did not currently reference the strategy which could weaken both documents.
- There were also questions on whether the identified funding was significant to deliver the 31 proposed actions.

- Could further measures be introduced to encourage biodiversity within resident gardens?
- The Director of Place confirmed that the strategic issues raised regarding links with the Local Plan would be discussed with the Local Plan team. In addition, officers were actively exploring funding opportunities through Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- In addition, he confirmed that discussions with water companies were ongoing, including the establishment of a stakeholder group with South East Water.
- It was important to understand that the Plan should be viewed as a living document which could adapt to changing circumstances.
- The inclusion of coastal, marine and marshland within the strategy was welcomed.
- Achieving the proposed 20% Biodiversity Net Gain target was ambitious.
- The public speakers were thanked for their attendance.
- Future planting schemes should take account of seasonal conditions.
- In response to a question regarding the local government reorganisation proposals, the Director of Place confirmed that work on the Local Plan would continue in accordance with the current timetable.
- There was a request for OSBG to be involved in reviewing and feeding back comments at an early stage through the pre-application process in order to maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
- Future reviews should consider the potential impacts of major infrastructure projects, such as data centres.
- Comments made would be used by Cabinet during their deliberations on the proposed adoption of the Biodiversity Plan.

There were three options available to councillors.

i. To recommend the adoption of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan.
ii. To not recommend the adoption of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan.
iii. To request a redraft and further consultation.

It was proposed, seconded and when put to a vote agreed to:

RECOMMEND (to Cabinet) that the Canterbury district biodiversity plan be adopted.

Record of voting:
For the proposal (13): Councillors Beth Forrester, Rachel Carnac, Mike Bland, Dane Buckman, Jean Butcher, Pat Edwards, James Flanagan, Liz Harvey, Stuart Heaver, Tom Mellish, Peter Old, Alex Ricketts and David Thomas
Against the proposal (0):
Abstained/absent for the vote (0)

243 **CITY AND TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES**

The Director of Place introduced the report and gave a short presentation on the next phase of the town centre strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. This comprised proposals for three new place panels, along with project directories consisting of current initiatives and project ideas for the future, and an action plan for projects the council hoped to deliver by April 2028.

He advised that, although the timetable for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had changed, the proposed approach remained valid and would help strengthen the

three centres and prepare them for future governance arrangements. The report sought comments, particularly on the proposed place panels and their governance arrangements, before consideration by Cabinet.

At the end of the introduction, Councillor Chris Cornell, as Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, addressed the committee supporting the proposals. He noted that the project directories and place panels would help provide a clear vision, encourage engagement and support investment in the district's town centres.

Councillors debated the report and made comments, with clarification provided by the Director of Place and the Senior Economic Development officer.

- Members expressed concern that the proposed recommendation did not provide a sufficiently robust approach to Place Panel membership. Particular reference was made to Herne Bay, where the lack of organisations such as a university or Business Improvement District might limit the pool of suitable members.
- Members noted that the establishment of the Place Panels presented an opportunity to adopt a positive and innovative approach. In respect of panel membership, it was suggested that a process similar to that used for the appointment of independent members to Whitstable Harbour Board be considered, whereby applications could be invited from interested individuals and community representatives, with appointments made through a formal recruitment process.
- It was noted that the Whitstable Harbour Board had attracted highly experienced and capable individuals via this method. Pride in Place panels had also used a similar approach effectively.
- The Senior Economic Development Officer advised that the public engagement process that had informed development of the strategies, had helped identify 25-35 possible panel members in each area. These participants had already given time and input into the development of the strategies and may wish to participate in the panels.
- A number of councillors shared similar concerns regarding the proposed selection process. It was also felt that the proposed criteria to identify panel members was over ambitious.
- Officers were urged not to make panel membership decisions without wider consultation.
- The public engagement process had resulted in involvement from individuals who would not normally participate in council consultation and engagement, and it was felt that the proposed arrangements narrowed participation rather than broadened it.
- It was suggested that many of the organisations identified from the previous consultation exercises were unlikely to come from the Herne Bay area.
- Concern was also raised about the proposed size of the Place Panels with and the risk of the panels becoming 'talking shops'.
- Although public engagement events had attracted a range of participants, some preferred to simply provide feedback rather than becoming more involved.
- Members asked how the current financial pressures at Herne Bay Sports Centre had informed the proposals. It was noted that the site was connected to the Kavanagh Cinema and former co-working hub.
- Several site-specific proposals were raised or commented on by councillors. The Chair advised that these be sent to the team by email so that they could be considered and responded to.

- Several proposals were dependent on Kent County Council and Southern Water and concern was expressed about their level of engagement.
- Local talent should be prioritised where possible in relation to mural and public art projects.
- There was a strong creative community within Herne Bay.
- The land train in the summer had been very popular, and it was hoped that this could return in future.
- The Director of Place reiterated that Cabinet would be asked to consider the overall governance arrangements, and not individual projects. The projects within the directory had originated from the consultation responses and engagement exercises and were intended to be dynamic working documents which would be reviewed. The Place Panels would be responsible for considering and prioritising projects.
- The Wincheap project in Canterbury directory seemed to focus mainly on transport and movement links and more emphasis on residents was needed.
- The Whitstable strategy seemed to focus heavily on tourism and visitors. It was felt that projects needed a stronger emphasis on the needs of its vibrant residential community and maritime heritage.
- Some councillors had been expecting to see more of a broad, strategic framework rather than project proposals, and asked why the project directories had been published before the Place Panels had been established.
- Councillors asked how they would relate to statutory authorities on issues such as highways, and officers reiterated that the proposed panel structure included both a councillor and officer from Kent County Council.
- It was noted that the volume of information presented to councillors for the meeting had been considerable.
- The Director of Place stated that the directories should be viewed as sitting alongside the strategies, place panels and action plan. The directories were intended to be live, dynamic working documents which would be consistently reviewed and updated.
- The Senior Economic Development officer explained that the directories had captured a range of ideas from the public engagement for the strategies. Council teams and some of its partners had also contributed ideas. The creation of the directories would avoid potentially valuable projects and information from being lost.
- Officers had developed an online tool to enable organisations and stakeholders to submit new projects.
- The online submission process needed to allow applicants to submit a project without being affiliated with an organisation.
- Elected members needed opportunities to comment on projects affecting their communities.
- Concerns were raised regarding vehicle movements associated with activities around Wimereux Square.
- Higher car park charges could deter visitors from visiting coastal areas.
- The former co-working hub in Herne Bay was raised as an example of a council-owned building that had remained vacant for a prolonged period.
- Reservations were expressed about extending the cycle hire schemes to Herne Bay due to the council's older demographic and the usage of mobility scooters.
- St George's toilet block needed to be brought back into use.
- The Place Panels would be strategic and advisory forums involving councillors, but also business and community representation. They were intended to inform and add value to council governance processes but would not replace formal decision-making.

- The Senior Economic Development Officer advised that the Chair of each Place Panel would be elected from the non-elected membership of the Panel, but councillors would have the opportunity to engage with panel discussions and projects.
- It was felt that there was significant overlap between Place Panels, future town councils and Community Governance Review discussions and there was potential for public confusion regarding the different governance structures. Officers advised that the Place Panels would inform and support decision making but would not replace formal decision-making arrangements.
- Not all councillors had been aware of the Place Panel proposals. The officer emphasised that each adopted strategy recommended the creation of place panels.
- The Canterbury strategy had generally achieved a balance between its role of major visitor destination and the needs of residents, but greater emphasis should be placed on connections between outer communities and the city centre, for example via the underpasses and other routes used by those living outside the city centre.
- Councillors would form part of the elected membership of the panels. The Terms of Reference would also allow panels to invite individuals with valuable local expertise and experience to attend for specific agenda items. This would include councillors who wished to engage with panel discussions and projects.
- Given the Government had not allocated Pride in Place funding to any of the three places, it was felt that there would be a lack of funding for the more ambitious ideas in the project directories and thought needed to be given to alternative funding sources.

It was proposed and seconded:

To Recommend (to Cabinet):

• That place panels are created for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.
• That authority is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the cabinet member, to invite identified local anchor institutions/partnerships and key community representatives to join the non-elected membership of the three panels.

To Note: • Project directories for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. • Canterbury City Council's City & Town Centre Strategies action plan (to April 2028).

Following discussions, the recommendation was amended by the original proposer. It was seconded and when put to a vote, it was AGREED to:

RECOMMEND (to Cabinet)

- That place panels are created for Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable.
- That authority is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the cabinet member to invite public applications from institutions/ partnerships and community representatives to join the non-elected memberships of the three panels using a process similar to that used to appoint independent members of Whitstable Harbour Board and that they recommend panel members to Council or Appointments Committee (as relevant committee) to be ratified.

NOTED:
• Project directories for Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable.
• Canterbury City Council's City & Town Centre Strategies action plan (to April 2028).

Record of voting:
For the proposal (11): Councillors Beth Forrester, Rachel Carnac, Mike Bland, Dane Buckman, Jean Butcher, Pat Edwards, James Flanagan, Stuart Heaver, Tom Mellish, Alex Ricketts and David Thomas
Against the proposal (1): Councillor Liz Harvey
Abstained/absent for the vote (1): Councillor Peter Old

244 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7pm, Thursday 8 October 2026.

245 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS TO BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC**

There was no business under this item.

246 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

247 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS WHICH FALLS UNDER THE EXEMPT PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 OR THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 OR BOTH**

There was no business under this item.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Cabinet
5 October 2026

Subject: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Action Plan 2026

Director and Head of Service:

Peter Davies, Joint Chief Executive

Officers:

Leo Whitlock, Head of Policy and Communications

Cabinet Member:

Alan Baldock, Leader

Key or Non-Key decision: Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the Cabinet

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public

CCC ward(s): All

Summary and purpose of the report:

To agree the final CIL Action Plan (2026), to deliver the priority projects from within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, based on the agreed approach to distributing and ringfencing CIL monies.

To Resolve:

(1) The CIL Action Plan (2026) be approved as per the recommendation of the CIL Spending Advisory Board.
(2) Authority be delegated to the Joint Chief Executives, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to approve expenditure of up to 10% above the project budgets set out in the CIL Action Plan (2026).

Next stage in process:

Subject to agreement at Cabinet:

- Implement the spending recommendations of the CIL Action Plan (2026).

Officers to review options for the spending of Neighbourhood CIL and report back to the CIL Advisory Board.

1. Introduction

Background

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provides funding towards the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the housing, employment, retail and other development identified within the Canterbury District Local Plan.

The council's approach to collecting and spending CIL is set out in the Infrastructure List (2026).

Many of the 'big ticket' infrastructure items related to the strategic development sites, such as new schools, major transport projects and community infrastructure improvements, are funded through the Section 106 agreements (S106) for the strategic development sites.

Alongside S106, the CIL has an important role to play to ensure smaller development sites are supported by necessary infrastructure improvements and to support the cumulative impacts of Local Plan growth and the delivery of the wider strategy.

Governance

The CIL Governance Framework to allow the spending of CIL was approved by Cabinet in March 2026 (Appendix 1).

Council officers prepare a draft CIL Action Plan on an annual basis, setting out the amount of CIL available for spend, forecast CIL receipts over the next five-year period and recommending the priorities for spend for each infrastructure type for the current financial year.

The draft CIL Action Plan is reviewed by the cross-party Cabinet-sponsored CIL Spending Advisory Board (SAB) and then considered for approval by cabinet.

The council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (2026) sets out how the CIL will be used to secure the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects across the district which are necessary to deliver the Local Plan over the long term, including the Canterbury District Transport Strategy, education, health, community and environmental infrastructure.

The IDP has been developed in collaboration with a range of infrastructure providers to ensure it reflects the providers' own plans and strategies and is deliverable over the period of the Local Plan.

Officers have previously assessed all costed schemes in the 2026 IDP which will not be fully funded through S106 and will therefore rely on CIL funding to secure delivery.

Based on this analysis, Cabinet agreed in March 2026 to distribute strategic CIL funding on a percentage basis for infrastructure types as set out in the CIL Action Plan (Appendix 2).

2. Detail

CIL Action Plan 2026

As at the end of 2025/26, the council held £3.37m of available strategic CIL funding and £461,762 of neighbourhood CIL funding for unparished areas.

The 2026 CIL Action Plan does not make recommendations for the spending of neighbourhood CIL, with further work being undertaken by officers and the CIL Spending Advisory Board to consider the approach to allocating funds.

Strategic CIL is ringfenced in accordance with the funding priorities approved by Cabinet in March 2026, with the majority of funding dedicated to transport infrastructure, reflecting the significant investment required to support sustainable growth and the delivery of the district's Transport Strategy.

Kent County Council (KCC) is the principal provider of education, highways and community infrastructure in the district, while the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) leads the planning and delivery of health infrastructure.

The CIL Action Plan has been developed collaboratively with both organisations.

The CIL Action Plan (2026) recommends the allocation of approximately £1.82m of strategic CIL in 2026/27 to infrastructure projects that are ready to progress and which will help address the impacts of planned development.

The recommended spending allocations are:

Transport Infrastructure

- **Transport Monitoring Sensors (£250,000)** – it is critical for the delivery of the Transport Strategy and Local Plan that the sensors are installed as early as possible to allow the impacts of subsequent measures to be monitored and reviewed.

- **Cycle hire (£100,000)** - a contribution from CIL would support the wider rollout of the scheme, building on the initial Canterbury launch, and would complement other potential funding sources including LUF and S106.

- **Sturry Road Bus Lane Phase 1 (£1,000,000)** – the extension to Sturry Road bus lane is a significant infrastructure project on one of the busiest bus corridors into the city and represents the council's commitment to a bus first Transport Strategy. Allocating funds in 2026/27 will make use of available funding from KCC via the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) grant. Future phases can be considered in subsequent years alongside investigation of any further grant funding.

- **Hopper bus delivery options appraisal (£30,000)** – the delivery of the hopper bus service is a key short-term objective of the Transport Strategy. A significant amount of work is needed in terms of set-up. Allocating CIL funds in 2026/27 to consider delivery options, will help ensure the project can be established within the next five years.

Education Infrastructure (as advised by KCC)

- **Water Meadows Primary School (£379,698)** - expansion of the primary school will increase educational capacity in response to housing growth in the Hersden area.

Social and Community Infrastructure (as advised by KCC)

- **Canterbury Adult Education Centre (£58,815)** - the upgrade and investment in additional digital infrastructure at Canterbury Adult Education Centre will enhance access to digital learning and community education services and support future Local Plan growth.

It is recommended that the remaining £1.55m of available strategic CIL should be carried forward for future years.

This will allow for further project detail, delivery requirements and potential other funding sources to be explored, as well as the pooling of funds to achieve the required funding to deliver proposals such as the Whitstable Park and Bus facility. Looking ahead, strategic CIL income is expected to increase following the adoption of the emerging Local Plan, largely as a result of strategic development sites becoming liable for CIL contributions.

These future receipts will play a critical role in supporting the delivery of transport, education, health and community infrastructure needed to accommodate planned growth across the district.

Recommendations of the CIL Spending Advisory Board

The CIL Spending Advisory Board met on 22 July 2026 to consider the draft CIL Action Plan (2026).

It was proposed by the chair and agreed by general assent that the CIL Spending Advisory Board recommend the Draft CIL Action Plan (2026) to Cabinet for approval.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

- Corporate Plan (2025)
- Canterbury District Local Plan (2017)
- Canterbury District Transport Strategy (2017)
- Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (Regulation 19) (2026)
- Draft Canterbury District Transport Strategy (2026)
- Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (2026)
- Town Centre Strategies for Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay (2026)
- Canterbury District Open Spaces Strategy (2025)
- Air Quality Action Plan (2025)
- Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (2020)
- Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan (2020)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018) and updated Action Plan (2026)
- Draft Biodiversity Strategy (2026)

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

(a) General consultations: There have been ongoing discussions with all major stakeholders throughout the development of the Local Plan and supporting strategies.

As per the CIL Governance Framework, a draft CIL Action Plan is initially considered by the CIL Spending Advisory Board who make recommendations to cabinet.

(b) Tenant engagement feedback: None

5. Options available

Option 1 – To approve the CIL Action Plan (2026) as per the recommendations of the CIL Spending Advisory Board (recommended).

Option 2 – Partially accept the spending recommendations of the CIL Action Plan (2026) (not recommended)

Option 2 – Reject the CIL Action Plan (2026) (not recommended)

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 is recommended.

Approving the recommended CIL allocations will enable the council to begin delivering infrastructure necessary to support planned growth across the district and implement key priorities within the emerging Local Plan, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Transport Strategy. The recommended projects have been identified in partnership with infrastructure providers and help to secure external funding opportunities, address infrastructure capacity pressures and support sustainable development.

7. Implications

(a) Financial
As per the report.

(b) Legal
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)
Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) (as amended)

(c) Equalities
An Equalities Impact Assessment has been published alongside this report.

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity
The Infrastructure List and Infrastructure Delivery Plan identify the full range of projects from which the CIL Action Plan will be developed. This ensures that

investment decisions are grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the district's infrastructure needs

Contact Officers:
Leo Whitlock, Head of Policy and Communications

Background documents and appendices:
Appendix 1 – CIL Governance Framework
Appendix 2 – CIL Action Plan (2026)
Appendix 3 – Climate Change Impact Assessment
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 1 – CIL Governance Framework

Cabinet	Agrees final CIL Action Plan to deliver the priority projects from within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the following five years, based on the agreed approach to distributing and ringfencing CIL monies. The Plan will be reviewed annually, with allocations made for the following year.



CIL Spending Advisory Board	Recommends the draft CIL Action Plan to Cabinet, designed to deliver the priority projects from within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the following five years, based on the agreed approach to distributing and ringfencing CIL monies. Proposals to be prepared annually for Cabinet approval.



Preparation of Draft CIL Action Plan	Prepared by CCC Policy and Strategy in discussions with CCC colleagues, KCC Highways, KCC Education, KCC Strategic Planning, Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (and other infrastructure providers as appropriate e.g. Network Rail, Stagecoach, Environment Agency)
• The preparation of the Draft CIL Action Plan will apply the agreed ringfenced allocations of CIL monies across the infrastructure types for transport, education, health, community and open space. • Informed by technical assessment of deliverability and priority working in partnership with infrastructure providers; • Sets out forecast CIL receipts over the 5-year period, including Neighbourhood Portion for non-parished areas, reflecting housing trajectory; • Recommends priorities for spend, including “reserve” projects where appropriate, for each infrastructure type over the 5-year period.	

Community Infrastructure Levy Action Plan

September 2026

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1. CIL Process

Background

1.1. The council adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule in 2020.

1.2. CIL funds must legally be spent on the infrastructure needed to support development in the district.

1.3. The council's approach to collecting and spending CIL is set out in the Infrastructure List (2026). Many of the 'big ticket' infrastructure items related to the strategic development sites, such as new schools, major transport projects and community infrastructure improvements are funded through the Section 106 agreements (S106) for the strategic development sites.

1.4. Alongside S106, the CIL has an important role to play to ensure that smaller development sites are supported by necessary infrastructure improvements, and to support the cumulative impacts of Local Plan growth and the delivery of the wider strategy.

1.5. The council retains 5% of the total CIL receipts collected to cover administrative expenses. This is reported in the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement.

1.6. The CIL Regulations stipulate that the CIL Charging Authority must pass 15% of local CIL receipts to the parish council for the area where a CIL liable development takes place, rising to 25% if the parish has a Neighbourhood Plan in place. This is also reported in the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement.

1.7. In areas that are unparished (Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable), at least 15% of CIL must be spent within the town where it was collected. It is for the council to make spending decisions for these funds.

1.8. The remaining CIL (c.80%), otherwise known as the 'strategic portion', must be spent on infrastructure needed to support the growth identified in the Local Plan.

1.9. The council has not spent any of the strategic or unparished neighbourhood portion CIL monies to date.

Governance

1.10. Council officers prepare a draft CIL Action Plan on an annual basis, setting out the amount of CIL available for spend, forecast CIL receipts over the next 5-year period, and recommending the priorities for spend for each infrastructure type for the current financial year. The draft CIL Action Plan is reviewed by the CIL Spending Advisory Board (SAB) and then considered for approval by cabinet.

1.11. Additional meetings of the SAB can be held as necessary throughout the year, for example to consider time-critical spending allocations if other funding streams are available.

1.12. The council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (2026) sets out how the CIL will be used to secure the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects across the district which are necessary to deliver the Local Plan over the long term, including the Canterbury District Transport Strategy, education, health, community, and environmental infrastructure. The IDP has been developed in collaboration with a range of infrastructure providers to ensure it reflects the providers' own plans and strategies and is deliverable over the period of the Local Plan.

1.13. Officers have previously assessed all costed schemes in the 2026 IDP which will not be fully funded through S106 and will therefore rely on CIL funding to secure delivery. Based on this analysis, Cabinet agreed in March 2026 to distribute CIL funding on a percentage basis for infrastructure types as set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1– CIL % allocation by infrastructure type

Infrastructure Type	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Total
Transport	71%	72%	60%	67%
Education	22.5%	22.5%	22.5%	22.5%
Health	3.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Community	3%	3%	2%	3%
Sports (football stadium)	0%	0%	13%	5%

1.14. For the unparished neighbourhood portion, the Local Plan and IDP are the starting point for identifying priorities given that the majority of developments and necessary infrastructure projects are planned for the urban areas. The projects contained within the IDP have already been subject to community and stakeholder consultation through the development of the Local Plan and its supporting strategies such as the Transport Strategy and Open Spaces Strategy.

Relationship with infrastructure providers

1.15. KCC is the most significant provider of infrastructure needed to deliver the Local Plan, being responsible for education provision, highways, and other community infrastructure, and is a therefore a key delivery partner.

1.16. The NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) are responsible for planning how NHS services will be delivered in the district and are the key delivery partner for health infrastructure.

1.17. Officers have worked collaboratively with KCC and the NHS to develop this CIL Action Plan and continue to work with infrastructure providers through the IDP and Local Plan.

Other funding sources

1.18. Other external funding sources have a critical role to play in delivering the infrastructure identified in the IDP, particularly where CIL could be used as match funding, to address a gap in funding, or form part of a wider funding package. These sources may include, but are not limited to, KCC capital budgets for education, highways and community infrastructure, NHS capital budgets for health infrastructure, collected S106 monies, and grants from organisations such as Active Travel England, or the Bus Service Improvement Plan grants.

1.19. Anticipating such sources of funding over longer time horizons is highly challenging. Funding opportunities and the likelihood of other funding sources becoming available will therefore be kept under review, including through engagement with infrastructure providers and within any IDP update. This will ensure that emerging funding streams can be identified at the earliest opportunity and considered alongside CIL to support the timely delivery of infrastructure across the district.

2. Strategic CIL Receipts and Forecast Income

Collected strategic CIL

2.1. The amount of available strategic CIL collected to the end of the 2025/26 financial year is **£3,370,289.21.**

Due and forecast strategic CIL

2.2. Forecasting future CIL income provides an understanding of the anticipated scale and timing of funds that may become available to support infrastructure delivery over the early years of the Local Plan period. Many infrastructure projects require early design work, match-funding bids, or phased delivery. An indication of future CIL income can help inform decisions on current allocations by providing an understanding of potential future resources.

2.3. Strategic development sites in the draft Local Plan will be required to pay CIL. This is a change from the adopted Local Plan (2017), where strategic development sites are CIL exempt and make all infrastructure contributions through S106. As a result of this change, the CIL income is expected to significantly increase as strategic sites in the draft Local Plan begin to build out.

2.4. Table 2.1 sets out the estimated strategic CIL receipts up to 2031/32, which covers the first 5 years of the draft Local Plan anticipated for adoption in 2027/28. The estimates are intended to give a high-level indication of CIL monies which may become available in the future from existing sites with planning consents and sites allocated in the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan. **The projections are indicative only and will change over time, as actual receipts depend on the timing, phasing and delivery of development.** A full breakdown by CIL source is presented in Appendix 1.

Table 2.1– Indicative projected strategic CIL

Strategic CIL Source	2026/27	2027/28 LP Y1	2028/29 LP Y2	2029/30 LP Y3	2030/31 LP Y4	2031/32 LP Y5
Total Indicative projected strategic CIL	£2.6m	£1.2m	£2.3m	£2.8m	£4.3m	£7.3m
Cumulative Total	£2.6m	£3.8m	£6.1m	£8.9m	£13.2m	£20.5m

3. Strategic CIL - infrastructure priorities

3.1. The available strategic CIL collected to the end of the 2025/26 financial year has been apportioned using the short-term percentage allocations agreed by cabinet in March 2026. This translates the total available CIL into ringfenced amounts for each infrastructure type, as set out in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1– Available CIL per infrastructure type

Infrastructure Type	Short-term (to 2031/32) Ringfenced %	Available ringfenced funds for spend
Transport	71%	£2,392,905
Education	22.5%	£758,315
Health	3.5%	£117,960
Community	3%	£101,109
Sports (football stadium)	0%	£0
Total	100%	£3,370,289

3.2. A full breakdown of forecast CIL funds per infrastructure type per year to 2031/32 is presented in Appendix 1.

3.3. The IDP sets out the longlist of infrastructure requirements to deliver the Local Plan to 2042/43, as well as the short-term priorities for the first 5 years of the plan up to 2031/32. Where CIL is identified as a potential funding source, these short-term priorities have been reviewed through this Action Plan to determine the next steps for project delivery and where CIL funds could be allocated this year.

Transport

3.4. There is **£2,392,905** of available strategic CIL ringfenced for transport infrastructure.

3.5. To mitigate the cumulative impacts of development, the council's draft Transport Strategy (2026) focuses on the incremental upgrade and improvement of public transport services and active travel routes which, alongside measures to moderate vehicular pressure on the city centre and a limited number of specific measures to support highways resilience, will lead to a significant reduction in the proportion of journeys made by private car.

3.6. In the early years of the Local Plan period, the delivery of measures such as improvements to bus services, a reduction in the number of car parking spaces, introduction of a city hopper bus service, construction of new cycle routes, and the introduction of a cycle hire scheme, will address pinch points in the network by encouraging mode shift to public and active transport. This will create capacity in the network to enable new growth to be delivered sustainably.

3.7. In the medium to long-term, higher levels of growth are be expected from new development sites, including around Canterbury city. Site-specific sustainable transport improvements and highway resilience measures delivered through S106 will be complemented by further changes to parking provision and controls to minimise off-site impacts on the wider road network.

3.8. Bids have been placed for Active Travel England and Bus Service Improvement Plan grants where possible to help secure the delivery of Transport Strategy infrastructure. The council have been successful in securing funding from Active Travel England towards several walking and cycling schemes set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP). These schemes are therefore not included in the short-term project list for CIL funding. Further LCWIP schemes are expected to be considered for CIL in future years.

3.9. Table 3.2 sets out the key schemes to be delivered through CIL funds in the short term as identified in the IDP (2026).

Table 3.2 – Short term CIL projects to 2031/32

Infrastructure Scheme	Location	Potential other funding sources	Estimated short term CIL cost	Scheme Status
Multimodal transport sensors	District Wide	-	£250,000	Ready to progress delivery subject to funding being secured
High-quality cycle parking	District Wide	LUF	£50,000	LUF funding granted for first phase. Further funding to be considered in future years
Cycle hire	District Wide	LUF S106	£100,000	Ready to progress – contribution to wider project.
Real-time passenger information signage schemes	District Wide	BSIP S106	£100,000	Bid pending for KCC BSIP funding. To consider in future years if unsuccessful or if additional are required

Infrastructure Scheme	Location	Potential other funding sources	Estimated short term CIL cost	Scheme Status
Mobility hub at railway stations	District Wide	-	£100,000	Design work ready to be progressed in-house. Funding to be considered in subsequent years
Phase 1 Extension to Sturry Road bus lane from junction with Park & Ride to South Street	Canterbury	BSIP S106	£1,000,000	Part funding anticipated from BSIP. Ready to progress delivery subject to final funding being secured.
Phase 2 Sturry Road bus lane - link road to Park & Ride	Canterbury	BSIP S106	£500,000	Design to be progressed through anticipated BSIP funding.
Phase 3 Sturry Road bus lane – Starle Close to Tourtel Road	Canterbury	BSIP S106	£500,000	To be considered for future BSIP funding
Phase 4 Sturry Road bus lane Asda to TA centre	Canterbury	BSIP S106	£100,000	To be considered for future BSIP funding
Introduction of a city hopper bus service	Canterbury	-	£5,000,000	Ready to progress delivery options appraisal subject to funding, c.£30k.
Provision of Park and Bus facility for Whitstable	Whitstable	Land secured through S106	£3,500,000	Linked to development, funding to be considered in future years once land transferred to CCC.
Whitstable residents' parking scheme.	Whitstable	-	£20,000	Linked to provision of Whitstable Park and Bus, funding to be considered in future years.
Public Realm improvements to town centre to reduce car dominance	District Wide	-	£1,000,000	Further detail to be informed by the emerging town centre strategies. Funding to be considered in future years.

Infrastructure Scheme	Location	Potential other funding sources	Estimated short term CIL cost	Scheme Status
Bus stop improvements including bus shelters, lighting, and hardstanding	District Wide	BSIP S106	£125,000	BSIP funding granted for first phase. Further funding to be considered in future years.

Infrastructure costs are estimates only and will be highly subject to change over time.

Multi-modal transport sensors

3.10. To enable a 'monitor and manage' framework for the Transport Strategy, there needs to be a system in place to monitor the flows of traffic and other modes of travel. It is proposed that roadside sensors will be installed which will give continuous real-time information on the volumes of all modes of transport on the highway network.

3.11. The sensors are a key priority for the Transport Strategy as it will enable monitoring of traffic flows as well as supporting the analysis and review of the effects of interventions, to inform future decision making as part of the 'Vision and Validate' approach.

3.12. At present the council uses census data from 2011 (as 2021 is unrepresentative due to the Covid-19 pandemic), and annual traffic counts from the Department for Transport. However, bus and cycle data can be limited. Multi-modal sensors are necessary to give the council and KCC Highways real-time dynamic traffic and journey counts split into vehicle types, including cycles and pedestrians at key sites across the city, to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy over time.

3.13. The estimated cost of sensors in key locations is £250k, which includes the initial supply and installation. The locations of the sensors would be discussed and agreed with KCC as the local highway authority.

3.14. The project is scalable and developers will be required to add to it with the provision of sensors on roads close to their developments where necessary, to support their own developments.

3.15. Officers have taken initial soundings from two suppliers, and we would need to go out to open tender for this project.

3.16. It is estimated that, if funding is approved, this project will be operational from April 2027.

Sturry Road Bus Lane

3.17. Sturry Road is the most used bus corridor in Canterbury with 14 buses in the morning peak hour as well as the Sturry Road Park and Ride service.

3.18. An extension of the bus lane is a key priority for the Transport Strategy. It would reduce congestion and improve reliability for bus users, as well as make the Sturry Road Park and Ride a more attractive alternative to parking in the city centre.

3.19. The full scheme would deliver a bus lane between the new Sturry link road to Tourtel Road, and will be split into 4 delivery phases:

- Phase 1 – Park & Ride to South Street
- Phase 2 – Sturry link road to Park & Ride
- Phase 3 - Starle Close to Tourtel Road
- Phase 4 - Asda to TA centre

3.20. Through the government Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) grant, KCC are anticipating allocating funding to Phase 1 which will provide an extension to the existing bus lane on Sturry Road between the junction with the Park & Ride to the junction with South Street.

3.21. A detailed design and cost estimate will be undertaken by KCC once their BSIP funding is in place. At present the working estimate is £2.3m, with KCC contributing approximately £1.3m from the BSIP grant. A £1m contribution from CIL would allow the scheme to be delivered.

3.22. KCC would deliver the scheme, therefore a CIL contribution would be a direct payment to KCC.

3.23. The scheme will require traffic orders to remove on- street parking and to create a bus lane. Any objections to the traffic orders will be considered by the Joint Transportation Board and the scheme will need political support from both administrations to succeed.

3.24. It is estimated that, if funding is approved, construction of Phase 1 will likely begin in 2027/2028.

3.25. In addition to part funding the design and delivery of Phase 1, KCC anticipate using BSIP funding to design Phase 2 of the bus lane extension between the new Sturry link road and the Park and Ride.

3.26. The delivery of Phase 2, and the design and delivery of Phases 3 and 4, could be considered for future BSIP funding, with a top-up from CIL if necessary, to facilitate delivery.

Hopper Bus

3.27. The draft Transport Strategy identifies potential for a city hopper bus. This service would provide bus loops around Canterbury city enabling passengers to avoid changing buses at the bus station, running at frequent intervals for a modest flat fare. The Strategy envisages that the scheme would be scalable, either with a more frequent bus or by adding further loops to link major developments as they build out.

3.28. The first step is to undertake a delivery options appraisal to undertake a detailed analysis of anticipated demand levels, route options and potential for future route adaptations taking into account proposed Local Plan growth and associated infrastructure, assess the impact of fare options on levels of demand, and review likely operational costs.

3.29. Further research will be also required to determine the number of residents who could switch modes from car to a hopper bus if the service were to be provided. It is proposed that this should be carried out by means of a residents' survey on the wider subject of transport choices and propensity for mode switch. KCC have agreed to provide funding for this work.

3.30. It is expected that the delivery options appraisal element would take around 6 months to complete if funding is agreed.

3.31. Following the delivery options appraisal and residents' survey work, funding options to implement the hopper bus service could then be considered. The scheme would need to be procured through a tender process, and it is expected that a service could be operational within 12 – 18 of a funding agreement.

Cycle Hire

3.32. The Transport Strategy plans for cycle hire schemes to be set up in Canterbury, Whitstable, and Herne Bay, which will facilitate trips between train stations, the bus station, the University of Kent, amenities, and residential areas, for users who only need temporary use of a cycle.

3.33. An initial scheme has been launched in Canterbury with operator Beryl Bikes.

3.34. The IDP identifies an indicative CIL cost of £100,000 to contribute to rollout of the wider project.

Public Realm

3.35. Public realm improvements can support walking and cycling by making town centres safer, more attractive, and easier to move through. Measures such as wider and better-quality footways, improved crossings, clearer wayfinding, reduced traffic dominance, and better lighting, can make short local journeys feel more convenient and inclusive. By improving the quality of the street environment and reducing conflict with vehicles, these schemes can encourage more people to walk and cycle for everyday trips, support access to public transport and local services, and contribute to the wider mode shift objectives of the Transport Strategy.

3.36. The IDP identifies an indicative CIL cost of £1m towards public realm improvements in the first 5-years of the Local Plan. Further detail on the scope and prioritisation of public realm schemes will be informed by the emerging town centre strategies.

Mobility Hubs at railway stations

3.37. Improved cycle parking, wayfinding, and onward travel information at railway stations would all contribute to improved sustainable transport interchanges in the district. The IDP indicates an indicative CIL cost of £100,000. Each station's requirements will need to be detailed through working in collaboration with Southeastern and Network Rail. Southeastern have already provided officers with a detailed survey of Canterbury East Station, to aid design.

3.38. This project could be progressed to design stage which would be undertaken in-house by the Transport and Environment team. Allocation of CIL funds can be considered for implementation once design work is completed.

Cycle Parking

3.39. Improved cycle parking will support the cycle routes identified in the LCWIP by making cycling a more practical and attractive option. Secure, weather-protected parking reduces the risk of theft and damage, and gives residents and visitors greater confidence to cycle.

3.40. The council has begun a programme of installing cycle lockers for both long-term rental and short-term usage, as well as an increase in the number of Sheffield stands. This has been funded through the Levelling Up Fund.

3.41. Further funding from CIL could be considered in future years to extend the scheme.

Bus stop improvements

3.42. Improvements to bus stops will make the bus a more appealing choice if a high-quality bus shelter is present with a legible and current timetable, and a bus stop clearway to enable the bus to pull up to the kerb. The IDP identifies an indicative CIL cost of £125,000 in the short-term.

3.43. The council has made a successful bid for BSIP funding for a programme of bus shelter provision and replacement. This will go out to tender for installation later in 2026 and is fully funded.

3.44. Further funding could be considered in future years to extend the scheme.

Real-time passenger information at bus stops

3.45. Real-time passenger information at bus stops improves accessibility and confidence for passengers by providing clear, up-to-date service information at the point of travel, including for those who do not have access to a smartphone or the Stagecoach app. Officers have submitted a bid for KCC BSIP funding for a pilot scheme using solar power, and if granted this will guide the first stage of the rollout.

3.46. Further funding could be considered in future years to extend the scheme, or if the BSIP bid is unsuccessful.

Whitstable Park and Bus facility and residents parking scheme.

3.47. Land has been secured via S106 for a Whitstable Park and Bus facility at Land South of Thanet Way (CA/23/00379). The facility would be served by a scheduled bus service providing an alternative parking option for visitors to Whitstable. The construction of the car park and access to Thanet Way will require CIL funding.

3.48. Under the terms of the S106 the land must be handed to CCC 3 months after commencement of the development. The allocation of CIL funding for construction can be considered following the transfer of the land.

3.49. The Whitstable residents parking scheme is linked to the provision of the Park and Bus facility, to reduce pressures to on-street parking and encourage greater take up of Park and Bus service by visitors. This can be considered for future funding linked with the delivery of the Park and Bus facility.

Summary of transport spending recommendations

3.50. It is recommended that CIL funds are allocated to the following projects in 2026/27, which will support the delivery of the Transport Strategy:

- **Transport Monitoring Sensors (£250,000)** – It is critical for the delivery of the Transport Strategy and Local Plan that the sensors are installed as early as possible to allow the impacts of subsequent measures to be monitored and reviewed.
- **Cycle Hire (£100,000)** - A contribution from CIL would support the wider rollout of the scheme, building on the initial Canterbury launch, and would complement other potential funding sources including LUF and S106.
- **Sturry Road Bus Lane Phase 1 (£1,000,000)** – The extension to Sturry Road bus lane is a significant infrastructure project on one of the busiest bus corridors into the city and represents the council's commitment to a bus first Transport Strategy. Allocating funds in 2026/27 will make use of available funding from KCC via the BSIP grant. Future phases can be considered in subsequent years alongside investigation of any further grant funding.
- **Hopper bus delivery options appraisal (£30,000)** – The delivery of the hopper bus service is a key short-term objective of the Transport Strategy. A significant amount of work is needed in terms of set-up. Allocating CIL funds in 2026/27 to consider delivery options, will help ensure the project can be established within the next 5-years.

3.51. It is recommended that the remaining ringfenced CIL for transport projects should be carried forward for future years, when further project detail, delivery requirements, and potential other funding sources have been explored.

3.52. To implement the hopper bus service and to deliver the Park and Bus facility in Whitstable, the CIL will likely need to be pooled over several years to achieve the required funding. Table 3.3 summarises the recommendations for spending on transport projects and ringfenced funds that would be rolled forward.

Table 3.3 – Summary of transport spending recommendations

Transport CIL allocation summary		CIL Funds
Total CIL ringfenced for transport projects		**£2,392,905**
Funds recommended for allocation	Transport Monitoring Sensors	£250,000
	Cycle Hire	£100,000
	Sturry Road Bus Lane	£1,000,000
	Hopper Bus delivery options appraisal	£30,000
	Total	**£1,380,000**
Total transport ringfenced CIL to be rolled forward		**£1,012,905**

Education

3.53. There is **£758,315** of available strategic CIL ringfenced for education infrastructure.

3.54. The council has worked closely with KCC as the provider of education infrastructure in the district, to review projects for spend.

3.55. A significant proportion of funding towards the education infrastructure outlined in the IDP is to come from S106, some of which has already secured from strategic development sites in the adopted Local Plan. The Infrastructure List (2026) requires strategic sites over 300 dwellings and greenfield allocations in Whitstable to contribute to education infrastructure build costs through Section 106. All other sites will contribute to education build costs through CIL. All development will provide education land contributions through S106.

3.56. KCC's Commissioning Plan for Education, which is reflected in the IDP, sets out the planned new education infrastructure up to 2033 (which is slightly beyond the period covered by this Action Plan). New primary education provision is planned through the delivery of a primary school at the 2017 adopted Local Plan strategic site Saxon Fields, Thanington, as well as the expansion of Water Meadows Primary School in Hersden. Increased secondary school provision is planned through the 0.5 form-entry (FE) expansion of Simon Langton Girls School as well as temporary secondary places, as necessary.

3.57. The Department for Education (DfE), through their Schools Rebuild Programme, is replacing the existing building of Water Meadows Primary School. The school currently operates as a 1FE, however KCC has secured agreement from the DfE for the new building to include core facilities sizes to support the future planned expansion to 2FE. avoiding the need for significant disruption, redesign, and

increased cost later. This will allow for the school to be expanded quickly in response to an increase in new pupil demand from housing growth in the area.

3.58. To deliver the core infrastructure for the school in preparation for expansion, KCC propose to use existing collected S106 funds. However, the combined DfE funding and S106 funding is not sufficient to meet the costs of delivering the enlarged 2FE core infrastructure as part of the rebuild. KCC have requested £379,698 of available CIL is allocated towards the project in 2026/27 to bridge the funding gap.

3.59. The 2017 Local Plan strategic site Land North of Hersden is adjacent to Water Meadows school. The site has resolution to grant planning permission subject to the signing of the S106 agreement. The development would provide additional land to the school to allow it to expand to 2FE in the future, along with S106 contributions to enable the future expansion.

3.60. The delivery of expanded education provision in Hersden is necessary to address the future increase in demand for primary school places in the area. It is recommended that the ringfenced funding is released to KCC.

3.61. Subject to funding being agreed, the project is expected to commence in late 2026 with completion anticipated in early 2028.

3.62. It is recommended that the requested funds are allocated to the Water Meadows expansion project in 2026/27, with remaining ringfenced funds to be rolled forward. Table 3.4 summaries the recommendations for spending on education projects and ringfenced funds that would be rolled forward.

Table 3.4 – Summary of education spending recommendations

Education CIL allocation summary		**CIL Funds**
Total CIL ringfenced for education projects		**£758,315**
Funds recommended for allocation	Water Meadows Primary School Expansion – Core Infrastructure	£379,698
Total education ringfenced CIL to be rolled forward		**£378,617**

Health

3.63. There is **£117,960** of available strategic CIL ringfenced for health infrastructure.

3.64. The council has liaised with the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board who are responsible for planning how NHS services will be delivered in the district.

3.65. The ICB is currently undertaking a full review of their Estate and Infrastructure Strategy. No schemes have been identified for CIL funding in 2026/27, and it is proposed that the ringfenced monies are carried forward for consideration in the next CIL Action Plan in 2027/28.

3.66. It is recommended that the £117,960 of CIL ringfenced for health infrastructure is rolled forward for consideration in the next CIL Action Plan.

Social and Community

3.67. There is **£101,109** of available strategic CIL ringfenced for social and community infrastructure.

3.68. KCC is responsible for the majority of community services in the district. As set out in the IDP, over the 5-year period up to 2030/31, CIL funds are proposed to be allocated towards improving KCC social and community services such as libraries, youth services, community learning, adult social care, and waste disposal and recycling services. The IDP does not identify any specific projects, therefore officers have worked with KCC to review projects for spend in 2026/27.

3.69. KCC Community Learning and Skills (CLS) are proposing to invest in additional Information Learning Technology (ILT) and upgrade the network infrastructure at the Canterbury Adult Education Centre. The improvements will support growing demand for digital learning and enable more flexible delivery of teaching courses across multiple sites.

3.70. The proposed IT upgrades include:

- Upgrading the internal network infrastructure at the Canterbury Adult Education Centre to increase capacity, performance, and reliability for a larger number of digital learners.
- Installing digital teaching wall classrooms, enabling tutors to deliver lessons digitally and connect with satellite classrooms for remote and multi-site learning.
- Purchasing new Information Learning Technology (ILT) equipment, including laptops and other digital learning devices.
- Providing mobile connectivity solutions and managed internet access to support community outreach and learning delivered in external venues.

- Installing locked laptop charging cabinets to securely store, charge and manage portable devices used across the service.

3.71. The investment will improve access to digital skills and employability training, particularly for young people aged 19-24 who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), while expanding outreach services and supporting wider participation, economic growth, and community wellbeing across Kent.

3.72. KCC have partial available funding towards the project from S106. KCC have requested £58,814.57 of available CIL is allocated towards this project in 2026/27 to bridge the funding gap and allow the scheme to be delivered.

3.73. Significant growth is planned in Canterbury through both the adopted and draft Local Plans. The proposed expansion will help meet the resulting increasing demands on adult education. It is therefore recommended that the ringfenced funds be made available to KCC.

3.74. Subject to funding being agreed, the project is expected to be completed in summer 2027.

3.75. It is recommended that in 2026/27 the requested funds are allocated to the upgrade of Canterbury Adult Education Centre, with remaining ringfenced funds to be rolled forward. Table 3.5 summaries the recommendations for spending on community projects and ringfenced funds that would be rolled forward.

Table 3.5 – Summary of education spending recommendations

Community CIL allocation summary		**CIL Funds**
Total CIL ringfenced for community projects		**£101,109**
Funds recommended for allocation	Canterbury Adult Education Centre ILT upgrades	£58,814.57
Total community ringfenced CIL to be rolled forward		**£42,294.43**

Open Space (Sports)

3.76. There is no available strategic CIL ringfenced for open space and sports infrastructure.

3.77. As set out in the IDP, in the short-term, open space and sports infrastructure improvements will predominantly be delivered through Section 106 contributions. Strategic CIL monies will be ringfenced in the long-term to secure delivery of a new football stadium located within the proposed allocation at

Merton Park (Policy C10), in the draft Local Plan. Open Space and sports projects could be considered for funding through the collected unparished neighbourhood CIL.

4. Strategic CIL Spending Recommendations

4.1. As outlined in Section 3, transport, education, and community projects have been identified for available strategic CIL funding in 2026/27. These projects are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1– Summary of strategic CIL spending recommendations

Infrastructure Type	Available Ringfenced funds for spend	Proposed projects	Funds recommended for allocation	Ringfenced funds to be carried forward
Transport	£2,392,905	Transport Monitoring Sensors	£250,000	£1,012,905
		Cycle Hire	£100,000	
		Sturry Road Bus Lane	£1,000,000	
		Hopper Bus delivery options appraisal	£30,000	
Education	£758,315	Water Meadows Primary School Expansion – Core Infrastructure	£379,698	£378,617
Health	£117,960	N/A	N/A	£117,960
Community	£101,109	Canterbury Adult Education Centre ILT upgrades	£58,814.57	£42,294.43
Sports (football stadium)	£0	N/A	N/A	£0
Total	**£3,370,289**	**-**	**£1,818512.50**	**£1,551,776.50**

4.2. In total around £1.82m of the available strategic CIL is recommended to be allocated to projects in 2026/27. Around £1.55m will be carried forward for consideration in the 2027/28 CIL Action Plan.

4.3. For some projects recommended for CIL allocation in 2026/27, such as the transport monitoring sensors, final costs can only be confirmed once detailed

design and procurement processes have been completed. To allow timely delivery and avoid unnecessary delay where costs vary modestly from the estimated allocation, it is recommended that delegated authority is given to officers to approve expenditure of up to 10% above the agreed project budget, subject to agreement with the Leader and Deputy Leader. Where a project allocated for spend experiences a significant cost increase of more than 10% above the agreed budget, any additional CIL allocation would need to be reconsidered by the CIL Spending Advisory Board and cabinet before further expenditure is committed.

5. Unparished Neighbourhood CIL

5.1. There is £461,762 of available unparished neighbourhood CIL collected to the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The split between the urban areas is as follows:

- Canterbury - £208,438
- Whitstable - £219,752
- Herne Bay - £33,572

5.2. As set out in Section 1, for the unparished areas of Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable, the council is responsible for making decisions on the allocation of these funds.

5.3. At this stage, officers are not proposing recommendations for the spending of neighbourhood CIL. Further work will take place with the CIL Spending Advisory Board later this year to consider the approach to the allocation of unparished neighbourhood portion funds.

Appendix 1 – Estimated Future Strategic CIL Receipts

Indicative projected strategic CIL to 2031/32

Strategic CIL Source	2026/27	2027/28 LP Y1	2028/29 LP Y2	2029/30 LP Y3	2030/31 LP Y4	2031/32 LP Y5
Due strategic CIL from commenced development	£250k	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
CIL from planning consents	£2.3m	£780k	£330k	£330k	£330k	£0
CIL from draft Local Plan allocations	£0	£410k	£1.7m	£2.5m	£4m	£7.3m
Total Indicative projected strategic CIL	£2.6m	£1.2m	£2.3m	£2.8m	£4.3m	£7.3m
Cumulative Total	**£2.6m**	**£3.8m**	**£6.1m**	**£8.9m**	**£13.2m**	**£20.5m**

CIL Projection Assumptions:

- Due CIL has been allocated based on assumed payment timescales as per the CIL Instalments and Payment in Kind Policy, so monies have been allocated to the 2026/27 year.
- Potential CIL monies have been allocated to the year development is due to commence, according to phasing information from the Housing Infrastructure Audit (2024/25)
- For potential CIL monies where no phasing assumptions exist (for example applications that do not involve a loss or gain of dwellings), one fifth of the CIL monies have been allocated to each year between 2026/27 and 2030/31.
- Figures have been rounded to 2 significant figures.

Indicative projected strategic CIL per infrastructure type to 2031/32

Infrastructure Type	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	Total
Transport	£1.8m	£850k	£1.6m	£2m	£3m	£5.2m	£14.5m
Education	£590k	£270k	£520k	£630k	£970k	£1.6m	£4.6m
Health	£91k	£42k	£81k	£98k	£150k	£256k	£718k
Community	£78k	£36k	£69k	£84k	£129k	£220k	£616k
Sports (football stadium)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	**£2.6m**	**£1.2m**	**£2.3m**	**£2.8m**	**£4.3m**	**£7.3m**	**£20.5m**

Appendix 3 - Climate Change Impact Assessment

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals	Positive	The Infrastructure List (2026), identifies the full range of projects from which the CIL Action Plan has been developed. This ensures that investment decisions are grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the district's infrastructure needs	
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.	Positive	Any CIL-funded upgrades to community or education facilities may incorporate energy-efficient design, reducing long-term operational emissions.	
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide			

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought
- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade
- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact**	**Mitigation**
Positive	The Infrastructure List provides the basis for the CIL Action Plan and includes projects with significant implications for climate mitigation and adaptation. Increased emphasis on sustainable transport in the early years of the Local Plan supports carbon reduction, improved air quality, and modal shift away from private car use. Longer-term allocations toward open space allow for biodiversity improvements, flood resilience measures and enhanced green infrastructure to support climate adaptation. Opportunities also exist to embed low-carbon construction, improve energy efficiency in community facilities, and ensure that all CIL-supported schemes contribute positively to the council's climate-change objectives.	

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal? If yes, please give a brief description

No

Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment

Date of initial assessment	17.09.2026
Division	Policy and Communications
Proposal to be assessed	CIL Action Plan 2026
New or existing policy or function?	Existing
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	Non-statutory
Your name	Lauren Morien
Your job title	Principal Policy Officer
Your contact	
Decision maker (e.g. Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Cabinet
Estimated proposal deadline	05.10.2026

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	**Aims and objectives:** To allocate Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to priority infrastructure projects that support planned growth and sustainable development across the Canterbury district. **Key actions:** To fund transport, education and community infrastructure projects identified as priorities for delivery in 2026/27 as set out in the CIL Action Plan 2026. **Expected outcomes:** Improved sustainable travel networks, increased education capacity and enhanced community infrastructure to support existing and future residents. **Who will be affected and how:** Residents, businesses, visitors across the district will benefit from improved infrastructure, services and opportunities for sustainable travel. **How many people will be affected:** The proposals have district-wide benefits for residents and visitors.

What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example “x% of customers are female” or “x% of customers are aged over 60”	None

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC’s PSED Technical Guidance		
Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	The proposals will provide improved education and community infrastructure.
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No	

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation
Age	Medium	Positive	The proposals will improve sustainable transport options and provide improved education and community infrastructure.
Disability	Medium	Positive	The proposals will improve sustainable transport options and provide improved education and community infrastructure.

Gender reassignment	None	Neutral	
Marriage and civil partnership	None	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	None	Neutral	
Race	None	Neutral	
Religion or belief	None	Neutral	
Sex	None	Neutral	
Sexual orientation	None	Neutral	
Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.	Medium	Positive	The proposals will improve sustainable transport options and provide improved education and community infrastructure.

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	None identified.
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	None identified.

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	N/A

Please update the section below if:

- You have amended your proposal
- You have new information
- You have undertaken consultation

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.
Have you made any changes to your initial assessment? If so, please give brief details	
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	

Should you need to revisit your assessment more than once, please ensure that you provide details of any changes or new information and the date these amendments were made

CABINET

5th October 2026

Subject: Community Safety Partnership Annual Review

Director and Head of Service:
Marie Royle - Director of People

Lora McCourt – Head of Locality

Officer:
Lacy Dixon - Senior Enforcement and Community Safety Manager

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Connie Nolan

Key or Non Key decision: Non Key

Decision Issues:

Cabinet is asked to note the Community Safety Partnership achievements for 2025/26, the priorities for 2026–2029 and the feedback of the Scrutiny Committee.

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): All Wards

Summary and purpose of the report:
The Council's Scrutiny Committee, acting as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, considered the Community Safety Partnership Annual Review on 24 June 2026.

This report presents the annual review and the committee's feedback to Cabinet.

It summarises partnership achievements during 2025/26 and sets out the New Community Safety Partnership priorities for 2026–2029.

To Note:
Cabinet is asked to note:
1. the Community Safety Partnership's achievements during 2025/26;
2. the Community Safety Partnership's new priorities and actions for 2026–2029; and
3. the feedback provided by the Scrutiny Committee and the operational updates made in response.

Next stage in process:

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership Executive Board will continue to monitor performance against the plan during 2026/27.

The annual partnership conference and councillor workshop will be held again in early spring 2027 to support development of the 2027/28 action plan.

1. Introduction

Community Safety Partnerships were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which requires specified public authorities to work together to reduce crime and disorder, tackle anti-social behaviour and minimise reoffending in their local area.

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) brings together statutory agencies under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Each year, the partnership produces two key documents:

- A **Strategic Assessment**, which analyses local data and trends on crime, anti-social behaviour and wider community safety issues, including demand, emerging risks, vulnerability, substance misuse and reoffending. This identifies where harm is greatest and where partnership action should be focused.
- A **Community Safety Plan**, which sets out the partnership's agreed priorities and actions, informed by the Strategic Assessment, and provides the framework for monitoring delivery throughout the year.

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership also reflects the annual priorities set by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and the Kent Community Safety Partnership. This helps align local activity with county priorities and strengthens opportunities to secure external funding.

The Council's Scrutiny Committee, acting as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, provides oversight and scrutiny of this function.

This report summarises partnership performance against the 2025/26 Community Safety Plan and sets out the agreed priorities for the next three years.

Although this plan focuses on Canterbury's needs, we work closely with neighbouring districts to address cross-boundary issues, identify shared priorities, share good practice and pursue opportunities for joint working.

Delivery and governance

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership Executive Board monitors progress against the Community Safety Plan quarterly, including performance against agreed actions and priorities and oversight of external funding secured to support delivery.

Operational delivery is coordinated through partnership sub-groups, which bring partners and stakeholders together regularly to drive progress, coordinate resources, share intelligence and respond to emerging issues requiring a joined-up, multi-agency response.

Task and finish groups and multi-disciplinary panels are established as needed to address location-based concerns, individual risk and thematic challenges. This is supported by specialist forums covering higher and further education, vulnerable individuals, domestic abuse and serious organised crime.

Overall, the Partnership continues to demonstrate strong multi-agency working, delivering targeted enforcement, prevention and engagement activity across the district. The new 2026–2029 priorities build on this progress and focus resources on the areas of greatest need, risk and opportunity for collaboration.

2. Detail

This section sets out key performance highlights against the previously agreed priorities for 2025/26.

The priorities were:

- Disrupting serious, organised crime
- Reducing exploitation and supporting vulnerable people
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and improving community reassurance
- Supporting children and young people through engagement and diversion
- Addressing domestic abuse and violence against women and girls
- Improving safety in the evening and night-time economy
- Tackling environmental crime
- Promoting road safety

2.1 Performance highlights 2025–2026

Disruption of Modern Slavery and Exploitation

- Intelligence-led visits took place across the district, helping partners identify and respond to risks linked to modern slavery and immigration offences, with a focus on barbers, retailers and gig economy riders.
- Approximately 80% of activity took place within city locations, with the remaining 20% focused on coastal areas.
- In addition, three proactive police-led operations targeting delivery riders were carried out across the district under Operation Leoside, focusing on welfare, safeguarding and vehicle roadworthiness.
- Operation Makesafe, led by Kent Police, tested safeguarding practices in city centre hotels. Four hotels identified potential child exploitation risks and took appropriate action, including refusing bookings, challenging individuals and following established procedures. One hotel gathered information to support future investigations if an offence was identified, while another received advice to improve practice.
- This combined enforcement and safeguarding activity led to 16 arrests for immigration offences, prosecution of two business owners and two further arrests for unrelated offences, demonstrating clear impact in disrupting criminal activity and protecting vulnerable people.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

- A coordinated district-wide programme of prevention, education and targeted intervention addressed the continued risk of young people being groomed into county lines activity, supporting priorities to reduce exploitation and protect vulnerable young people.
- Partners accessed exploitation toolkits and resources from the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit, alongside Prevent-related training. Seven training sessions were made available to CCSP partners, covering topics including extreme right- and

left-wing ideology and extremism.

- The partnership funded St Giles Trust through the Crime Reduction Grant to provide online safety and county lines training sessions. This was delivered to approximately 100 students at Simon Langton Grammar School at the school's request.
- A targeted programme was delivered in partnership with Canterbury RFC to support young people identified by schools as being at risk of exploitation. The cohort included ten girls aged 12–14 from across the district. Average participation was five young people in structured physical activities, with others remaining engaged through non-physical sessions or school-based provision, ensuring continued support across the full cohort. Feedback from participants showed increased confidence, greater willingness to try new things and a stronger sense of empowerment in making decisions for themselves.

Youth Engagement and Diversion

- The Purple Partnership — comprising the council, Kent Cricket, Canterbury Rugby Football Club, Canterbury Christ Church Students' Union, Kent Police, Distinctive Bars and the Community Alcohol Partnership — led a coordinated district-wide approach to maintain youth engagement and diversionary provision despite reduced statutory services, supporting young people and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- The Purple Partnership -The partnership continued to promote Ask for Angela across participating venues as an inclusive way for anyone who feels unsafe or uncomfortable to seek discreet support, including men and trans people. The partnership also promotes complementary initiatives which supports LGBTQ+ customers experiencing or witnessing discrimination, harassment or hate.
- Diversionary activity was delivered across city locations, including Thanington Resource Centre and Spring Lane Neighbourhood Centre, mixed catchment provision at Prince of Wales Youth Club, and coastal areas, ensuring broad geographic coverage and continued access to support.
- The partnership also supported targeted and inclusive interventions, including the *Gossip & Gains* programme for vulnerable females, *Soccerena* sessions in St George's Street, and the *Give It A Go* event, which attracted around 800 attendees and is being considered as an annual initiative.
- Weekly partner-led sessions in youth centres have strengthened sports provision, increased engagement and provided consistent opportunities for young people to take part in positive activities.
- The University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University both actively encourage students to volunteer within their local communities, including with youth organisations. For example, a number of Christ Church students volunteer and coach at Canterbury RFC, contributing to wider community engagement; during the 2025–26 academic year, 170 students have collectively recorded 4,566 volunteering hours.
- The partnership also supported Taekwondo provision at Herne Bay Family Hub.

The programme averaged nine young people per session and included a participant who achieved a silver medal at the British Open after only ten weeks' training.

- Through the Crime Reduction Grant, the partnership provided funding to Herne Bay Baptist Church (£503.95) and The Hub in Seasalter (£2,044) to strengthen local youth provision. Funding supported equipment and activities including boxing equipment, gaming consoles, laptops for homework support, craft materials, basketball hoops and sports equipment.
- Connect and Thrive were commissioned in January 2026 to provide diversionary support for young people aged 14 to 18. Between January and April, they worked with 23 young people from four city schools, one coastal school, home-educated young people and those not currently in education. Support was tailored to individual needs and focused on communication, confidence, practical life skills, safety and future aspirations. Early outcomes include improved confidence, communication, emotional awareness, routines and motivation. A further bid has been submitted to the OPCC to extend the project throughout 2026/27.

Road Safety and Enforcement

- A coordinated programme of joint enforcement operations led by Kent Police and Canterbury City Council targeted dangerous driving and inappropriate parking across the district, directly supporting priorities around road safety, anti-social behaviour and community reassurance.
- In total, 17 joint operations were undertaken since the start of the 2022–2026 action plan.
- In addition, a sustained programme of targeted enforcement and engagement at schools and other key locations delivered 158 operations between August 2024 and January 2026 to tackle inappropriate parking across the district. The distribution of activity is set out below:
    - 68 in coastal areas
    - 54 in city areas
    - 27 in rural locations.

- This combined road safety and enforcement approach resulted in 137 penalty charge notices issued, alongside Section 59 warnings, arrests, prosecutions and education activity.

Environmental Crime and Waste Enforcement

- Council officers tackled fly-tipping across city, coastal and rural locations, securing nine prosecutions during the reporting period. Outcomes included a 12-month/100-hour community order and £7,647 in financial penalties. Three further 2025/26 cases are pending.

- The partnership coordinated three multi-agency operations targeting commercial waste vehicles, including a two-day joint operation with the Environment Agency, DVSA, HMRC, Kent Police and the council's Enforcement Team. Across the operations, 60 vehicles were stopped, 28 enforcement actions were taken and 43 drivers were served notices requiring waste transfer notes or waste carrier licence details. Intelligence was shared with national hubs to support wider investigations into organised and cross-border waste crime.
- Partnership work to investigate environmental crime also helped uncover wider criminal activity, with evidence from cannabis grow fly-tipping supporting Kent Police to secure a warrant and dismantle a £47,000 cannabis grow in Herne Bay.

2.2 Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2026–2029

The 2026–2029 priorities reflect the areas of highest risk, demand and vulnerability identified through the Strategic Assessment and partner engagement.

Two Community Safety Partnership conferences and a workshop were held in March 2026, bringing together practitioners, councillors and community leaders to review evidence, agree priorities and develop the multi-agency action plan for April 2026 to March 2029.

Across all priorities, three core themes will run throughout our work:

- Putting victims at the forefront of our activity
- Prioritising our communities
- Safeguarding those most vulnerable in our communities

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership priorities for 2026–2029 are:

Reducing harm in our communities

Reducing harm in our communities means combining prevention, enforcement and clear communication so people feel safe and supported. It focuses on early intervention, tackling misinformation and ensuring partners work together visibly and effectively across the district.

The priority also focuses on reducing harm from substance misuse through targeted support, awareness and access to services, helping to reduce related anti-social behaviour and vulnerability.

We will:

- Deliver proactive enforcement and prevention activity to reduce harm and improve community safety
- Work with partners to challenge misinformation and improve public confidence
- Promote awareness of risks and available support through targeted campaigns and engagement
- Strengthen approaches to reducing substance misuse and associated harms

Supporting survivors and reducing domestic abuse

Survivors of domestic abuse should be able to access services that are easy to reach, flexible,

and responsive to individual needs. A key focus is reducing barriers to support, particularly for those who may be isolated, at greater risk, or unsure how to seek help.

We will:

- Make it easier for survivors to find and safely access support services
- Raise awareness within communities about domestic abuse, support available, and how to seek help
- Work with partners to ensure services are coordinated, accessible and responsive across the district
- Embed the council's ongoing DAHA accreditation work within the Community Safety Partnership action plan

Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against women and girls has a serious impact on individuals, families and communities. Preventing this harm and creating safer environments is a key priority. This means working with partners and communities to raise awareness, challenge harmful behaviour, and ensure support services are visible, trusted and easy to access. There is a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, so women and girls feel safe and confident seeking help.

We will:

- Work with communities and partners to raise awareness and challenge behaviours linked to violence against women and girls
- Support women and girls to access impartial advice and specialist support services safely
- Improve safety across public spaces, workplaces, education settings and the night-time economy
- Ensure a joined-up, partnership approach to prevention, safeguarding and support across the district
- Support Canterbury City Council to maintain its White Ribbon accreditation and promote activity that engages men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls

Supporting Children, Young People and those in Further and Higher Education

Children and young people are disproportionately more likely to be victims of crime, often experiencing harm in places where they should feel safe, including their homes, schools and local communities. In response, there will be a strong focus on early intervention, prevention and support, recognising the importance of creating safe environments and ensuring that young people are equipped with the knowledge and resilience to make positive choices.

We will continue to work with young people through youth inclusion programmes and education settings to promote understanding of the risks they face and the potential impact on their lives.

We will:

- Work in partnership with schools, colleges and universities to support positive outcomes and future career pathways
- Ensure young people have clear access to support services, including advice, guidance and safeguarding provision
- Promote awareness of opportunities and risks through targeted engagement and education activity
- Strengthen connections between education, training and employment to support progression into work or further study
- Target support towards those most at risk of disengagement or vulnerability, ensuring inclusive access across the district
- Work with Canterbury BID, Sports Connect and other partners to support and promote partner-led diversionary activities, including the Back to School event, helping young people access inclusive sports, positive activities, advice and support

A safe place to live, work, study and visit

Creating a safe place to live, work, study and visit is central to our approach. We recognise that feeling safe is not just about enforcement—it is about ensuring that people have confidence in their environment and in the services around them.

Our approach will include visible, coordinated activity across partners, clear communication, and support systems that enable residents, visitors and businesses to feel reassured and supported in their communities.

We will:

- Maintain a visible and coordinated multi-agency presence across the district to support public confidence
- Improve public awareness of the work of the CCSP through targeted campaigns
- Deliver targeted awareness campaigns to inform, educate and encourage responsible behaviour
- Work in partnership with businesses to support a safe and well-managed evening and night-time economy
- Provide clear routes for reporting issues and accessing support services

The partnership is also guided by a range of key duties and strategic priorities, which are fully embedded within the delivery of actions and plans. These include alignment with the Kent Police Control Strategy and PCC priorities, alongside statutory responsibilities such as the Serious Violence Duty, Domestic Abuse Duty, and the Prevent Duty in response to the national terrorism threat level.

In addition, the partnership supports wider system priorities, including reducing re-offending and offender management, as well as responding to emerging changes through devolution and local government reorganisation in Kent, ensuring that the approach remains aligned with regional and national policy direction.

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership Executive Board has endorsed the priorities

and actions summarised above. Performance against these is monitored by the Partnership.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

We want residents to feel safer and happier where they live and to make sure that Canterbury continues to be a great destination to visit.

The delivery of the Community Safety Plan contributes significantly to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

- Revitalising public spaces
- Increase protected green space
- Improve planning enforcement and environmental provisions
- Support local businesses
- Free access to sport and low-cost facilities
- Supporting voluntary organisations
- Support the voluntary sector
- To use underutilised council property
- To improve safety in and around schools

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

No public consultation is required to develop the Community Safety Plan.

Individual consultations may be carried out by partners to establish local concerns, additional needs, or to help define an approach.

A workshop was held to engage local ward councillors in the process. Councillors took part in an online event, and this has been fed into the CSP Action Plan for partners to support in delivering where applicable.

The Community Safety Partnership Annual Review was considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 24 June 2026 as part of the Council's statutory crime and disorder scrutiny arrangements. The committee's feedback has been incorporated into the relevant performance sections of this report. Minutes can be found here.

Scrutiny welcomed the informative report and partnership response, noting significant improvements in anti-social behaviour in Canterbury and Herne Bay and recognising Canterbury's victim-centred approach to cuckooing, which has been adopted across Kent.

Members' principal concerns, and the actions taken or agreed in response, were:

- Dangerous and illegal parking, particularly around schools — The school parking programme has since returned to full staffing, weekly tasking has resumed and activity will be reviewed so that operations can be increased where evidence and resources support this. Furthermore, joint operations with partners are programmed to be taking place focusing on dangerous and illegal parking and anti-idling.

- Fly-tipping — Concerns were raised regarding the online reporting process. Following feedback about the online reporting information, the fly-tipping webpage wording has been amended. It now explains that reports may relate to fly-tipping in a public area, rather than referring only to land or highway, making clear that the reporting route applies where the public can gain access.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

To note the annual review, the priorities for 2026–2029 and the Scrutiny Committee feedback.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 is recommended. Cabinet has received the statutory annual overview and the Scrutiny Committee's feedback while delivery and performance monitoring continue through the Partnership's established governance arrangements.

The report also provides Cabinet with assurance on partnership delivery during 2025/26, records the Scrutiny Committee's feedback and confirms the priorities that will guide partnership activity during 2026–2029. The risk associated with requesting further information is limited but could delay Cabinet's formal receipt of the annual review. This risk is mitigated by the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board's continuing quarterly monitoring of the plan.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

The partnership proactively seeks external funding to deliver project work outlined within the Community Safety Plan. Council resources required to deliver the actions outlined are covered through existing budgets. KCC has discontinued the Youth Intervention Fund, which funded ASB-focused work for partner agencies directed by CCC, along with associated officer time. We are currently evaluating alternative options through the Violence Reduction Unit, Serious Violence Duty and other Home Office grants where available.

(b) Legal

The Community Safety Partnership is the lead statutory body required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent legislation and is accountable for all statutory duties placed on community safety partnerships. The partnership plan is required to contain the statutory strategies and must be revised before the start of each year. Regulation 10 states that 1 April is the start of the year. A summary of the plan must be published.

Enforcement powers are enacted in accordance with relevant legislation.

(c) Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 3. The assessment identifies an overall positive impact because the plan is intended to reduce harm, strengthen safeguarding and improve access to support. It also recognises that crime, disorder, abuse and fear of crime are not experienced equally across the population. Mitigations include equality monitoring, accessible communications, engagement with

representative groups, consistent safeguarding referrals and annual review of the assessment.

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

The Community Safety Plan is expected to have a broadly positive environmental impact through activity to prevent and respond to fly-tipping, waste crime, graffiti and vehicle-related nuisance. No significant adverse carbon or biodiversity impacts have been identified at this strategic level. Any future project or operational change with a material environmental impact will be assessed separately.

Other implications

(e) Staffing resource

Provided for through existing resources. Staff are deployed to target issues or locations as appropriate.

(f) Human rights issues

Regulations are applied consistently and staff operate within the framework of dignity, fairness, respect and equality.

(g) Crime and disorder

The principal purpose of the Partnership and plan is to reduce crime and disorder. The Council must consider the effect of its decisions on community safety and ensure that they contribute to reducing crime and disorder across the district. The actions outlined in this report make a significant contribution to this duty.

(h) Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

The Council has a duty to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm when carrying out its functions. This is a Partnership priority and is delivered through targeted multi-agency interventions, education, awareness raising and person-centred responses to individual cases.

Contact Officers

Marie Royle - Director of People Marie.royle@canterbury.gov.uk

Lora McCourt – Head of Locality Services Lora.McCourt@canterbury.gov.uk

Background documents and appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Safety Partnership Performance 2025/26 – Project Action Plan Update

Appendix 2 – Kent Violence Reduction Unit Exploitation Toolkit (available separately)

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – Community Safety Partnership Structure

Appendix 1 – Community Safety Partnership Performance 2025/26 – Project Action Plan Update

Below is an update on the CSP project action plan previously reported to this committee as part of the 2024/25 report. It provides updates on projects that were not complete at the time of the last report. Actions are shown by priority area and colour-coded to indicate status: completed (green), ongoing (yellow) and not started (red).

No new actions were adopted at the 2025 CSP conference. Instead, outstanding actions from the previous year were carried forward so the partnership could focus on completing them ahead of developing the new Community Safety Plan for 2026–2029.

CCSP Priority 1: Disrupt Serious Organised Crime

Action:	Update:	Target date:	RAG:
Raise awareness and confidence in spotting the signs, reporting and referring Prevent radicalisation concerns	Through the Community Safety Partnership, partners were able to access anti-exploitation toolkits and resources provided by the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit, alongside training on related areas such as Prevent. In total, seven training sessions were delivered and made available to all CCSP partners, covering topics including the extreme right and left wing, incels and Islamist extremism.	N/A	

CCSP Priority 2: Disrupt Anti-Social Behaviour, including environmental offences

Action:	Update:	Target date:	RAG:
Create an ASB professionals forum	The Community Safety Team now chairs a regular anti-social behaviour forum involving key stakeholders, such as housing providers, CCC and Kent Police, to understand issues, identify best practice and coordinate multi-agency responses through task and finish groups.	N/A	
Utilise empty premises to put out key community safety messages	This was scoped but was unable to progress due to a lack of funding.	N/A	
Improved	This was explored but was not able to be	N/A	

perception campaign	delivered within 2025/26; it now forms part of our plans for 2026/27.		

CCSP Priority 3: Safeguard and have a vulnerable person focus, including Prevent Duty & hate, Drugs & Alcohol and Safety & Domestic Abuse

Action:	Update:	Target date:	G:
Training for partners on Victims and Perpetrators	Victim blaming language training from Kent CSP has been disseminated to all partners. Talks between CCC and Rising Sun have identified the need to have local input. However, the delivery of this has been delayed and will be carried forward.	Ongoing	
Work with companies and delivery riders to ensure they are safeguarded i.e. Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking	Three proactive police-led operations targeting delivery riders were carried out across the district under Operation Leoside, focusing on welfare, safeguarding and vehicle roadworthiness. Other businesses have also been engaged and targeted operations delivered on these issues.	Ongoing	
DAHA incorporation with CSP actions	Policy work has been completed, and DAHA accreditation work is underway.	Ongoing	
Raise profile of services available for addiction	Partners working in the addiction field are a part of the CSP and have been invited to relevant engagement opportunities to raise the profile of their services. This remains an ongoing piece of work moving into 26/27 as part of our priority to reduce harm in our communities.	Ongoing	
Raising the profile of Hate Crime locally	The partnership has funded two years of Zero Tolerance training across the district and worked with key partners to deliver awareness-raising activity in diverse communities. We recognise this is an ongoing piece of work and moving forward it will be addressed through our priority of reducing harm in our communities.	Ongoing	
Work with schools for educating young people on suicide and self-harm	This action was reviewed with partners and KCC is already delivering against this.	N/A	

Safe havens	Safe Havens operate in the city during the night-time economy, providing places where people can seek refuge if they need help or support. Consideration was given to extending this provision across the district, but there is currently no funding available to the partnership to support this.	N/A	
Create a panel for sharing information on vulnerable people at risk of self-harm	Through the partnership, adult suicide prevention training was offered to all CSP partners, including sub-groups. The option of creating a separate panel was considered with partners. However, it was agreed that this function is already provided through the Canterbury District Vulnerability Panel, which offers an established multi-agency route for sharing information and coordinating responses for vulnerable people, including where there are risks of self-harm or wider safeguarding concerns.		

CCSP Priority 4: Safety in the Night-Time Economy, including VAWG and Serious Violence Duty

Action:	**Update:**	**Target date:**	**RAG:**
Consent campaign	In 2024/25, the partnership supported Canterbury Christ Church University Students' Union to embed consent into its "Expect Respect" campaign. The partnership was unable to identify funding for further initiatives in 2025/26; however, we will carry this action forward into 2026/27 as part of our priority to prevent violence against women and girls.	Ongoing	
Purple Flag	Purple Flag accreditation was successfully achieved again in July 2025. This reflects the continued strength of Canterbury's partnership approach to supporting a safe and well-managed evening and night-time economy. Thanks go to Canterbury BID for leading the process, and to all community safety partners who supported the application	N/A	

	and assessment.		
Nighttime Economy Forum	A review was undertaken to consider whether a standalone forum was needed. Following discussion, partners agreed that the issues are already being addressed through existing forums.	N/A	
Campaign on drug use in the nighttime economy	As part of our priority to reduce harm in our communities, we will continue to seek funding to develop a campaign that raises awareness of the risks associated with drug use.	Ongoing	

CCSP Priority 5: Young People, including Higher & Further Education, referral and intervention for prevent & Local Children's Partnership Plan

Action:	Update:	Target date:	RAG:
Funding for youth provisions in the district – The Purple Partnership	In 2025/26, the Purple Partnership — comprising the council, Kent Cricket, Canterbury Rugby Football Club, Canterbury Christ Church Students' Union, Kent Police, Distinctive Bars and the Community Alcohol Partnership — led a coordinated district-wide approach to maintain youth engagement and diversionary provision despite reduced statutory services. The aim was to support children and young people and help reduce anti-social behaviour. Supporting children and young people will remain a priority, and we will continue to explore opportunities to fund youth provision across the district.	Ongoing	
Universities to provide volunteers for youth provision	The University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University both actively encourage students to volunteer within their local communities, including with youth organisations. For example, a number of Christ Church students volunteer and coach at Canterbury RFC, contributing to wider community engagement; during the 2025–26 academic year, 170 students collectively recorded 4,566 volunteering hours.	N/A	

Make use of the CCCU multi-sport space during the Summer holidays	Canterbury Christ Church University is keen for its space to be used during the summer holidays, and we are currently looking at options to make use of this space to benefit young people in Barton Ward.	Ongoing	

Appendix 2 – Kent Violence Reduction Unit Exploitation Toolkit (available separately)

The toolkit is 22 pages long and, as such, has not been included in full within the appendices. Instead, the toolkit can be accessed separately as: Exploitation-Toolkit.pdf

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Date of initial assessment	June 2026
Division	Locality Services
Proposal to be assessed	Canterbury Community Safety Partnership Plan 2026-2029
New or existing policy or function?	New
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	Statutory
Your name	Lora McCourt
Your job title	Head of Locality Services
Your contact telephone number	01227 862000
Decision maker (e.g. Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Community Safety Partnership Executive
Estimated proposal deadline	April 2026

Please outline your proposal, including:

1. Aims and objectives
2. Key actions
3. Expected outcomes
4. Who will be affected and how
5. How many people will be affected

Aims and objectives

The Canterbury Community Safety Partnership Plan 2026–2029 will provide the district's statutory, multi-agency framework for reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, disorder and community harm. It is informed by the annual Strategic Assessment, partner intelligence and operational feedback, and will set the priorities, actions and governance arrangements for the partnership over a three-year period.

The plan aims to make Canterbury district a safer place to live, work, study and visit by focusing partnership resources on the areas of greatest risk, harm and vulnerability. It recognises that community safety is not only about recorded crime, but also about safeguarding, public confidence, community cohesion, prevention, early intervention and access to support.

The proposed priority themes are:

1. Reducing harm in communities, including anti-social behaviour, serious violence, exploitation, environmental crime, substance misuse and repeat victimisation.
2. Supporting survivors and reducing domestic abuse,

	including improved access to specialist support, earlier intervention and stronger multi-agency pathways. 3. Preventing violence against women and girls, including safer public spaces, night-time economy safety, bystander awareness, support for reporting and a focus on perpetrators. 4. Supporting children, young people and those in further and higher education, including diversion, prevention, youth engagement, safeguarding and reducing exploitation risk. 5. Creating safe places to live, work, study and visit, including town centres, coastal communities, rural areas, transport hubs, housing settings and the night-time economy.
	Key actions
	1. Develop an annual action plan with named leads, measurable outcomes, timescales and review points. 2. Use Strategic Assessment data, partner intelligence and community feedback to target activity where risk and harm are greatest. 3. Continue targeted enforcement and prevention activity, including joint operations on retail crime, vehicle nuisance, exploitation, environmental crime, unsafe premises and ASB hotspots. 4. Strengthen safeguarding responses for people at greater risk, including children and young people, survivors of domestic abuse, people with mental health needs, people affected by substance misuse, rough sleepers, migrants, UASC, and people at risk of exploitation or radicalisation. 5. Improve prevention, education and diversion opportunities, including youth activities, school and college engagement, Prevent training, substance misuse education and community awareness campaigns. 6. Improve partnership data sharing, equality monitoring and community engagement so that the plan remains responsive to changing risk, demand and local experience.
	Expected outcomes
	1. Reduced crime, anti-social behaviour and harm in priority locations and communities. 2. Improved safety and confidence among residents, businesses, students and visitors. 3. Earlier identification of vulnerability and more effective safeguarding pathways. 4. Improved access to domestic abuse, VAWG, substance misuse, mental health, housing and youth support services. 5. Stronger partnership accountability, with clearer

	ownership of actions and better use of shared resources. 6. Improved understanding of differential impact across protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups.
	Who will be affected and how The plan will affect all residents, businesses, partner agencies, community organisations, students and visitors across Canterbury district. The impact is expected to be broadly positive because the plan is designed to improve safety, access to support, prevention and community confidence. Some groups are likely to experience a greater positive impact because they are more directly affected by the plan's priorities. These include victims and survivors of crime, ASB and domestic abuse; women and girls; children and young people; people with disabilities or mental health needs; people affected by substance misuse; ethnic minority communities; faith communities; LGBTQ+ residents; students; rough sleepers; people in insecure or poor-quality housing; migrants and UASC; and people living in areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation, ASB, coastal seasonal demand or community tension. There is a potential risk that enforcement-led activity could be perceived as disproportionately affecting some communities if it is not clearly evidence-based, transparent and accompanied by prevention and support. This will be mitigated through data-led targeting, partner oversight, community engagement, safeguarding referrals where appropriate and regular review of equality impacts. **Scale of impact** The plan is district-wide and applies to all wards across Canterbury district. The Strategic Assessment identifies a 2024 mid-year population estimate of 162,100 people. The plan will therefore have a broad public-facing impact, with targeted activity focused on priority places, groups and harms.
What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example "x% of customers are female" or	The Strategic Assessment provides a broad evidence base on the profile of the district, recorded crime, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, VAWG, hate crime, deprivation, unemployment, substance misuse, safeguarding, Prevent, fire safety, road safety and partner operational intelligence.

"x% of customers are aged over 60".	Key evidence relevant to equality impact includes: 1. Canterbury district has an estimated population of 162,100 and a younger age profile than the county average, reflecting its student population. It also has a larger proportion of residents aged 65 and over. 2. The 2021 Census shows that 17.5% of residents are classified as an ethnic minority, slightly higher than the Kent average of 16.8%. 3. Levels of deprivation vary significantly across the district. The Strategic Assessment states that Canterbury was ranked as the 8th most deprived district in Kent in the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation, out of 12 districts where 1 is the most deprived. 4. Unemployment is 3.1%, below the Kent and national averages, but young people aged 18–24 make up a higher proportion of unemployed residents than the Kent and national averages. 5. Recorded crime increased by 6.7%, with 15,189 crimes compared with 14,232 the previous year. Anti-social behaviour increased by 17.5%, with 2,646 incidents compared with 2,251 the previous year. 6. Domestic abuse incidents increased by 3.9% to 4,037 incidents. VAWG offences reduced slightly by 1.4%, but remain a significant area of harm and partnership focus. 7. Hate crime incidents increased by 1.5% overall. Sexual orientation hate incidents increased significantly, although police commentary indicates that improved recording of verbal abuse contributed to this increase. 8. One Stop Shop domestic abuse data shows high levels of need among survivors, including visitors from ethnic minority communities, disabled people, LGBTQ+ residents, pregnant visitors and households with children. 9. Substance misuse treatment data shows that 534 Canterbury residents accessed structured treatment between October 2024 and September 2025. Of these, 35% were receiving treatment for alcohol only, 30% for opiate use, 18% for non-opiate use and 17% for combined non-opiate and alcohol use. The Strategic Assessment does not provide a directly comparable structured-treatment total for the previous year, so it is not possible to determine from this data whether the number in treatment has increased or decreased. However, separate data from We Are With You shows that referrals from the Canterbury district increased from 115 in 2024 to 151 in 2025—an increase of 31.3%—and that Canterbury remained the largest source of referrals in Kent. This indicates increased referral demand, although referral numbers should not be treated as equivalent to the number of residents accessing structured treatment.

	10. Prevent data identifies young people, males under 30, people with neurodiversity or mental health challenges, and those affected by socio-economic disadvantage as groups requiring continued awareness, early identification and safeguarding support. 11. Partner feedback identifies growing complexity linked to mental health, substance misuse, housing insecurity, youth ASB, community tensions, misinformation, online harm, safeguarding and funding pressures.
	This evidence indicates that the proposal is highly relevant to equality considerations because the causes and impacts of crime, disorder, abuse, exploitation and fear of crime are not experienced evenly across the population. The plan should therefore continue to use data, partner intelligence and community feedback to target resources, reduce barriers to support and monitor whether activity is benefiting those most at risk of harm.

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below?

Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's PSED Technical Guidance

Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	The plan is directly relevant to this duty because it includes partnership activity to prevent and respond to hate crime, domestic abuse, VAWG, exploitation, modern slavery, radicalisation, ASB and repeat victimisation. The Strategic Assessment identifies increases in domestic abuse incidents, hate crime incidents and ASB, alongside partner concerns about community tension, misinformation, online harm and exploitation. The plan will support this duty by promoting victim-centred responses, safer reporting routes, safeguarding referrals, targeted enforcement and prevention activity, and partnership action to challenge harassment, abuse and discrimination where it occurs.
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons	Yes	The plan is relevant because the Strategic Assessment shows that risk and harm are not experienced evenly across the district or across different groups. The plan prioritises people who may face additional barriers to safety or support, including survivors of domestic abuse, women and girls, children and young people, disabled people, people with mental health needs, ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ residents, people affected by substance misuse, students, migrants, UASC and people living in areas of higher deprivation. It will advance

who do not share it		equality of opportunity by improving access to specialist support, strengthening early intervention and safeguarding pathways, supporting prevention and education, and using data and community feedback to target resources where need and harm are greatest.
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	The plan will support good relations by strengthening partnership work on hate crime, Prevent, community cohesion, ASB, misinformation and place-based community safety. The Strategic Assessment identifies risks linked to community tension, offensive graffiti and stickering, anti-migrant narratives, online radicalisation and seasonal ASB in coastal communities. The plan will help foster good relations through community engagement, awareness campaigns, dialogue with faith and community groups, youth and student engagement, visible partnership problem-solving, and communication that explains action being taken and encourages confidence in reporting and support services.

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	**Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None**	**Explanation**
Age	High	The plan has high relevance for children, young people, students, working-age adults and older residents. The level and type of impact will differ by age group. The Strategic Assessment identifies that Canterbury has a younger age profile than the county average, reflecting its three universities and higher proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds, while also having a larger proportion of residents aged 65 and over. The proposed priority themes are expected to benefit all age groups. Children and young people will benefit from the focus on safeguarding, early intervention, youth diversion, exploitation prevention, substance misuse education, Prevent awareness and positive activities. This is important because the Strategic Assessment identifies youth-related ASB, exploitation risks, young people's substance misuse referrals and Prevent-related vulnerability among younger age groups. Students and those in

		further and higher education should benefit from safer public spaces, night-time economy work, VAWG prevention, consent and bystander awareness, Prevent training and improved links with universities and colleges. Working-age adults should benefit from action on domestic abuse, VAWG, ASB, substance misuse, retail and workplace safety, housing-related vulnerability and community reassurance. Older residents should benefit from safeguarding, scams and doorstep crime awareness, fire prevention, safe homes activity, community cohesion work and support where isolation, vulnerability or fear of crime may affect confidence and wellbeing. The plan will use Strategic Assessment data, partner intelligence and community feedback to target activity where risk, harm and vulnerability are greatest, rather than applying a single approach to all age groups.
Disability	High	High relevance. The proposed plan is expected to have a positive impat for disabled people, including people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, neurodiversity, sensory impairments, long-term health conditions and mental health needs. The Strategic Assessment identifies that disabled people and people with mental health needs are represented among those experiencing harm and seeking support. One Stop Shop domestic abuse data shows that 30.5% of visitors considered themselves to have a disability; of those, 45.1% reported a mental health condition, 27.0% a physical disability and 11.9% a learning disability. The same data shows that 74.4% of disabled visitors said their condition had worsened as a result of the abuse. The Strategic Assessment also identifies people with neurodiversity and/or mental health challenges as a group at increased risk of susceptibility to radicalisation, and partner feedback highlights growing case complexity linked to vulnerability, mental health, substance misuse, housing insecurity and safeguarding. The plan should therefore benefit disabled residents by strengthening safeguarding pathways, improving access to specialist support, supporting trauma-informed domestic abuse responses, improving links between community safety, housing, mental health, substance misuse and safeguarding services, and ensuring that prevention and support sit alongside enforcement where vulnerability is present. There is a potential risk that disabled people, particularly those with mental health needs, learning disabilities, neurodiversity or

		communication needs, could face barriers to reporting crime, accessing support, understanding enforcement processes or engaging in consultation. To mitigate this, the plan should ensure communication is accessible and plain English, referrals and reporting routes are clear, reasonable adjustments are made where required, and the Disability Advisory Panel is used as a sounding board. Equality monitoring should also be strengthened so the partnership can understand whether disabled residents are benefiting from community safety activity and whether any barriers remain.
Gender reassignment	Medium	The plan has medium relevance for trans residents, students and visitors because it includes activity on hate crime, safe reporting, domestic abuse, VAWG, Prevent, community cohesion and safer public spaces. The Strategic Assessment records 10 transgender hate incidents during the reporting period, compared with 11 the previous year. One Stop Shop domestic abuse data also records that 2.9% of visitors identified as transgender, with a further 10.9% recorded as not known or declined to answer. This indicates that trans people may be affected by community safety issues and may also need confidence that support services are inclusive, respectful and safe to access. The plan should have a positive impact by improving confidence in reporting, supporting victims of hate crime or abuse, ensuring domestic abuse pathways are inclusive, and making sure partnership communications avoid assumptions about gender identity. Monitoring should consider whether trans residents experience barriers to reporting, accessing support or feeling safe in public spaces.
Marriage and civil partnership	Low	This characteristic has low direct relevance because the Strategic Assessment does not identify a specific community safety impact linked solely to marriage or civil partnership status. However, relationship status may be relevant in domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, separation, housing insecurity and family court-related issues. One Stop Shop data shows that 58.3% of visitors attended because of abuse from an ex-intimate partner and 18.1% because of abuse from a current partner. The plan should therefore have an indirect positive impact where it improves survivor-centred domestic abuse pathways, housing advice, legal signposting, safeguarding referrals and support where relationship breakdown increases risk. No specific negative impact has been identified, but services should remain sensitive to household circumstances and avoid assumptions about marital

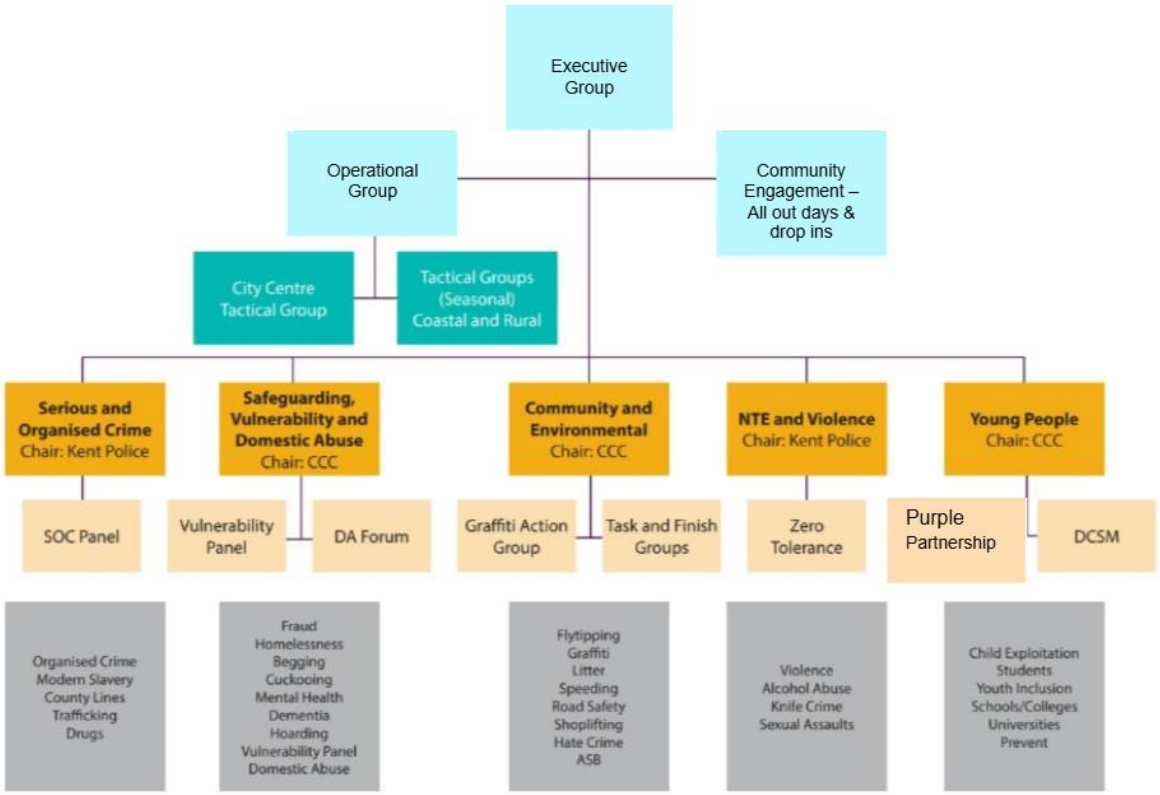
		or civil partnership status.
Pregnancy and maternity	Medium	The plan has medium relevance for pregnant women, new parents and families with young children because domestic abuse, housing insecurity, safeguarding, access to support and fear of crime can have particular impacts during pregnancy and early parenthood. The Strategic Assessment records that 42 One Stop Shop visitors were pregnant, representing 2.9% of visitors, and that there were 1,852 children aged 16 and under in the households of visitors, including 1,312 primary school age or younger. The plan should have a positive impact by improving early identification of domestic abuse, strengthening trauma-informed support, improving links with housing and legal advice, and ensuring safeguarding referrals are made where children are affected. The plan should also recognise children as victims in their own right where they experience domestic abuse within the household. Communication and referral routes should be accessible to pregnant women and parents who may need urgent, confidential or practical support.
Race	High	The plan has high relevance for residents, students and visitors from ethnic minority communities because it includes work on hate crime, Prevent, exploitation, safeguarding, community cohesion, anti-migrant narratives and access to support. The Strategic Assessment states that 17.5% of Canterbury's population is classified as an ethnic minority and records 238 race-related hate incidents, compared with 236 the previous year. The Prevent section identifies risks linked to anti-migrant narratives, misinformation, graffiti, targeted communications and community tension. The plan should have a positive impact where it improves culturally competent engagement, safe reporting routes, victim support, community cohesion, safeguarding and access to domestic abuse, housing and advice services.
Religion or belief	High	The plan has high relevance for faith communities, people with no religion or belief, and places of worship because it includes activity on Prevent, hate crime, community cohesion, safeguarding, misinformation, protests and safer public places. The Strategic Assessment records 12 religion-related hate incidents, compared with 20 the previous year. Although this has reduced, the Prevent section identifies continuing risks linked to global events, antisemitism, anti-Muslim rhetoric, offensive graffiti

		and stickering, and targeted communications or actions affecting religious institutions and communities. Canterbury Cathedral is also identified as one of the local sites assessed under the Home Office crowded places programme. The plan should have a positive impact by supporting early identification of radicalisation risk, improving confidence in hate crime reporting, maintaining dialogue with faith leaders and community representatives, supporting places of worship and promoting clear communication to reduce fear, misinformation and community tension. Monitoring should consider whether faith communities feel able to report concerns and whether partnership activity is helping to foster good relations.
Sex	High	The plan has high relevance in relation to sex because domestic abuse, VAWG, sexual offences, coercive control, stalking, harassment, night-time economy safety and safer public spaces are core areas of focus. The Strategic Assessment records 4,037 domestic abuse incidents, an increase of 3.9%, and 3,068 VAWG offences, a slight reduction of 1.4% but still a significant volume of harm. One Stop Shop data shows that 93.9% of visitors were female and 4.6% were male. The most common abuse types recorded were controlling and coercive behaviour and psychological or emotional abuse. The plan should have a positive impact for women and girls through prevention, safer places, awareness campaigns, survivor-centred support, bystander activity, access to specialist services and partnership work with the night-time economy. It should also recognise that men and boys can be victims of domestic abuse, exploitation, violence, stalking, abuse and mental health-related harm, and ensure support pathways are inclusive, accessible and clearly communicated. Monitoring should consider both gendered patterns of harm and access to support for all victims.
Sexual orientation	High	The plan has high relevance for LGBTQ+ residents, students and visitors because the Strategic Assessment records a significant increase in sexual orientation-related hate incidents: 60 incidents compared with 31 the previous year, an increase of 93.5%. Police commentary explains that improved recording of verbal abuse is likely to have contributed to this increase, but the scale of the increase still demonstrates the need for continued focus on safe reporting, victim support and confidence-building. One Stop Shop data also records that 3.9% of visitors were from the LGB+ community, which was a significantly greater proportion than the

		Kent and Medway population comparison of 2.7%. The plan should have a positive impact by improving safe reporting routes, supporting victims of hate crime and domestic abuse, strengthening inclusive communications, supporting safer public spaces and ensuring partnership responses address harassment, abuse and discrimination affecting LGBTQ+ people. Monitoring should consider whether LGBTQ+ residents and students feel confident reporting incidents and accessing support.
Other groups:		
Low income households	Positive	Positive impact expected. The plan should support residents experiencing poverty, deprivation or financial stress through prevention, safeguarding, access to support, scams awareness, substance misuse pathways, housing-related interventions and place-based work in areas with higher deprivation. The Strategic Assessment states that Canterbury was ranked as the 8th most deprived district in Kent in the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation and 185th out of 317 local authority districts nationally, placing it within the least deprived half overall. However, this masks significant local variation, with some areas within England's most deprived 10% and others within the least deprived 10%. The greatest levels of deprivation are identified in Wincheap and Barton wards. The assessment also records 17,121 Universal Credit claimants in Canterbury as at September 2025, representing 17.2% of the resident working-age population. Low-income households may be more affected by poor housing, financial abuse, scams, substance misuse, limited transport, digital exclusion, food insecurity, fear of crime and reduced access to support. The plan should therefore have a positive impact by targeting resources to areas of higher harm and vulnerability, improving referral pathways, supporting prevention and advice services, and ensuring communication is accessible through trusted community partners.
Rural and coastal communities	Positive	Positive impact expected. Rural and coastal communities may experience different patterns of community safety demand, including seasonal ASB, isolation, transport barriers, reduced access to services and environmental risks. The Strategic Assessment identifies that Herne Bay and Whitstable experience seasonal ASB because of their coastal locations and increased summer footfall, and notes that work was undertaken to

		encourage reporting following community concerns in Herne Bay. It also records that ASB increased by 17.5% overall, with the largest categories being rowdy or nuisance gatherings in public, drunken or rowdy behaviour, and motor vehicle nuisance. Kent Fire and Rescue Service evidence identifies rural priorities including rural homes, farmers and agricultural businesses, wildfires, flooding and water safety, road traffic accidents, medical emergencies in villages and smaller towns, and building community resilience. The plan should therefore have a positive impact by ensuring partnership activity is not concentrated only in Canterbury city centre, but also reflects the needs of coastal towns, rural communities and villages. This should include place-based problem solving, seasonal planning, engagement with local communities, visible reassurance activity, targeted prevention and accessible reporting routes.

Appendix 4 – Community Safety Partnership Structure


Executive Group
Operational Group
Community Engagement – All out days & drop ins
City Centre Tactical Group
Tactical Groups (Seasonal) Coastal and Rural
Serious and Organised Crime Chair: Kent Police
Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Domestic Abuse Chair: CCC
Community and Environmental Chair: CCC
NTE and Violence Chair: Kent Police
Young People Chair: CCC
SOC Panel
Vulnerability Panel
DA Forum
Graffiti Action Group
Task and Finish Groups
Zero Tolerance
Purple Partnership
DCSM
Organised Crime
Modern Slavery
County Lines
Trafficking
Drugs
Fraud
Homelessness
Begging
Cuckooing
Mental Health
Dementia
Hoarding
Vulnerability Panel
Domestic Abuse
Flytipping
Graffiti
Litter
Speeding
Road Safety
Shoplifting
Hate Crime
ASB
Violence
Alcohol Abuse
Knife Crime
Sexual Assaults
Child Exploitation
Students
Youth Inclusion
Schools/Colleges
Universities
Prevent

Cabinet

5th October 2026

Subject: Right to Grow (RtG) – end of two-year pilot report

Director and Head of Service:

William Hicks, Director of Place

Richard Moore, Head of Transport and Environment

Officer:

Rebecca Booth, Senior environment Officer

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Mel Dawkins, Cabinet member for Environment and Sustainability

Key or Non Key decision: Non Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of Cabinet

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s):

All Wards

Summary and purpose of the report:

This report presents the outcomes, learning and recommendations following completion of the two-year Right to Grow (RtG) pilot, which tested community cultivation on four council-owned sites and assets. Learning from the pilot has informed the recommendations for any future RtG scheme.

To Resolve

To continue the Right to Grow scheme, delivered in accordance with the revised approach and recommendations set out in Option 1 of the report.

Next stage in process:

Subject to Cabinet approval, implement a Right to Grow scheme in line with the recommendation

1. Introduction

In April 2024 Cabinet resolved for the council (Environment Team) to deliver and monitor an initial two-year pilot 'Right to Grow' (RtG) scheme across the Canterbury district in a limited number of locations, and to delegate to the Director of Place the ability to make minor changes to the pilot scheme in consultation with the portfolio holder.

2. Detail

The aim of the scheme was to test, across a range of growing models, how community groups could be enabled to access and manage underused parcels of council land for food cultivation and biodiversity improvement. The pilot sought to understand the operational, legal, environmental and community implications for the council of implementing and managing a Right to Grow scheme against agreed criteria.

Four pilot sites were included, representing a mix of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund (GF) land across both urban and rural locations in the Canterbury district. The sites were:

- Canterbury - Land off Sturry High Street – HRA
- Herne Bay - Four box planters, Central Parade – GF
- Whitstable - Salt Marsh Lane open space – GF
- Rural - Land off Mill Lane, Bridge – HRA

Outcomes of the pilot scheme

Of the four pilot sites pursued, only the Whitstable site has progressed to implementation. The Canterbury site was unsuccessful because the interested group is not a legal entity and, under the pilot criteria of requiring a legal licence, cannot enter into a licence agreement with the council. The Herne Bay planter model was unsuccessful due to complexities around water provision - access and cover of costs. The rural site at Bridge was paused but recent clarification about the site means it could still be progressed if desired.

Challenges, findings and learnings

The RtG pilot has presented a range of challenges and therefore has provided important learning for any future approach. The main lessons relate to legal status of participants, licence requirements, community engagement before sites are confirmed, staff capacity across numerous services, planning constraints, funding risks and the need for clearer public guidance.

Legal issues – Formal land licences require groups to have a legal identity, such as a Community Interest Company. This requirement is burdensome for some and has proved to be a barrier to participation during the pilot.

If RtG is to continue, a less formal model, such as operating under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), is suggested. However, this model is not without risk, as an MoU has no legal standing and therefore does not provide the same level of protection for the parties involved. This is particularly important where a group is granted exclusive management of a site, or part of a site. MoUs are already in use for friends' groups involved in the

management of open spaces; however, the key difference is that CCC retains overall management of those sites, with friends groups adding value without being wholly responsible for them. The Property team believes that if the council give an organisation exclusive use of one of our assets, then a formal licence is the best mechanism (assuming the other party has sufficient legal status to enter into such an agreement). The risks of entering into MoUs with non-legally constituted organisations may have to be looked at on a case-by-case basis to decide, probably in conjunction with Legal, whether this is in our best interests.

Resistance to sites – The pilot demonstrated that there can be a difference between the council's assessment of suitable land and local residents' views about how that land should be used, as was the case at Salt Marsh Lane. Although resource hungry, early and robust community engagement is therefore essential, particularly where sites bound residential areas.

Staff resource – The pilot required greater resource from the Environment team than anticipated (approximately double). The pilot has also required support from Housing, Property Services, Legal, Planning and Contracts/Canenco. No dedicated budget was allocated for the pilot, so officer time and associated costs have been met from existing resources.

Planning implications – Earlier identification of planning constraints, linked to Conservation Area and Permitted Development Rights, would have reduced uncertainty and avoided delays.

Financial viability – External funding is critical for many groups. Delays caused by resident objections, licence requirements or planning constraints did jeopardise funding conditions and can affect overall project viability.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

Corporate Plan
Open Spaces Strategy 2025 – 2040

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

Leadership Steering Group supports continuing beyond the pilot, offering a Right to Grow scheme operating a Memorandum of Understanding approach in place of legal land licences.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

Option 1. Continue Right to Grow in a revised form, incorporating the following:

- Develop a clear criteria checklist and public-facing webpage so community groups understand what is required before submitting proposals.
- Using the pilot assessment approach, assess future requests on a case by case basis, rather than proactively identifying a district-wide list of sites.

- Operate a Memorandum of Understanding model to reduce the legal burden on community groups and on Property and Legal officers, recognising that this is less robust than a formal licence and does not provide the same legal protections.
- Continue supporting the Salt Marsh Lane scheme with Revival, subject to annual review, given the investment already made and the scheme's progress.
- Revisit appropriate stalled or unsuccessful pilot sites if an MoU model is adopted.

Option 2. Continue with Right to Grow operating in line with the original criteria and concept of the pilot, with the requirement of groups to enter into a legally binding licence which means groups will need to be a legal entity to participate. Continue to support the existing Salt Marsh Lane scheme.

Option 3. Do not progress a Right to Grow scheme but continue to support the existing Salt Marsh Lane scheme.

Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 is recommended because it provides a more accessible and flexible model while reducing the legal burden on community groups and the council. The use of a clear criteria checklist and public-facing webpage would also help retain the ability to support and formalise appropriate, robust RtG schemes, in line with Corporate Plan objectives.

Options 2 and 3 are not recommended. The pilot has demonstrated that formal legal licences place a significant burden on community groups and act as a barrier to participation in RtG schemes. However, not offering any RtG scheme would limit the council's ability to respond to future community interest in accessing suitable land for growing, biodiversity and wider community benefit.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

Operating a Right to grow scheme will be met using existing staff resource.

(b) Legal

There is an increased risk in the absence of issuing licences to groups. A Memorandum of Understanding is an informal agreement and has no legal basis or weight.

(c) Equalities

None

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

None

Other implications

Contact Officer: Rebecca Booth, Senior Environment officer

Background documents and appendices

Appendix 1 - Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:

No

Appendix1 Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Please provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal under each of the headings below. If none, please say so.

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Impact of proposal	**Explanation of impact**	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals		
Positive	No direct impact on carbon dioxide emissions.	None required.
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.		
Neutral	Providing very local spaces for communities to grow and cultivate could lead to a reduction of some car use.	None required
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide		

Neutral	No direct impact on emissions of climate changing gases.	None required

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought
- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade
- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive	Cultivating open spaces for biodiversity benefits will make a positive contribution to biodiversity and nature recovery. Cultivating land for edible gardening will make a positive contribution to health and well-being, and local food production.	None required

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal?

If yes, please give a brief description

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Date of initial assessment	September 2026
Division	Transport & Environment
Proposal to be assessed	Right to Grow pilot – end of scheme report
New or existing policy or function?	Existing
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	None

Your name	Rebecca Booth
Your job title	Senior Environment Officer
Your contact telephone number	07429 056776
Decision maker (e.g.Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Cabinet
Estimated proposal deadline	

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	To note the outcomes, learning and recommendations following the implementation of the Right to Grow pilot Implement pilot, monitor, and review during the lifetime of the pilot. Take learning from the pilot to inform and shape any future development of Right to Grow. Local community groups who wish to participate if Right to grow and those involved in the pilot. The proposal will directly affect community groups involved in the pilot, and indirectly wider communities.
What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example “x% of customers are female” or “x% of customers are aged over 60”	

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC’s PSED Technical Guidance		
Aim	Yes/No	
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation		
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it		
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it		

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics. Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.			
Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal	Impact of proposal	

	High/ Medium/ Low/None	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	
Age	Medium	Positive	A right to grow scheme encourages community groups involved to be inclusive to all age groups and to encourage cross-generational and multi--generational participation.
Disability	Medium	Positive	The scheme would encourage community groups involved to be inclusive to people with disabilities.
Gender reassignment	None		
Marriage and civil partnership	None		
Pregnancy and maternity	None		
Race	None		
Religion or belief	None		
Sex	None		
Sexual orientation	None		
Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.	Medium	Positive	The scheme would encourage community groups involved to be inclusive to all members of their local community.

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	Learning from the pilot has been used to inform recommendations
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	None identified

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	Monitoring and review of the pilot scheme has helped to increase understanding of the impacts of Right to Grow and this learning has been taken

	forward for future improvement of a potential permanent scheme

If a consultation exercise is required as part of your proposal, please complete the consultation planning form on iCan.

Please update the section below if:
- You have amended your proposal
- You have new information
- You have undertaken consultation

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.
Have you made any changes to your initial assessment? If so, please give brief details	
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	

Should you need to revisit your assessment more than once, please ensure that you provide details of any changes or new information and the date these amendments were made.

Cabinet Report

5 October 2026

Subject: Public Toilets Relocation

Heading of Report: Relocation of Kings Hall public toilets

Director and Head of Service
William Hicks, Director of Place

Officer:

Tim Odlin – Senior Building Surveyor, Ann Gardner - Corporate Projects Manager

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Charlotte Cornell, Cabinet Member for Council Services, Culture and Heritage

Key or Non Key decision: Non Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the Cabinet

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): Heron Ward

Summary and purpose of the report:

This report sets out an options appraisal for the relocation of the public toilets currently attached to The King's Hall, Herne Bay, which is required as part of the wider Kings Hall refurbishment works.

Three potential locations have been assessed against their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and costs. A decision is required so that final design and procurement can take place for a new modular toilet block.

The three options include Kings Hall site itself, or a new modular unit near the beach huts on the East Cliff Promenade, and the former NCI/coastguard lookout building on East Cliff Promenade. The NCI / coastguard look out building is not recommended as it is not owned by the council.

The report recommends that a new modular public toilet block is located near the beach huts on the East Cliff Promenade.

This report proposes that the new modular toilet block comprises two unisex single toilets and an accessible toilet with a baby change facility. The current public toilet provision is two ladies' toilets and one male toilet with urinal, but no accessible toilet. This proposal improves the accessibility provision of the public toilets.

To Resolve:

1. That Cabinet agrees that new modular public toilets are provided at the East Cliff Promenade, near the new beach huts (Option 2), funded from the existing public toilets budget, and that officers proceed to develop this option through the necessary governance, design and procurement stages.
2. The proposal is that the new modular toilet block consists of one accessible and baby changing facility, and two further toilets. *See SK02 Plans and Elevations.* Total provision three toilets. Costs in this report refer to this size of modular unit.

Next stage in process:

To implement the proposal

1. Introduction

The current public toilets are attached to The King's Hall building and were a late addition, resulting in blocking up pavilion windows on the west side of the building.

As part of The King's Hall refurbishment works the plan is to relocate the public toilets to re-establish the west facing windows which have the best sea views. As part of the refurbishment work, toilet provision within the building is being increased by 35% to meet guidelines for a venue with a capacity of 600 people.

The current public toilet provision at The King's Hall does not include any disabled access provision nor baby changing facility, and this will be provided in the proposed option.

The current public toilets are open Monday to Sunday as follows:

- Summer 1 April to 30 September 07:30 to 20:00
- Winter 1 October to 31 March 07:30 to 16:00.

The new modular toilet units opening times will be the same as above.

This report sets out the location options considered for relocating the public toilets and recommends a preferred site.

2. Detail

Officers assessed three potential locations for the relocated public toilets:

Option 1: Kings Hall site - modular public toilets (Not recommended)
Strengths: The toilet location would remain well known to the public, albeit moved to the other side of the building, and the toilets are currently open all year round.

Weaknesses: The turning circle for emergency vehicles is already tight and does not work for larger vehicles once a bin store is also accommodated alongside the new toilets. Additional drainage, water and electrical works would be required. Any disabled parking provision would become more difficult to provide for due to the smaller area available. The toilet roof may be visible from the residential area above and the addition

of a modular toilet block would be aesthetically damaging to the newly refurbished King's Hall.

Costs would increase because the bank would need to be cut back and a new section of retaining wall built, in addition to the drainage, water and electrical costs. Having public toilets on The King's Hall site may make it less attractive to future operators.

Estimated cost: £150,000 for the modular toilets, plus £35,000 for cutting into the bank, unquantified additional drainage / water /electrical costs and circa £12,000 for the provision of temporary portaloos - as the installation at this site would be impacted by the refurbishment works. This option is significantly more expensive than option 2.

Additional comments: Kings Hall will see a 35% increase in its internal toilet provision, so there will be no need to open public toilets for large events. Patrons of The King's Hall (cafe / bar / events) can use the newly refurbished internal toilets. New public toilet signage will be required for any of the new locations.

Option 2: Near the new beach huts / East Cliff Promenade - modular public toilets (recommended)

Strengths: The location supports a wider range of amenities on the Herne Bay seafront including the new beach huts (30 already built, with permission for a further 54) and is in an ideal position to support the proposed sauna.

This option better maintains a suitable distance between the Herne Bay and Reculver public toilets. This location is only 350 metres (4 - 5 minute walk) from the current public toilet location.

This location also supports the area to the east including visitors to the UKSPF-funded art installations.

This part of the promenade is wide enough (10 metres wide) so can accommodate the modular unit and has vehicle access for any public toilet cleaning contractors. All the necessary utilities are already available.

A modular toilet unit could be installed within around six months, removing the need for temporary portaloos when the current public toilets are closed at The King's Hall - saving circa £12,000.

Weaknesses: Some minor additional drainage works may be required, but this will be limited as drains are close to the location. Severe storms may affect access if significant quantities of shingle are thrown onto the promenade. The modular toilet unit will be placed on a 300mm concrete platform with further 150mm upstand to ensure any storm events are minimised, and the engineering team will be ready to remove the shingle promptly.

Estimated cost: £135,000 (this includes an estimate for the concrete ramp and slab)

Additional comments: New toilets will be provided inside The King's Hall and this proposed location is 350m along the promenade, a 4 - 5minutes walk from the current provision. Other public toilets are available at the Bandstand in Herne Bay and at Reculver. CCTV at the new facility is being considered and would be welcomed, subject to further assessment of cost and timing.

Option 3: NCI & coastguard lookout building, East Cliff Parade (Not recommended)

This option has been discounted as the property was disposed in 2006 on a 99 year lease.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

The proposal supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028 objectives by delivering a **Better** district through investment in and improvement of a key council asset and enhancing the visitor experience, a **Fairer** district through the provision of accessible and inclusive toilet facilities including disabled access and baby changing provision and a **Stronger** district by supporting the wider regeneration and economic activity of Herne Bay seafront.

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

Consultation is not required as the public toilets are being improved and relocated within just 350 metres of the current location so there is no significant change to service delivery.

5. Relocation Options available with reasons for suitability

Officers assessed three potential locations for the relocated public toilets:

Option 1: remaining on The King's Hall site in a modular unit – not Recommended

This is a significantly more expensive option as will require cutting into the bank behind the current bin store and the provision of additional drainage, water and electrical supply.

It also has a significant impact on disabled parking and emergency vehicle access.

Option 2: a new modular unit near the new beach huts on the East Cliff Promenade - Recommended.

Less expensive option (no need for major ground works like at The King's Hall)

Supports the development of this area of the sea front – beach hut users, possible sauna and art developments

Option 3: the former National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) and coastguard lookout building on East Cliff Parade

This option was discounted as Canterbury City Council no longer own this building; it was disposed of in 2006.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 2 - a new modular toilet block near the beach huts on the East Cliff Promenade is recommended as it best supports the council's wider ambitions and increased footfall at the East Cliff Promenade and avoids undermining the improvements at The King's Hall.

It is also the lowest-cost option, at an estimated £135,000, and could be delivered within around six months, potentially avoiding the circa £12,000 cost of temporary portaloos.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

Project costs will be met from existing capital budgets

(b) Legal

For Option 2 the council's Planning Department have confirmed that the modular toilet unit can be delivered under permitted development rights.

(c) Equalities

The preferred option would maintain disabled parking access options at The King's Hall. It also provides new accessible toilets and includes a ramp for disabled access to the raised modular unit.

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

None

Other implications [delete as appropriate]

(e) Staffing resource

This will be delivered by the existing project team

(f) Property portfolio

Option 3 would require re-engaging with the leaseholder of a building sold by the Council in 2006 on a 90-year lease.

For Option 2 (recommended option), Property colleagues have already identified utility routes (water, electricity and drainage) in the area, supporting delivery.

(g) Planning including building regulations.

The proposed modular toilet block constitutes a small ancillary building erected by or on behalf of the local authority on land maintained for public recreational and amenity purposes. The facility is required to support the Council's management and operation of the seafront promenade and falls within the dimensional limitations (4 metres in height and less than 200 cubic metres in volume) contained within Schedule 2 Part 12 Class A of the GPDO 2015. It has been confirmed by CCC planning that the proposal can be delivered under permitted development rights.

The new toilet and ancillary works will comply with current UK Building Regulations.

(h) Human rights issues

None identified.

(i) Crime and disorder

CCTV at the new facility is being considered as part of Option 2 and would be welcomed; the cost and timing of this are still to be assessed.

(j) Safeguarding children

None identified.

(k) Heritage

For Option 1, there was a concern that new toilets on The King's Hall site could be aesthetically damaging to the recently refurbished Kings Hall building, impacting on the heritage value of the building. Option 2 removes that risk

Contact Officers: Tim Odlin & Ann Gardner

Background documents and appendices
Proposed site drawings for the preferred option 2 – East Cliff Parade
Proposed modular unit paper – one disabled and a further two individual toilets. Total of three toilets.

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:

No [delete as appropriate]

Appendix 1 Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Please provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal under each of the headings below. If none, please say so.

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals	Neutral	Neutral – relocation of toilets. Newer facility should reduce water and energy consumption	
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.	Neutral	Neutral – relocation of toilets. Newer facility should reduce water and energy consumption	
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide	Neutral	Neutral – relocation of toilets. Newer facility should reduce water and energy consumption	

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought
- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade

- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact**	**Mitigation**
Positive	If a green modular toilet roof is agreed this enhances wildlife and encourages pollinators	Plant choice will be discussed with Martin Hall if budget allows.
Neutral	Shingle buildup in storms	A 300mm concrete slab will raise the modular unit up to avoid shingle build up in storms. An additional upstand will be built to further mitigate against any shingle movement. The promenade is cleared during storms, so this would be an agreed operational process.

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal? If yes, please give a brief description

The exact specification of the modular unit will be agreed with Management team following the governance sign off.

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

[can be deleted if not relevant after the MT stage]

Please be aware that in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, this document will be made available to the public.

You should treat this as a live document and keep it under continuous review. You should do this by recording any issues you identify, along with any actions you take to minimise their impact.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance to help you in completing this form.

For the purposes of this form, we refer to your policy, function, project or service as a proposal.

We have contact with two groups who can be useful sounding boards as part of any consultation or pre consultation engagement. They are the Disability Advisory Board (DAP) and the Ethnic Minority Independent Council (EMIC), both are local groups. You can contact Matthew Archer for further advice.

Date of initial assessment	27 August 2026
Division	Property
Proposal to be assessed	Relocation of public toilets
New or existing policy or function?	Existing
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	Non statutory
Your name	Ann Gardner
Your job title	Corporate Project Manager
Your contact telephone number	n/a
Decision maker (e.g.Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	TBC
Estimated proposal deadline	October 2026

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	Relocating the public toilets currently at the King's Hall to the proposed new location of the East Cliff Promenade. Relocation is a 4 to 5 minute walk, 350 metres. Affected people – current public toilet users. One key improvement is that a disabled toilet will be included in the new modular unit.

What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example "x% of customers are female" or "x% of customers are aged over 60"	The current public toilets do not have any accessible toilets, so the new toilets will improve this situation as one will be an accessible toilet. Three toilets are proposed. The current configuration is two ladies and two male facilities.

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below?
Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's PSED Technical Guidance

Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	An accessible toilet will be provided, with a baby changing facility, and the two other toilets will be gender neutral.
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	Ditto above
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	Ditto above

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation
Age	Medium	Positive	A ramp will enable easy access for all ages
Disability	High	Positive	The modular unit will include an accessible toilet, with a baby changing facility, and a ramp for easy access for all users.
Gender reassignment	Medium	Positive	The toilets will be gender neutral
Marriage and civil partnership	None		

Pregnancy and maternity	None		
Race	None		
Religion or belief	None		
Sex	Medium	Positive	The toilets will be gender neutral
Sexual orientation	Medium	Positive	The toilets will be gender neutral
Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.			N/A The relocation of the public toilets will give easy access to all walkers and beach users in the area

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	N/A
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	N/A

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	We do not have exact numbers of users of the current public toilets. It is noted that toilet queues are never present outside the current public toilets. It is thought the current proposal will provide suitable and adequate public toilet provision along the sea front near the beach huts.

If a consultation exercise is required as part of your proposal, please complete the consultation planning form on iCan.

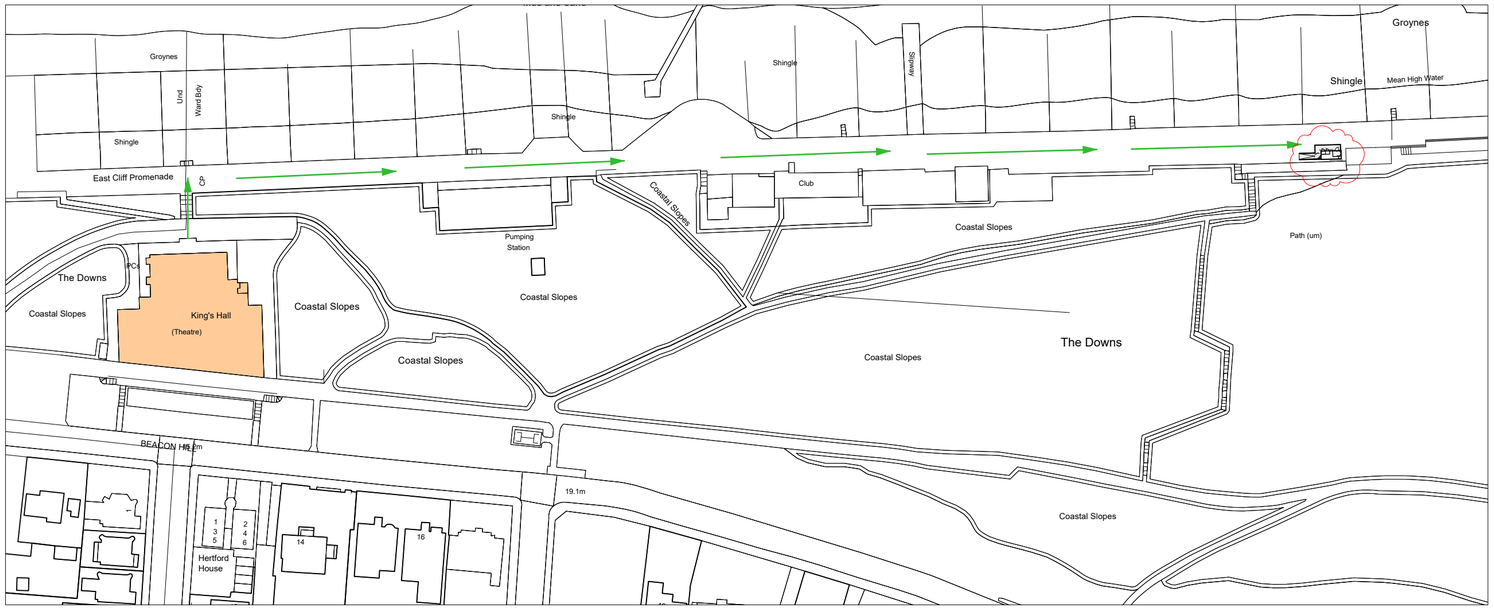
Please update the section below if:
- You have amended your proposal
- You have new information
- You have undertaken consultation

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.
Have you made any changes to your initial assessment? If so, please give brief details	
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	

Should you need to revisit your assessment more than once, please ensure that you provide details of any changes or new information and the date these amendments were made

Appendices:

SK01, SK02, and SK03

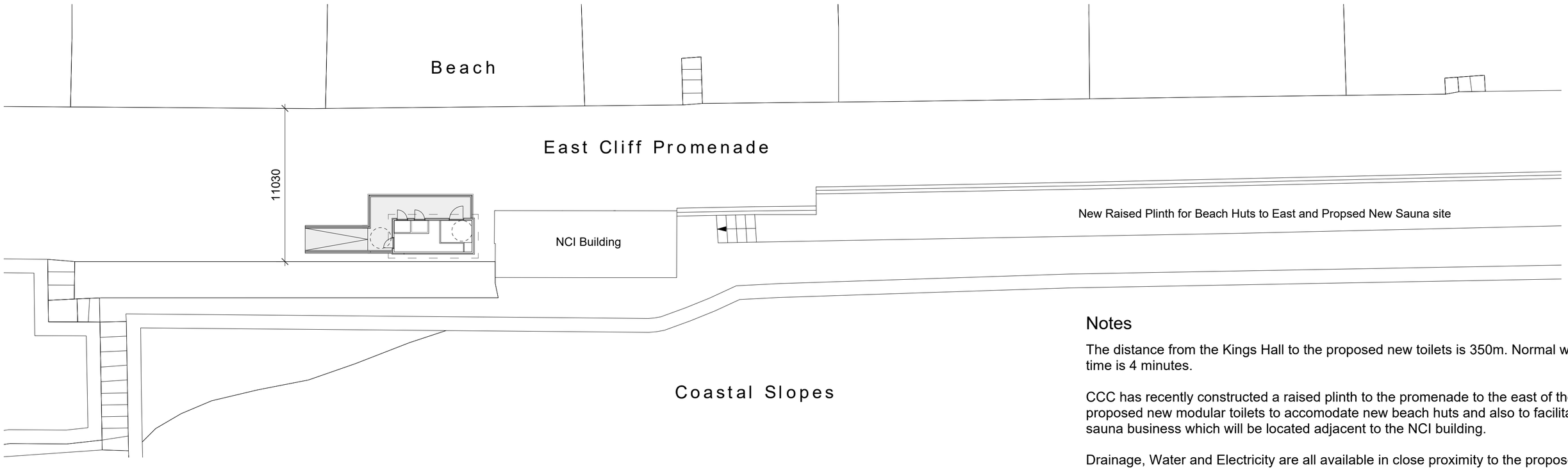


1 Location Plan
Scale: 1:1250

0 50 100m
scale 1:1250



3 Aerial Photograph
Scale: NTS



2 Block Plan
Scale: 1:200

0 2 10m
scale 1:200

N

Notes

The distance from the Kings Hall to the proposed new toilets is 350m. Normal walking time is 4 minutes.

CCC has recently constructed a raised plinth to the promenade to the east of the proposed new modular toilets to accomodate new beach huts and also to facilitate new sauna business which will be located adjacent to the NCI building.

Drainage, Water and Electricity are all available in close proximity to the proposed toilets.

Modular Toilets Herne Bay

drawing no: SK01 revision: ( )

Do not scale. All dimensions to be checked on site prior to fabrication. This is not a construction drawing.

rev:	date:	by:	description:	notes:

project: Herne Bay Toilets
title: Location & Block Plans
job no: xxxx drawn: TO
status: Sketch
date: August 2026
scale: various @ A2

Canterbury City Council
14 Rose Lane
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 2UR

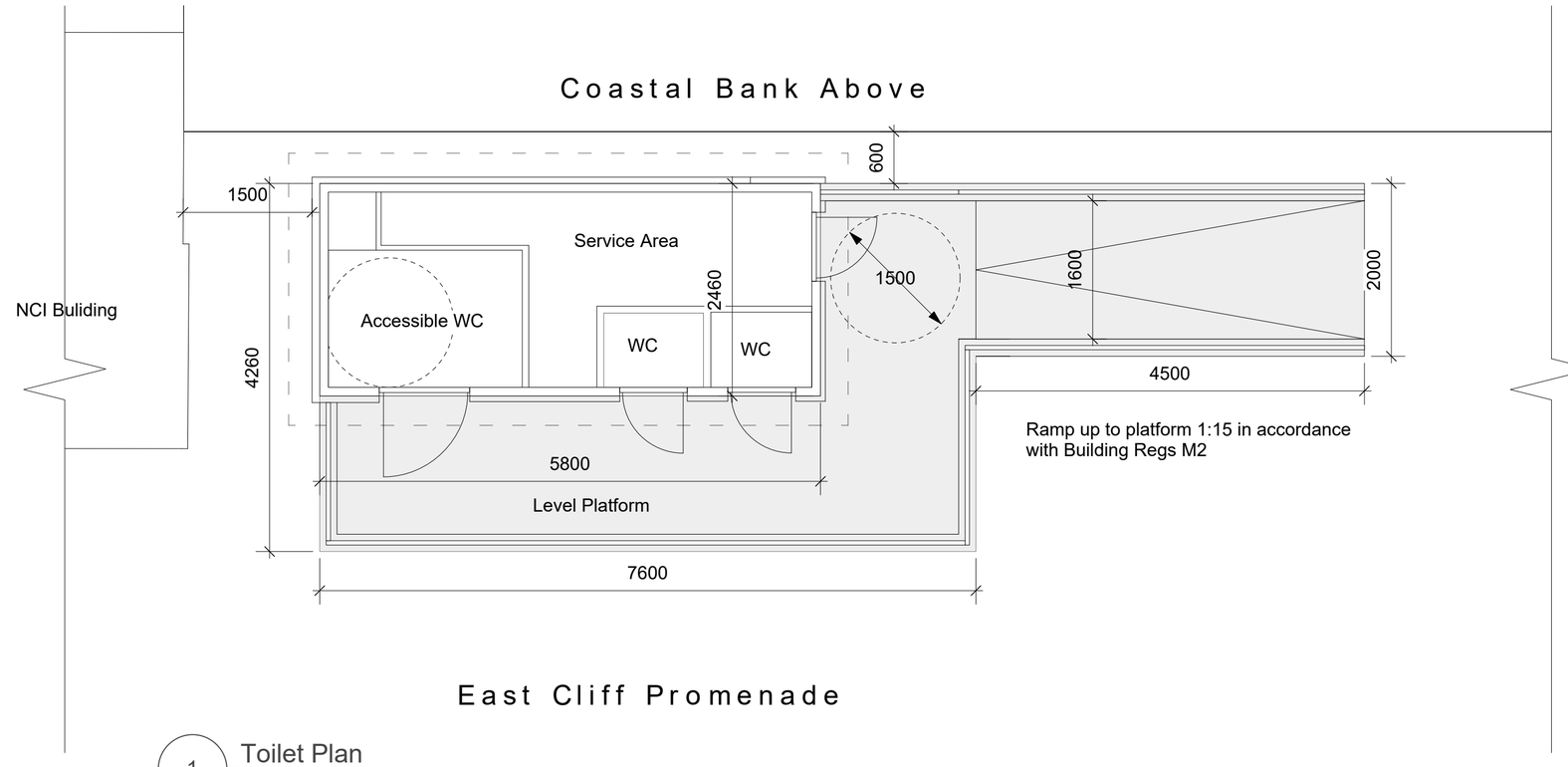
canterbury city council



2 Front Elevation
Scale: 1:50



3 Side Elevation
Scale: 1:50



1 Toilet Plan
Scale: 1:50

N

0 1 5m
scale 1:50

Notes

The new modular toilet block will be constructed on a 300mm high concrete plinth with upstands at 150mm high. Total height at edges 450mm. This will provide protection from shingle/pebbles washing up on the promenade. It will also provide some protection against flooding.

Ramps and handrails will be provided to comply with UK Building Regulations Approved Document M (2) (Access to and Use of Buildings), Approved Document K (Protection from Falling, Collision and Impact) and BS8300.

Modular Toilets Herne Bay

drawing no: SK02 revision: ( )

Do not scale. All dimensions to be checked on site prior to fabrication. This is not a construction drawing.

rev:	date:	by:	description:	notes:

project: Herne Bay Toilets status: Sketch
title: Floorplan & Elevations 1 date: August 2026
job no: xxxx drawn: TO scale: 1:50 @ A2

Canterbury City Council
14 Rose Lane
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 2UR

canterbury city council







Green Roof



CCC's own 'Healthmatic' modular toilet in Canterbury with cement board cladding

Cladding and Roofing Options

A range of cladding and roofing options are available. TBC at detail design.

Site Context



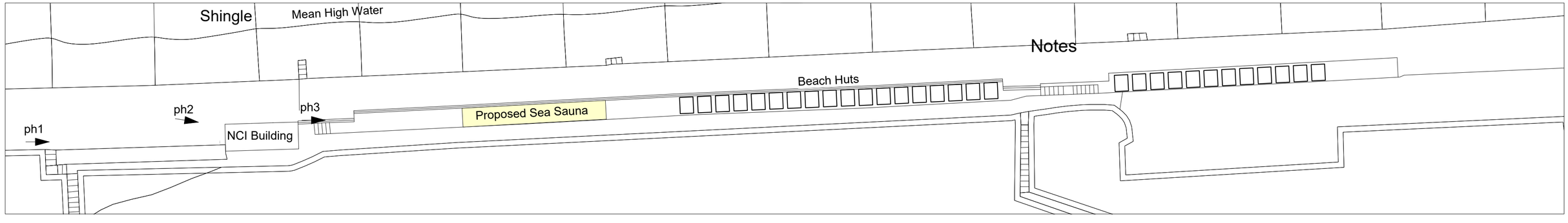
Photograph 1- showing proposed location of new toilets adjacent to NCI Building



Photograph 2 - showing NCI Building looking East



Photograph 3 - showing new plinth constructed for proposed Sea Sauna and Beach Huts



Modular Toilets Herne Bay

drawing no: SK03 revision: ( )

Do not scale. All dimensions to be checked on site prior to fabrication. This is not a construction drawing.

rev:	date:	by:	description:	notes:

project: Herne Bay Toilets
title: Photographs
job no: xxxx drawn: TO
status: Sketch
date: August 2026
scale: NTS @ A2

Canterbury City Council
14 Rose Lane
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 2UR

canterbury city council

Cabinet

Thursday 5 October

Subject:

City & Town Centre Strategies (C&TCS) – next steps

Director and Head of Service:

Bill Hicks, Director of Place

Officer:

Nick Churchill, Senior Economic Development Officer

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Chris Cornell, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Inclusion, Coastal Towns Champion

Key or Non Key decision: Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the Cabinet.

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): All

Summary and purpose of the report:

The city and town centre strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable were adopted by Cabinet on 9 February 2026. The next stage has been to move from strategy adoption into structured delivery planning. The importance of this is heightened by the prospect of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Once the process and timetable for LGR is confirmed Canterbury City Council will likely have limited time, capacity and statutory life remaining before the creation of a successor authority.

This report recommends a three-part delivery framework: project directories for each place, place panels for strategic stewardship and partnership advocacy, and a focused CCC action plan setting out the commitments the council can realistically progress ahead of LGR.

Together these provide a clear bridge between the adopted strategies and practical delivery, helping the council, partners and a future unitary understand what is already committed, what is emerging, what requires partnership support, and what should be carried forward.

On 10 September Overview Committee gave feedback on these proposed next steps, primarily on the creation of place panels. This is summarised in the report.

Overview Committee also recommended to Cabinet that the proposal to create place panels be approved.

To Resolve:

That the Council:

1. establishes place panels for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable; and
2. delegates authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for overseeing the place panels, to:

   a. invite identified local anchor institutions, partnerships and key community organisations to nominate representatives to serve as non-elected members of the panels; and

   b. appoint, following an open invitation for applications, individuals to serve as non-elected members of the panels, with those appointments reported to Full Council for noting.

To Note:

- Project directories for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.
- Canterbury City Council's City & Town Centre Strategies action plan.

Next stage in process:

If approved, officers will promptly move forward to create new place panels as set out in the resolution above, as well as making suitable arrangements for the first panel meetings.

Work will also resume on the project directories and delivery of the action plan.

1. Introduction

The adopted city and town centre strategies set out long-term visions and strategic principles for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. They were developed through evidence gathering and engagement and are intended to provide a shared framework for regeneration, investment, partnership working and place-based decision-making.

Adoption was therefore only the first stage. The more difficult next step is to create a practical system for turning broad strategic ambitions into visible progress, while being honest about capacity, funding, partner dependencies and the council's eventual transition to a successor authority.

The recommended approach is to use three linked tools: project directories, place panels and the CCC action plan. Each has a different function. The directories capture the wider pipeline of potential and live projects. The panels provide strategic stewardship, partnership challenge and advocacy. The action plan identifies a narrower set of actions CCC is committing to progress before a successor authority takes its place. This creates a structured delivery framework without implying that every project is approved, funded or within CCC's gift to deliver.

2. Detail

Overview

The three components should be understood as a single system sitting under the overarching strategies which set the long-term vision and principles for each place. In this way the project directories translate those principles into a broad project pipeline, including council-led, partner-led and community-led proposals. The place panels then

provide a senior, place-based forum to review that pipeline, identify gaps, advise on prioritisation and support advocacy. As part of delivery the action plan sits alongside this as the council's short-term delivery commitment during any transition period.

This matters because the council will not be able to deliver every idea raised through the strategies. Many projects depend on landowners, county council functions, cultural partners, transport bodies, businesses, community organisations, funders or the future unitary authority. The framework therefore gives CCC a disciplined way to distinguish between: projects it is directly committing to; projects it may enable or support; projects that require partnership leadership; and longer-term opportunities that should not be lost through Local Government Reorganisation.

In practical terms, this approach will help preserve corporate memory, support funding bids, give partners a clearer route for bringing projects forward, and provide the successor authority with a more organised starting point. It also gives CCC a basis for managing expectations: inclusion in a directory means strategic relevance, not approval, funding or guaranteed delivery.

The relationship can therefore be summarised as follows: the strategy sets the long-term direction; the project directory captures the pipeline; the place panel reviews, challenges and advocates for the pipeline; and the action plan identifies the specific CCC commitments that can be progressed in the short term.

Project Directories

The project directories are the 'delivery bridge' between the adopted strategies and practical action on the ground. A separate directory has been drafted for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. Each captures a broad long-list of projects that could contribute to the relevant strategy, including council-led activity, partner-led proposals and community or stakeholder ideas.

The projects within the directories have come from a range of sources. During the internal and external engagement undertaken while the city and town centre strategies were being developed, many ideas were put forward as projects that could help the city and towns prosper. The directories capture the ideas submitted that would help each place achieve its respective vision.

However, the project directories are not simply a list of projects. They explain what the directory is for, why partner projects should be included, what information is needed from project leads, what the core inclusion and exclusion criteria are, how proposals will be scored, and how this will be used to support future prioritisation and action planning.

The value of the directories is that they create a shared pipeline rather than a closed council programme. This is important because the strategies are intended to be owned by the places themselves, with CCC acting as an enabler, convenor and delivery partner rather than the only body responsible for action. The directories should therefore make it easier for partners to see how activity connects, where collaboration is needed, and where projects may support funding bids or investment conversations.

The directories are also important tools to help our places make the most of devolution and other external funding opportunities. By having a pipeline of projects that have been clearly articulated and linked to the strategies, the city and towns will be better able to respond quickly and in a targeted way to future funding opportunities or devolved budgets.

It is important to manage expectations clearly. Inclusion in a project directory does not mean that a project is approved, funded, prioritised or owned by CCC. It means that the project appears capable of contributing to the agreed strategy and is sufficiently defined to be captured, compared and reviewed. Some projects will be council-led, some will

require council enabling support, and others will remain primarily for partners, landowners or community organisations to lead.

As well as providing a comprehensive and transparent guide to how CCC has identified projects in each area, the directories will also operate as a corporate memory tool through LGR. Capturing projects consistently, including projects that are completed, paused, removed or rejected with a rationale, will reduce the risk that knowledge is lost during transition. This will be particularly valuable for complex place-based projects where the history of engagement, constraints, dependencies and previous decisions is as important as the current proposal.

The proposed directories use a consistent submission format across all three places. At minimum, each project should identify its lead organisation, location, linked strategy principles, outputs, outcomes, delivery partners, stage, timeframe, dependencies, likely permissions, risks, support needed, cost and funding assumptions, evidence base and confidence in benefits. This will allow different types of projects to be compared fairly, even where some are early ideas and others are already moving towards delivery.

Projects should be included where they clearly fit the relevant strategy, are place-based, have an identified lead or plausible delivery route, can be described consistently, are lawful and appropriate in principle, and go beyond routine business-as-usual activity. Projects should be excluded where there is no clear strategic link, no place impact, no identifiable lead, no realistic delivery route, or where the activity is routine maintenance rather than a time-limited improvement project.

The directories will help CCC and partners to:

- capture projects consistently across the three places;
- show how projects align to the adopted strategy principles;
- identify overlaps, gaps, dependencies and opportunities for collaboration;
- support strategic prioritisation and sequencing;
- strengthen advocacy and funding readiness;
- provide a clear handover record for the successor authority; and
- maintain momentum during the period before and after LGR.

Partner participation will be central to making the directories credible. If the directories only contain council projects, they will understate the scale of activity and reinforce the impression that CCC alone owns delivery. If partners can submit and update their own projects, the directories become a shared place pipeline and a more useful basis for collaboration, investment and advocacy.

To support this, an online form has been developed with the CCC digital team to allow anyone to submit projects for consideration. Submissions will be sent to the Economic Development team inbox, where the team will determine whether the proposed project should be included in the directories. Once the place panels are established, it is envisaged that this role will be delegated to the relevant panel.

Due to their large-size, well-formed draft versions of the three project directories are available to view as **background documents** to this item and not appendices**.** Focus to-date has mainly been on the content of these. However, CCC's Communications team have ensured these current versions are presented in a visually appealing format.

Action Plan

The CCC action plan is different from the project directories. It is not the full pipeline and should not attempt to include every project, idea or partner aspiration. Its purpose is to

identify the specific actions CCC is committing to progress before it is abolished and replaced by a successor authority. Currently this timescale is set to April 2028.

The action plan will:

- focus on projects where CCC has a clear lead, enabling role or committed contribution;
- be realistic about available resource and not include routine business-as-usual activity unless that activity is part of a defined improvement project;
- provide service areas with a clear and manageable list of commitments, rather than a broad wish-list;
- help manage expectations from councillors, partners and place panels by distinguishing committed council action from wider pipeline opportunities; and
- provide a transparent handover record for the successor authority, showing what has been progressed, what remains incomplete and what needs decision-making.

The current draft action plan contains 40 actions across Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable, including development briefs, cultural and heritage projects, transport and active travel schemes, digital and visitor economy activity, inclusive play, markets, health and community initiatives, harbour-related work and coastal events coordination. Many of these activities will be led by teams within the Place directorate. The intention is therefore that the Director of Place owns the action plan, while acknowledging that not every project will sit within that remit.

This breadth is useful, but it also reinforces the need to keep the plan disciplined. The action plan only shows what CCC is prepared to stand behind over the shorter term.

The action plan is not an exhaustive list of all projects being delivered by CCC services; it captures those that will contribute specifically to the visions of the city and town centre strategies. Service areas will continue to have a range of other projects and business-as-usual activity that is not captured in the action plan.

The action plan will provide a practical link between the directories and formal governance. Place panels may recommend additions, changes or future priorities, but those recommendations should not automatically become CCC commitments. They should be considered through normal governance, budget-setting and service planning routes. This protects the council from overcommitting while still allowing the panels to influence future action planning.

Depending on what the LGR position is at April 2028 CCC may wish to develop the next iteration of the action plan (thereby extending the CCC delivery period) at that point. It may also seek to recommend projects for the place panels and/or any successor authority to consider. The draft action plan is enclosed as **Appendix 3**.

<u>Place Panels</u>

The place panels are proposed strategic partnership forums. Their purpose is to keep momentum behind the strategies, bring senior partners together, maintain a strong local voice through LGR, review project pipelines and support strategic advocacy.

The proposed model is for three place-specific panels: one each for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. It reflects the distinct identities, priorities and stakeholder networks of these places. This model mirrors key features of UK Government guidance for place-based boards (e.g. Ramsgate/Dover neighbourhood boards) and partnership governance, while tailoring roles during the initial period to maintain strategic focus.

The place panels will:

- provide strategic stewardship of the adopted strategies;

- review the project directories at a strategic level;
- advise on gaps, overlaps, dependencies and sequencing;
- bring partners together around shared priorities; and
- make recommendations to CCC and, in time, the successor authority.

The panels will not be delivery boards. They should not manage day-to-day project delivery, approve funding, replace council governance or create a parallel decision-making route. Their value lies in strategic challenge, local stewardship, partnership convening and advocacy.

In reviewing the project directories, panels should focus on questions such as:

- Does the project clearly fit the relevant strategy?
- Are there gaps in the pipeline and do any projects duplicate or compete?
- Are there dependencies that need senior partner attention?
- Which projects need convening, feasibility, advocacy or funding support?
- Which projects should be recommended for future action planning?

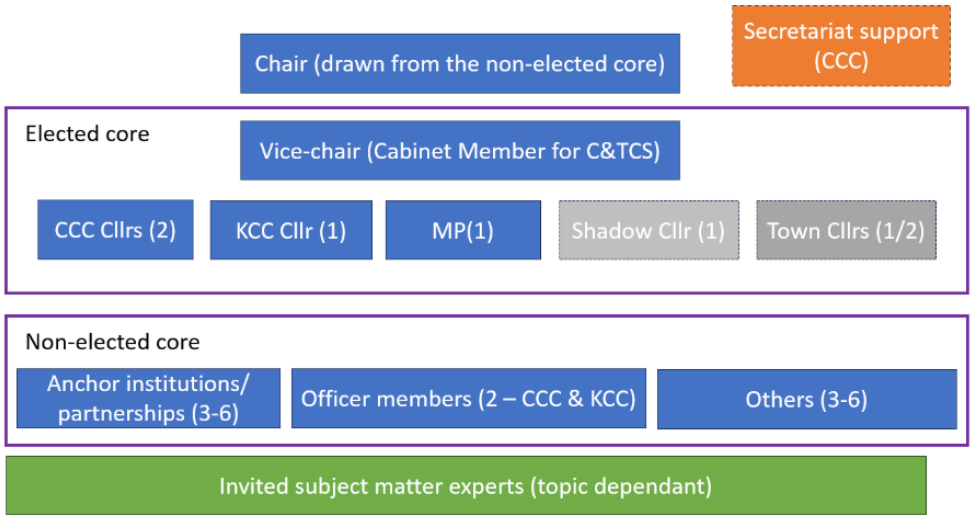
Proposed place panel terms of reference, structure, roles and responsibilities, and operating procedures are included at **Appendix 4.** These clarify the chairing model, meeting cycle, councillor appointment route and relationship to council governance.

Appendix 4 is clear that each panel will normally meet twice a year, with one annual joint session across the three panels to support shared learning. This protects the strategic role of the panels and avoids creating a parallel operational delivery structure.

The terms of reference make clear that panels are advisory and that recommendations remain subject to normal council governance, decision-making and budget-setting arrangements. This is important during the transition period, when democratic accountability, officer capacity and future ownership arrangements must remain clear.

Recommended panel membership includes a chair drawn from the non-elected core membership, the relevant Cabinet Member as vice-chair during the initial phase, two Canterbury City Council councillors appointed through a similar route to outside bodies and multi-agency partnerships, and senior representatives from anchor institutions and relevant public, private, voluntary, community, cultural, education, health, transport and visitor economy partners. Officer support will be provided by CCC, with the role and resource requirement kept proportionate. Figure 1 (below) sets out this structure.

Figure 1: Proposed place panel structure



KCC will be invited to nominate an elected representative for each panel as will shadow

authorities once they are created. Should town councils be established via the community governance review process, the relevant town council(s) will be asked to nominate a representative to take their place on the panel.

Alongside invitations to anchor institutions an 'open and advertised' call will be made to the local community to invite interest from individuals to take up other places on the panels. This will aim to bring people on to the panels with valuable agency, skills, experience and/or insights into the places.

How the directories, place panels and town centre strategies work together

The recommended approach works because these elements have a distinct purpose and a clear relationship. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: How these elements work together



The strategies provide the overarching visions, principles as well as the outcomes. The project directories provide breadth. They capture the long list of projects, ideas and proposals that can deliver against each strategy. The place panels provide stewardship. They create a structured forum for senior partners to review that pipeline, identify strategic priorities and advocate for delivery. The CCC action plan forms one part of the delivery. It provides discipline, identifying what the council itself is committing to progress ahead of any LGR process.

This relationship should help avoid three common risks. First, it avoids the strategies becoming static documents with no delivery mechanism. Secondly, it avoids the project pipeline becoming an unrealistic promise that every idea will be delivered. Thirdly, it avoids place panels becoming operational delivery groups that create additional officer burden without clear governance or resource. This should also be able to help panel memberships clearly understand their role in this system.

The proposed system also supports a smoother transition through LGR. The aim should be to have three published project directories, functioning or established place panels, and a transparent record of CCC's delivery commitments. This will give the

successor authority a stronger basis for deciding which projects to continue, which to pause, which to prioritise and how place-based partnership governance should evolve.

Governance, ownership and transition

During the initial phase, CCC will retain ownership of the project directories and the action plan. This is necessary because the directories need to be prepared, quality controlled and reported through existing governance routes before the panels can take on any meaningful stewardship role. The panels can advise on the directories and action plan but not determine council commitments or budget decisions.

Once the panels are established, they can provide recommendation notes to accompany future governance reports. These should be concise and should explain what the panel recommends, why it matters, which strategy principles are engaged, which partners are relevant, and what risks or dependencies need to be managed. This will give members and senior officers useful place-based insight without confusing advisory input with formal decision-making.

After LGR milestones, including the establishment of shadow and successor arrangements, the role of the panels should be reviewed. At that point, it may be appropriate for panels to take on a stronger stewardship role over the directories and future action planning, but this should be decided deliberately as part of the transition process rather than assumed at the outset.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

- City and town centre strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.
- Returning Pride to our District: Our Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028.
- The strategies are referenced in the draft Local Plan as policies C1 (Canterbury), HB1 (Herne Bay) and W1 (Whitstable).

4. Consultation undertaken

(a) **Public engagement**

A report to Cabinet (9 February 2026) set out the level of public engagement that was carried out to inform the city and town centre strategies. In summary this included:

- Public survey (ran between 4 September to 5 October 2025). Over 350 local stakeholder groups and key individuals were contacted directly, with District Councillors, Parish Councils, and staff encouraged to share the survey widely. 311 responses were received.
- Three community drop-in events were held to gather direct feedback: Canterbury on 21 August (outside The Beaney), Herne Bay on 31 August (during Baytastic at Memorial Park), and Whitstable on 13 September 2025 (outside the South Quay Shed, to coincide with the date of the Whitstable Rocks Oyster Festival).
- Targeted engagement sessions (September and October 2025) to gather input from key local audiences. These included in-person business stakeholder meetings in Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable, followed by online community sessions for each town later in October.
- Strategic stakeholder discussions were also conducted online, and a dedicated

councillor event brought together CCC and KCC representatives at The King's Hall in Herne Bay.

- On 12 December, officers and the cabinet member met with Rosie Duffield MP and Sir Roger Gale MP to allow them to contribute their thoughts to the draft strategies.

(b) **Feedback from Overview Committee**

A report, including the proposal to create place panels and to also comment on the project directories and action plan, was presented to Overview Committee on Thursday 10th September. The committee made two particularly relevant points to bring to the attention of Cabinet:

- Overview committee recommended that Cabinet approves the proposal to create new place panels.
- It also proposed an amended second recommendation to read as follows:
  - *That authority is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the cabinet member to invite public applications from institutions/partnerships and community representatives to join the non-elective memberships of the panels. This should use a process similar to that used to appoint independent members of Whitstable Harbour Board and that they recommend panel members to Council or Appointments Committee (as relevant committee) to be ratified.*

Rationale for the amendment: Overview Committee viewed the creation of panels as a good opportunity to identify high calibre candidates. It proposes that the selection process for place panel membership be broadened. This should encourage a wide range of applications to come forward from different candidates, ensuring the panels take on a mix of ideas, experience and insights. This was considered particularly relevant to Herne Bay which lacks anchor institution coverage and business representative groups. Also Whitstable Harbour Board was identified as a good example of where this approach has worked well.

Response: The amended recommendation from Overview committee has been considered and brought into the report. The recommendation to Cabinet now proposes the council offer an open invitation for applications from individuals to serve as non-elected members of the panels. However following consultation with the Cabinet member, it is suggested that a more streamlined approval process (i.e. of appointed panel members) is adopted. In this respect whereas ratification at Full Council may lead to an unnecessary delay it will instead be notified of the appointments at the next appropriate meeting after the appointment process has concluded. This will help to expedite the appointment process, preventing a delay and allowing arrangements to be confirmed for first panel meetings (e.g. attendees, meeting dates etc). This is also considered to be a proportionate approach given the identified role and function of the place panels.

Other comments received from Overview Committee included:

Committee Comment	Officer Response
Drawing on the recently announced pause to LGR, some councillors felt that we now have more time to create the panels, so we shouldn't rush	In introducing the item the Director for Place had explained that despite the pause, LGR will still happen, therefore we shouldn't alter course. The extra time will help embed the panels and allow refinements to be made

through this process.	with the aim of putting our three places in the strongest possible position when CCC does hand over to a successor authority.
A member commented that the structure of the panels, as proposed (possibly as many as 15-20 people), would be too large to be strategically effective.	The proposed size of the panels generally aligns with neighbourhood boards for example (e.g. Ramsgate has 18 members excluding any TDC officers).
One councillor expressed some confusion around the relationship of the panels with future town councils. He felt that the panels' creation should be considered alongside or as part of the community governance review process.	Officers emphasised that the panels would have a strategic and advisory role. They would aim to add value to existing council governance and future decision-making processes, not replace or displace these.
One member asked how other councillors will be able to engage with the panels.	Officers explained that the panels would include councillors from identified 'town centre' areas. Other councillors could be invited as 'witnesses' to contribute to meetings. i.e. people with important agency, experience and insights into the places. This is in the Terms of Reference.
It was felt that it needs to be clearer where the directories' lists of project ideas have come from.	The report to Overview does briefly explain this. However, in the next iteration of the directories (after Cabinet) officers will make this clearer. To explain that project entries have been sourced from the C&TCS public engagement process from late 2025 plus CCC teams and from recent conversations with its partners.
One councillor commented that the Whitstable directory was currently too focused on projects that promote the town as a visitor destination. This should be balanced with other characteristics (e.g. maritime/ industrial heritage).	The strategies are plans for economic development and sit alongside plans that more specifically focus on resident utility. The Whitstable strategy seeks to better balance the needs of residents and tourists as recommended during the public engagement.
A few councillors made comments at a granular level about specific projects and ideas (from the directories), particularly those which may take place in their wards.	More detailed comments on specific project ideas will be collected by officers and presented to the panels for discussion when these are in place.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

Option 1 (recommended): Approve the establishment of three strategic place panels, underpinned by project directories and a focused CCC action plan. This option

provides the clearest route from strategy adoption to strategic place stewardship, while managing expectations, preserving officer delivery responsibility and supporting transition through LGR.

Option 2 (not recommended): Continue with project directories and an action plan but delay the establishment of place panels. This would reduce immediate governance and resourcing pressure, but would weaken partner ownership, reduce councillor visibility of strategic direction and lose the opportunity to maintain a strong local voice during transition.

Option 3 (not recommended): Rely on existing service planning and do not create place panels, project directories or a specific CCC action plan. This would avoid creating new processes, but would risk the strategies losing momentum, reduce transparency around strategic prioritisation and weaken the handover position for the successor authority.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 is recommended because it creates a coherent strategic stewardship system for the adopted strategies. It recognises that councillors should guide strategic direction, place priorities and partnership legitimacy, while officers remain responsible for delivery planning, project management, resourcing and governance.

The place panel terms of reference provide that balance. They establish panels as advisory strategic partnership forums, chaired by a non-elected member from the core membership, with the relevant Cabinet Member acting as vice-chair. They also set a proportionate meeting cycle, typically of two meetings per year for each panel, supported by one annual joint session across the three panels to help share learnings.

The project directories provide the breadth needed for place-based delivery. They capture the wider pipeline and help partners see how their activity fits into the shared vision. The place panels provide the strategic mechanism needed to keep that pipeline live, locally owned and focused on place outcomes. The CCC action plan provides the officer-led discipline needed to focus council effort before any LGR process.

This approach is also the strongest way to prepare for LGR. It gives the successor authority a structured handover: adopted strategies, organised project pipelines, a record of CCC commitments, and emerging place-based partnership forums. It should therefore improve continuity, preserve corporate memory, strengthen advocacy and reduce the risk that locally important projects lose momentum during governance change.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

The report makes clear that projects within the action plan are those identified as being committed to and deliverable by the council. This period is set to April 2028. Other project ideas included in the directories (but not the action plan) will have strategic relevance, but these will not have council approval or funding at this stage.

(b) Legal

None identified

(c) Equalities

Please refer to appendix 2 to this report

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

Please refer to appendix 1 to this report

Other implications

(e) Staffing resource

The place panels will be created and managed and the directories and action plan monitored and updated within existing staff resource.

(f) Property portfolio

Both the action plan and directories identify projects where key buildings or sites can make a positive contribution to the town centre strategies. Sites may be identified as part of projects in the action plan that are committed to by the council.

(g) Planning including building regulations

Some project ideas identified in the directories may require planning or other permissions. Where known this is indicated as part of the project submission.

(h) Human rights issues

None identified.

(i) Crime and disorder

Some projects in the directories could positively contribute to reducing anti-social behaviour, or where this is a potential risk or issue for a project, it is identified.

(j) Safeguarding children

None identified.

(k) Heritage

Both the action plan and directories include initiatives that support heritage in each place and suggest/present ideas for future heritage related projects.

Contact Officer: Nick Churchill (Senior Economic Development Officer)

Background documents and appendices

Appendix 1 - Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)
Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 3 - Canterbury City Council Action Plan (up to April 2028)
Appendix 4 - Place Panels – terms of reference/operating procedures

Background document - Project directory for Canterbury
Background document - Project directory for Herne Bay
Background document - Project directory for Whitstable

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:
No

Appendix 1 Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Please provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal?

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals	Positive	**Promotion of Sustainable Transport** Directories for all centres propose projects emphasising walking, cycling, and active travel corridors, reducing car dependency and emissions. **Traffic Management and Mobility** Directories propose active travel corridors and park-and-ride improvements to reduce congestion and carbon emissions in the centres. This aligns with CCC operational emission reductions by influencing travel patterns for staff, residents, and visitors. **Green Infrastructure** The directories propose green corridors and reimagined public spaces encouraging active travel and biodiversity. Whitstable's directory has a tree planting pilot for Gorrell. These interventions can sequester carbon and improve resilience, contributing to whole-life carbon benefits. **Building Reuse and Flexible Spaces** Canterbury's directory aims to bring key sites back into productive use promoting meanwhile / pop-up uses. Reusing existing structures avoids embodied carbon from new builds, a whole-life impact.	

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.	Positive	**Shift to Active and Sustainable Transport** All 3x directories promote walking, cycling and active travel corridors, reducing reliance on private cars: Whitstable - green corridor walking and cycling routes reducing car dependency. Canterbury - improve the quality, coherence and safety of walking and cycling routes. Making active travel a key part of the Canterbury experience. These changes can cut transport-related emissions across the district. **Traffic Management and Mobility** Canterbury's directory proposes park-and-ride upgrades and active travel, reducing carbon emissions and congestion. District-wide benefits include reduced vehicle miles and improved air quality. **Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity** The directories include green corridors and reimagined public spaces encouraging active travel and ecological connectivity. These ideas can sequester carbon and mitigate urban heat island effects, contributing to long-term emissions reduction.	

Topic	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation of impact If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	Mitigation
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide		**Reduced Vehicle Emissions Beyond CO_2** The directories include projects that promote active travel and park-and-ride improvements, reducing nitrous oxide (N_2O) emissions from vehicle exhausts, which are strongly linked to combustion in cars and vans. Lower congestion in the city's historic centre and improved walking/cycling routes across all towns will cut short trips, which are disproportionately high in N_2O emissions. **Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity** Introducing green corridors/more planting and reimagined public spaces (Herne Bay and Whitstable) can help capture and oxidize methane in soils and vegetation, albeit modestly. These spaces also reduce urban heat islands, indirectly lowering refrigerant use (CFC/HFC substitutes) in cooling systems. **Adaptive Reuse of Buildings** Focus on reuse of underused spaces and promoting meanwhile uses avoids demolition and new construction, which may involve refrigerants (CFC/HFC) in HVAC systems and nitrous oxide emissions from cement production.	

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact**	**Mitigation**
Positive	Herne Bay's directory include projects to restore and reconnect coastal gems and improve the seafront. These may integrate flood resilience measures (e.g. raised promenades, buffers, shelters). Green corridors, improved surface water management with landscape and public realm improvements and improved connectivity in all towns can help manage surface water and reduce urban flooding risk. The directories propose more green infrastructure and public spaces, that may help reduce urban heat island effects and provide shaded areas for vulnerable populations. Green corridors and active travel routes can enhance biodiversity and pollinator habitats. Reuse of buildings reduces land take and protects natural landscapes. The strategies encourage local businesses and markets which can help to support local food systems and reduce reliance on imports.	

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

[can be deleted if not relevant after the MT stage]

Please be aware that in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, this document will be made available to the public.

You should treat this as a live document and keep it under continuous review. You should do this by recording any issues you identify, along with any actions you take to minimise their impact.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance to help you in completing this form.

For the purposes of this form, we refer to your policy, function, project or service as a proposal.

We have contact with two groups who can be useful sounding boards as part of any consultation or pre consultation engagement. They are the Disability Advisory Board (DAP) and the Ethnic Minority Independent Council (EMIC), both are local groups. You can contact Matthew Archer for further advice.

Date of initial assessment	18 August 2026
Division	Place
Proposal to be assessed	City & Town Centre Strategies – next steps
New or existing policy or function?	New
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	Non-statutory
Your name	Nick Churchill
Your job title	Senior Economic Development Officer
Decision maker (e.g.Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Cabinet
Estimated proposal deadline	October 2026

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	Next steps for City & Town Centre Strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable: - Place Panels; - Project Directories; and - CCC Action Plan. Too much information to outline. Please see strategies and proposals for next steps proposal.
What relevant data or information is currently available about the	All the data pertaining to those in our district as this impacts everyone (e.g. residents, visitors, students, workers etc)

customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example “x% of customers are female” or “x% of customers are aged over 60”	

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below?		
Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	Some project ideas identified may help eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation by embedding inclusivity and equality into the design and delivery. Proposals like the youth hub (Cant & Herne Bay) and the Oast House Community Hub (Cant) aim to create accessible, attractive and safe public spaces where everyone can participate without barriers, reducing the risk of exclusion or intimidation. Initiatives such as co-designing programmes with young people, empowering communities to take ownership of regeneration, and introducing flexible spaces for cultural and social activities foster a sense of belonging and respect for diversity. Economic inclusion is also tackled via support for local and community-owned businesses, creative workspaces, and skills pathways, helping tackle inequalities that often underpin discrimination. Improvements to wayfinding, lighting, and connectivity may lead to safer and more welcoming environments, while cultural programming that celebrates local identity and diversity promotes positive social norms.
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	Projects across the strategies and directories etc can advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. They do this by prioritising inclusive design and participation. For example, the strategies commit to creating accessible, attractive and safe public

		spaces and improving connectivity, which benefits people with disabilities, older residents, and those with limited mobility. They also emphasise co-designing cultural and leisure programmes with young people and empowering communities to shape regeneration, ensuring that groups who might otherwise be marginalised have a voice in decision-making. Additionally, proposals to improve or expand business workspace provision, provide skills pathways, and support local traders help reduce economic barriers for underrepresented groups, including women, ethnic minorities, and younger people. By embedding accessibility, participation, and economic inclusion across the strategies, they create conditions where individuals with protected characteristics can access the same opportunities as others, fostering fairness and reducing structural disadvantage.
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	The proposal can foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by aiming to create shared, inclusive spaces and experiences that encourage interaction and mutual understanding. For example accessible, attractive and safe public spaces, cultural programming, and community events that bring diverse groups together in positive settings are proposed. Initiatives such as co-designing programmes with young people and empowering local communities to shape regeneration ensure that different voices are represented, reducing barriers and promoting respect across demographic lines. Additionally, by supporting local businesses, creative industries, and

		skills pathways, the proposal may help reduce economic inequality and create opportunities for collaboration between groups who might otherwise be socially or economically segregated. Cultural events and destination branding that celebrate the district's heritage and diversity also play a role in challenging stereotypes and building shared pride in place. Together, these measures create environments where people from different backgrounds can interact safely and positively, fostering understanding and good relations.

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation
Age	High	Positive	The proposed projects can have a positive impact by creating inclusive spaces and programmes for all ages, with emphasis on youth engagement through co-design and skills pathways, and improvements that benefit older people through better accessibility and active travel options.
Disability	High	Positive	Highly relevant and positive impact: proposals to make town centres accessible, improve wayfinding, and create safe, welcoming public spaces directly support people with physical and sensory impairments.
Gender reassignment	Low	Positive	Minimal direct impact, but inclusive design and community engagement principles can help ensure town centres feel safe and welcoming for trans and non-binary individuals.
Marriage and civil partnership	None		
Pregnancy and maternity	Medium	Positive	Positive impact through improved pedestrian environments, seating, and accessible

			routes, making town centres easier and safer for parents and carers with young children.
Race	Low	Positive	Positive potential: cultural programming and inclusive events can celebrate diversity and foster belonging, though impact depends on active engagement with minority ethnic communities.
Religion or belief	Low	Positive	Minimal direct impact, but public spaces for community events and cultural activities can provide opportunities for interfaith engagement and respect for different beliefs.
Sex	Low	Positive	Indirect positive impact: safer, well-lit public spaces and improved connectivity can enhance safety and comfort for women and girls, reducing risks of harassment.
Sexual orientation	Low	Positive	Minimal direct impact, but inclusive cultural programming and community engagement can help create welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ individuals.
Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.	Medium	Positive	There are project ideas identified across the directories (e.g. skills, employment) which may benefit low-income households, long term unemployed, NEETs etc.

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	No. We would not make changes because the strategies already embed principles of inclusion, accessibility, and community engagement, and no significant negative impacts on people with protected characteristics were identified. Instead, the proposals generally have a positive or neutral effect, meaning they align with equality duties without requiring fundamental alterations. The directories are also active,

	live documents so new projects may offer new or different benefits to other groups.
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	There are no significant negative impacts identified that cannot be minimised or removed through inclusive design, engagement, and accessibility measures.

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	To strengthen the Equality Impact Assessment, additional information such as local demographic data, current accessibility audits, and feedback from protected groups would help identify specific needs and barriers. Socio-economic data, safety statistics, and representation of cultural and faith communities would also clarify how proposals affect equality and inclusion.

If a consultation exercise is required as part of your proposal, please complete the consultation planning form on iCan.

Please update the section below if:

- You have amended your proposal
- You have new information
- You have undertaken consultation

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.
Have you made any changes to your initial assessment? If so, please give brief details	The town centre strategies were co-created with the community, as outlined in the above report. The directories will invite new project ideas from the community where these align with the strategies. The Place Panels will also include community representatives and invite other specialist interests as expert witnesses/evidence providers etc
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	Yes, public engagement, as above.
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	No.
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	As above.
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these	The proposals were developed along with members of the community who have protected characteristics.

findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	No.

Should you need to revisit your assessment more than once, please ensure that you provide details of any changes or new information and the date these amendments were made

Appendix 3

Canterbury City Council

City & Town Centre (Strategies) Action Plan 2026-2028

Place	Action	Description	Delivery Teams	Timeframe
Canterbury	Wincheap Development Brief (3.7 in Project Directory)	Early development brief and evidence, building on the draft Local Plan policy, that will articulate what the site could become, test realistic options, identify constraints and opportunities, and create a clearer basis for future decisions, land assembly, feasibility, viability, engagement and investment.	Planning Policy and Property & Regeneration	Apr 2028
Canterbury	Sidney Cooper Gallery (8.3 in Project Directory)	Secure the long-term future for Sidney Cooper Gallery as a working gallery and arts learning space in line with its charitable purpose.	Culture, Leisure and External Development (CLED) and Property & Regeneration	Dec 2026
Canterbury	UNESCO City of Literature bid (5.1 in Project Directory)	Explore and coordinate a long-term programme supporting a potential UNESCO City of Literature bid for Canterbury, building on the city's literary heritage, universities, cultural institutions and contemporary creative sectors.	CLED	Jan 2027
Canterbury	Former Debenhams site (3.1 in Project Directory)	Work with the building owners to bring the former Debenhams department store complex back into productive use.	Planning	Updates to Apr 2028

Canterbury	Former Nasons (Bigglestone Yard) (3.3 in Project Directory)	Work with the building owners to bring the former Nasons department store site back into productive use as Bigglestone Yard.	Planning	Updates to Apr 2028
Canterbury	Hopper buses (2.4 in Project Directory)	Develop a frequent hopper bus service linking locations such as Canterbury's railway stations, park & ride sites, university campuses, edge-of-centre neighbourhoods and key city centre destinations.	Transport & Environment	Apr 2028
Canterbury	Wincheap park and ride expansion (2.1 in Project Directory	Work towards expanding Wincheap Park & Ride onto the Canenco site to safeguard and increase capacity, responding to the planned loss of spaces from the A2 slip road and rising demand.	Transport & Environment	Jan 2028
Canterbury	Riverside active travel – phase 2 & 3 (7.5 in Project Directory)	A phased programme to extend and complete a high-quality riverside walking and cycling route linking the city centre and Riverside area. Phase 2 covers the section from Asda to Vauxhall Avenue. Phase 3 extends the route to Vauxhall Road, including a bridge over the river and a route around the southern and eastern perimeter of the Audi garage.	Transport & Environment	Apr 2028

Canterbury	Riverside active travel – phase 4 (7.5 in Project Directory)	Development of concept to continue the route eastwards from Phase 3 by crossing Vauxhall Road and then running through the service strip in the field just south of Shalloak Road to meet the Sturry Link Road, which includes a cycleway/footway within its design.	Transport & Environment	Updates on progress for Apr 2028
Canterbury	Digital infrastructure review (8.1 in Project Directory)	Review the current digital connectivity and infrastructure position across Canterbury city centre, working with infrastructure providers, businesses, universities and public sector partners to identify gaps and scope future improvements to cellular, fixed line broadband, public Wi-Fi and digital capacity.	Economic Development	Review in place by Dec 2027
Canterbury	DWP youth hub (employability & skills offer) (1.10 in Project Directory)	Facilitate the creation of a dedicated, youth-friendly employment, skills and wellbeing support space for 16- to 24-year-olds. The hub would be delivered with DWP as part of the Youth Offer, with work coaches and local partners providing tailored support in a setting that feels more approachable than a Jobcentre.	Communities & Economic Development	Apr 2028
Canterbury	Via Francigena (6.4 in Project Directory)	Maximise visitor economy opportunities of the Via Francigena assembly (May 2027) and other pilgrimage-based activities via Visit Canterbury (& partners).	Economic Development	Up to Sept 2027

Canterbury	Heritage Lighting Strategy (4.2 in Project Directory)	A strategy that sets a clear, consistent framework for how street lighting should be designed, specified, installed, refurbished and maintained across the city's historic areas.	Planning & Heritage	Dec 2027
Canterbury	Poor Priests Hospital (4.5 in Project Directory)	Conserve and re-present the site's nationally significant medieval spaces, embed new interpretation and artworks, and create The Hive as a long-term home for the Marlowe Theatre's learning and participation work. The scheme will also introduce community-use spaces, public events and a riverside café.	CLED and Property & Regeneration	Sustained progress towards project's delivery by Apr 2028
Canterbury	Festival forum / toolkit (5.3 in Project Directory)	Create a Festival Forum and practical event toolkit supporting coordination, collaboration and growth across Canterbury's festivals and events sector. The project would provide shared guidance, networking opportunities, event planning resources and support for organisers while helping improve programming coordination and reduce duplication.	CLED	Apr 2028
Herne Bay	Widen inclusive play at Memorial Park (5.4 in Project Directory)	Play area to be extended and upgraded to provide a high quality inclusive and accessible play area for Herne Bay and the wider district.	Transport & Environment	Dec 2026
Herne Bay	Seafront play area upgrade (5.5 in Project Directory)	Full upgrade of the existing Herne Bay seafront play area to create a high-quality,	Transport & Environment	Apr 2028

		inclusive and attractive destination play space for children and families.		
Herne Bay	King's Hall refurbishment (4.1 in Project Directory)	Major refurbishment of The King's Hall to secure the long-term future of one of Herne Bay's most important heritage and cultural assets, improve the visitor experience, and strengthen its role within the wider seafront and town centre economy.	CLED	Sep 2027
Herne Bay	The King's Hall creative skills hub (6.1 in Project Directory)	A skills-led cultural partnership centred on The King's Hall and developed in collaboration with East Kent Colleges Group to create practical learning, training and progression opportunities linked to theatre, live events, production and the wider creative industries. The project would use The King's Hall as a real-world learning environment where local students can develop technical, creative and operational skills connected to live performance and venue management.	CLED and Economic Development	Apr 2028
Herne Bay	Central Bandstand refurbishment (4.3 in Project Directory)	A programme to complete essential structural repairs and final enabling works that bring the Central Bandstand back into full use, including reopening the stage for live performance and improving the functionality of the bandstand complex for year-round activity.	Property & Regeneration	Jan 2027

Herne Bay	Market review & refresh (7.3 in Project Directory)	Revisit previous review of Herne Bay (Mortimer St) retail market. Identify and implement some early refresh related improvements. Also help to raise awareness of other market offers in Herne Bay (e.g. food, specialist).	Economic Development	Initial delivery by Nov 2026. Continuing up to April 2028
Herne Bay	Voids management toolkit (1.1 in Project Directory)	Develop a toolkit to help tackle key empty units in town centre. To be centred on Mortimer St and areas connecting it to seafront (e.g. William St) and to the High St.	Economic Development	Developed by Nov 2026
Herne Bay	Herne Bay health hubs (5.1 in Project Directory)	Introduction of a flexible Herne Bay Health Hubs model that brings health, wellbeing, advice and community support into accessible venues across the town.	Communities	Apr 2028
Herne Bay	Banking hub (1.2 in Project Directory)	Help embed a new permanent hub into town centre. Working with landlord/agent, Link UK and participating banks. Help find a shared space for a temporary hub if permanent one is unlikely to be operational by Nov 2027.	Economic Development	Aim for operational permanent hub by Nov 2027 Temporary hub identified by Dec 2026 (if required)
Herne Bay	Land train (3.5 in Project Directory)	Review of summer 2026 Land Train pilot, report findings and recommend next steps.	Economic Development	Jan 2027

Herne Bay	Hydrothermal bathing (5.7 in Project Directory)	Facilitate a seafront concession for a hydrothermal bathing facility on Herne Bay's eastern esplanade, expected to include a sauna and potentially complementary elements such as cold-water plunge/ice bath and/or hot tubs, subject to operator proposal and approvals.	Property & Regeneration	Operator selected by Oct 2026
Herne Bay	Community art & culture trail refresh (3.2 in Project Directory)	Review current trail with a view to refresh and update information. Relaunch the trail using the new Canterbury & Coastal digital hub.	Economic Development, CLED	Start by Apr 2028
Herne Bay	Clocktower Square concession (4.5 in Project Directory)	To align with a new concessions policy, seek to identify an activation opportunity / series of opportunities for Clocktower Square.	Property & Regeneration, Economic Development	Apr 2028
Herne Bay & Whitstable	Coastal events forum (7.1 in in Herne Bay Project Directory) (6.1 in Whitstable Project Directory)	Establish a coordinated Coastal Events Forum for Herne Bay and Whitstable to bring together organisers, venues, businesses, cultural organisations, community groups and public agencies involved in events and programming across the towns.	CLED	Apr 2028
Whitstable	Town wayfinding (first phase) (5.1 in Project Directory)	Deliver a refreshed Whitstable wayfinding scheme focused on replacing, rationalising and adding pedestrian fingerposts and associated signage across the town centre, harbour, seafront and Tankerton.	Transport & Environment	Apr 2027

Whitstable	Crab and Winkle Way extension (2.4 in Project Directory)	Complete the next stage of the Crab and Winkle Way extension in Whitstable, creating a continuous high-quality walking, cycling and wheeling route from the north side of Whitstable railway station towards the harbour, following the line of the former Crab and Winkle railway as closely as possible.	Transport & Environment	Apr 2028
Whitstable	Harbour EdShed/ community classroom (4.3 in Project Directory)	Embed the EdShed at Whitstable Harbour as a dedicated learning and community classroom space that coordinates education, environmental stewardship and maritime heritage activities across the harbour estate.	Whitstable Harbour/Engineering (Foreshore)	Apr 2028
Whitstable	Heritage Harbour status bid (4.4 in Project Directory)	Work with maritime heritage partners to secure Heritage Harbour status for Whitstable and use the designation as a platform for celebrating and sustaining the town's working maritime identity.	Whitstable Harbour/ Engineering (Foreshore), CLED	Apr 2028
Whitstable	Harbour welcome experience (1.4 in Project Directory)	Deliver a coordinated harbour signage, welcome and interpretation project that improves the appearance, legibility and accessibility of Whitstable Harbour, with a specific focus on improving the appearance and access to the Harbour from its southern boundary.	Whitstable Harbour /Engineering (Foreshore), CLED	Apr 2028
Whitstable	Wet fish concession (4.2 in Project Directory)	Establish a wet fish concession at Whitstable Harbour focused on local catch, maritime	Whitstable Harbour /Engineering	Dec 2026

		food culture and the working harbour economy.		
Whitstable	Whitstable Harbour development brief preparation (5.2 in Project Directory)	Prepare for the development of a comprehensive development brief for the Whitstable Harbour mixed-use broad location, building on the draft Local Plan policy, to guide the sensitive regeneration and redevelopment of this strategically important part of Whitstable.	Planning Policy and Property & Regeneration	Apr 2028
Whitstable	Sound map (5.3 in Project Directory)	Support the development of a Whitstable maritime coastal soundwalk and digital sound map. The project will create a free-to-access, GPS-triggered audio experience delivered through a smartphone platform, enabling residents and visitors to explore Whitstable's harbour and coastline through layered sound, music, oral histories, creative writing and environmental recordings.	Engineering (Foreshore), CLED & Economic Development	Jan 2027
Whitstable	Gorrell Ward Tree Planting Action Plan (pilot) (1.7 in Project Directory)	Gorrell to be a pilot Ward Action Plan area to increase tree provision where canopy cover is below district average. To include planting locations, numbers of trees to be planted and partner projects.	Transport & Environment	Plan in place by Apr 2027
All	Canterbury & Coast Digital Hub	Support roll out of new digital hub helping to maximise business participation and ensuring CCC spaces/facilities are strongly promoted.	Economic Development	From July 2026 through summer/ autumn into 2027

All	Place Panels	Setting up place panels for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.	Corporate Governance (with support from across CCC)	By Apr 2027

Appendix 4

City and Town Centre Strategy Place Panels

Contents of this document:

- Overview (inc. membership)
- Terms of Reference
- Structure
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Operating Procedures
- Appendix 1 – Best practice alignment

Overview

The place panels aim to support the long-term success of Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable by providing strategic, place-based forums that help champion, shape and sustain delivery of the adopted city and town centre strategies. Their key role is to keep momentum behind the agreed vision for each place and support continued partnership working across sectors.

The overarching objectives are to:

- provide strategic stewardship for the city and town centre strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable;
- bring together councillors, partners and stakeholders to support joined-up, place-led working;
- help shape future priorities, action planning and advocacy in support of each place; and
- maintain continuity and local influence through local government reorganisation and future governance change.

Membership

Each place panel will have a chair, include elected members and a cross-section of senior representatives from relevant public, private, voluntary, community, cultural, education and other partner organisations. The chair will be drawn from the non-elected members of the groups. Officer support will be provided by the council. Membership will be tailored to the circumstances of Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable respectively.

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the place panels is to provide strategic, place-based forums that support delivery of the adopted city and town centre strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.

The panels will help champion the agreed vision for each place, support collective advocacy and partnership working, and maintain local stewardship of the strategies as more detailed delivery plans emerge.

2. Status

The place panels are informal strategic partnership forums. They are advisory in nature and do not replace formal council decision-making or governance processes.

The panels will provide strategic input, advocacy and stewardship in support of the adopted city and town centre strategies, but recommendations made by the panels will remain subject to the council's normal governance, decision-making and budget-setting arrangements.

3. Scope and areas of focus

The place panels will support the strategic delivery of the adopted Canterbury city centre strategy and the Herne Bay and Whitstable town centre strategies.

Their scope is to help maintain focus on the agreed long-term vision, priorities and strategic principles for each place, while supporting joined-up partnership working and local stewardship as more detailed delivery plans, project pipelines and future action plans emerge.

Areas of focus will be:

- championing the adopted vision, priorities and strategic direction for each place;
- helping maintain momentum and a strong local voice during local government reorganisation and wider governance change;
- supporting joined-up working between councillors, partners and stakeholders;
- identifying strategic opportunities, barriers and enabling actions relevant to the success of each place; and
- informing future project prioritisation, delivery planning and advocacy; and

- supporting continued place-based stewardship of the strategies as they evolve over time.

4. Membership

Each place panel will include elected members and a cross-section of senior representatives from relevant partner organisations and sectors.

Membership should reflect the need for a broad range of voices and perspectives, including representation from public, private, voluntary, community, cultural, education and other relevant interests.

Membership will be tailored to the circumstances of Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable respectively.

Council officers will provide support to the panels and may attend meetings in an advisory capacity.

5. Meetings

Each panel will normally meet on a bi-annual basis (6-monthly), with a coordination meeting of the three panels to be held annually.

A chair will be appointed for each panel from the non-elected core of the panel members, with the relevant CCC Cabinet member acting as vice-chair.

Meetings will focus on strategic discussion, shared priorities, key updates, emerging opportunities and barriers, and any recommendations or actions arising.

The panels may invite additional contributors or witnesses to attend specific meetings where this would support discussion or provide relevant expertise.

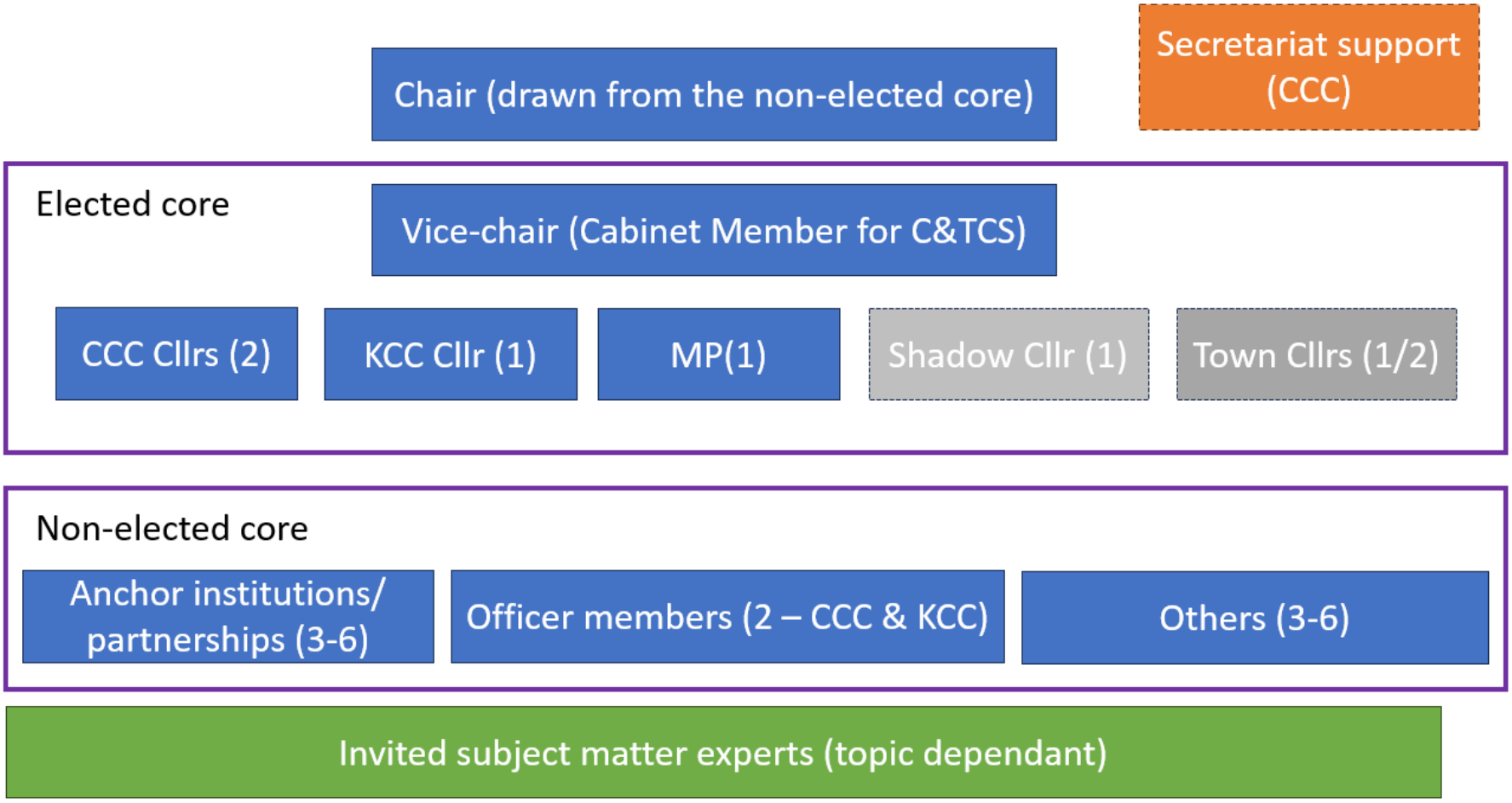
6. Timeline

The place panels will be established to support the next phase of work following adoption of the city and town centre strategies.

Their role and operation may evolve over time in response to local government reorganisation, future governance arrangements, available capacity and emerging delivery priorities.

The terms of reference should be kept under review and updated where necessary to reflect changes in context, governance or purpose.

Structure


Chair (drawn from the non-elected core)
Secretariat support (CCC)
Elected core
Vice-chair (Cabinet Member for C&TCS)
CCC Cllrs (2)
KCC Cllr (1)
MP(1)
Shadow Cllr (1)
Town Cllrs (1/2)
Non-elected core
Anchor institutions/ partnerships (3-6)
Officer members (2 – CCC & KCC)
Others (3-6)
Invited subject matter experts (topic dependant)

Roles and responsibilities

Chair

A different Chair will lead each of the three Place Panels, helping to ensure they are visibly place-led, balanced and able to bring together a broad range of voices around the shared ambitions of the city and town centre strategies. The Chair will be elected by the group at its first meeting. This approach reflects established government good practice for place-based boards and neighbourhood governance, where chairs are used to provide impartial leadership, encourage constructive challenge and help maintain confidence that discussions are being shaped in the interests of the place rather than any single organisation or political perspective. The Chair should therefore be someone with a strong connection to the city or towns, demonstrable leadership ability, the credibility to champion the places locally and beyond, and the ability to convene partners, residents and stakeholders around a common purpose. The role requires someone collaborative, trusted and community-focused, and the Chair must not be an elected representative.

Purpose:

1. To lead the Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable Place Panels to help shape future priorities, action planning and advocacy in support of each place, guided by the city and town centre strategies;
2. To be the lead advocate of the Place Panels and strategies at a local, regional and national level;
3. To Chair the Place Panels and drive the debate and discussion to ensure that they maintain their strategic focus, that decisions are made in a timely manner, that pace of delivery is maintained and that engagement with our communities is robust and an embedded part of the Panel's programme;
4. To guide and work with Canterbury City Council (as the Accountable Body) on the strategic use of any secured funding and have oversight of the project programmes and action plans;
5. To support the appointment of Place Panel members, ensuring that Panel members act with neutrality and conflicts of interest are identified and addressed;
6. To ensure that the Panel is diverse, dynamic and dedicated, focussed on the purpose and allows for transparency upholding Nolan principles of public life: integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership;
7. To uphold the Terms of Reference of the Place Panels (once adopted); and
8. To represent and be a champion of the Place Panels and the city and town centre strategies and be the face of the Panel within the local community, the media and with partners.

Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair will be the relevant Canterbury City Council Cabinet Member, providing a clear link between the panel's place-led discussions and the council's formal decision-making processes. This arrangement complements the role of the chair by combining impartial convening and broad-based partnership leadership with democratic accountability and institutional connection.

In practice, the Vice-Chair will help ensure that panel discussions are well connected to council priorities, governance routes and delivery mechanisms, so that recommendations can be translated more effectively into action where appropriate. This reflects wider government good practice in place-based boards and neighbourhood governance, where strong partnership working is supported by an accountable body and clear democratic oversight.

The Vice-Chair will therefore play an important role in championing the panel's work within the council, helping align it with emerging programmes, policy and investment decisions, and strengthening the panel's ability to influence delivery rather than operate solely as a forum for discussion.

Elected members

Canterbury City Council elected members will be drawn from councillors representing the Canterbury district. This will be achieved via nominations from political group leaders, which are then ratified by Group Leaders or Appointment Committee in line with the appointments process for multi-agency partnerships. The outcome will be reported to Full Council.

KCC will be invited to nominate an elected representative for each panel as will shadow authorities once they are created. Should town councils be established via the community governance review process, the relevant town council(s) will be asked to nominate a representative to take their place on the panel. The local MP to the city and towns will also be eligible to sit on the panels.

Anchor institutions

Anchor institutions will be senior representatives of organisations with a strong, long-term stake in the success of each city or town centre and the capacity to influence investment, activity, reputation or stewardship. Their inclusion reflects good practice in place-based boards and neighbourhood governance, which emphasises the value of bringing together public, private, cultural, education, health, heritage and community anchors so that strategy delivery is informed by those institutions most closely connected to the life and future of the place along with the themes and priorities identified in the relevant strategy.

Anchor institutions will be invited to join the panel, initially by Canterbury City Council. The Director of Place and relevant Cabinet portfolio holder will decide on the precise number and identity of those to be invited onto the panel upon its inception.

In Canterbury, possible invitees could include organisations such as the Business Improvement District, Canterbury Cathedral, the universities and The Marlowe Theatre. In Whitstable and Herne Bay, the relevant anchor institutions will reflect the distinct economic and social role of each town.

In Whitstable, membership could include strategic voices linked to the harbour, major land and property stewardship, hospitality, visitor economy and the oyster industry. In Herne Bay, anchor institutions are more likely to reflect the town's strategic priorities around skills, health, community resilience and coastal regeneration, for example education, employment and health partners alongside locally rooted trusts and civic organisations.

The council's destination marketing initiative Visit Canterbury is also likely to have a role on the Whitstable and Herne Bay panels in view of the importance of tourism to both places. Collectively, anchor institution members should help ensure each panel is grounded in the realities of the place, connected to major partners and able to support coordinated action, advocacy and long-term stewardship.

Others

Other members will be appointed to the non-elected core of the panels following a recruitment process. The role of these members is to address any gaps in the panel's overall balance of skills, experience, sectors or community perspectives.

This category may include voluntary and community sector representatives, local civic or neighbourhood organisations, specialist advisers, or other strategic voices whose inclusion would strengthen the panel's understanding of the place and the communities it serves.

To help capture a broad range of voices, skills, experience and/or insights into the places, CCC will invite applications from interested candidates via openly advertised 'calls'. The recruitment process will be based on that used by CCC to appoint independent members to Whitstable Harbour Board and by other local authorities to recruit members to (Pride in Place) neighbourhood boards. This process will be overseen by the Director of Place and Cabinet portfolio holder who will shortlist and decide on the precise number of those to be appointed to the panels.

The intention is that these appointments will complement, rather than duplicate, the other core members of the group, helping ensure that each panel remains well-rounded, locally credible and able to reflect the diversity of interests needed to support effective place stewardship.

Officer members

Officer members will provide a strategic advisory and enabling link between the panel and the public bodies responsible for policy, delivery, coordination and transition planning. Consistent with good practice for place-based boards, officers will not displace the independent, partnership-led nature of the panel, but will help ensure that discussions are informed by up-to-date intelligence, aligned with wider programmes and connected to the practical realities of delivery and governance.

It is proposed that officer membership should include the Director of Place at Canterbury City Council and the Head of Economy at Kent County Council, recognising the importance of district, county and future transition considerations in shaping the success of the city and town centre strategies.

Officers may nominate substitutes where necessary to maintain continuity and ensure meetings remain appropriately informed. Their role will be to support strategic discussion, advise on governance and delivery interfaces, help connect the panel to relevant council and partner activity, and provide continuity through local government reorganisation and future institutional change.

City and Town Centre Strategies Place Panel Operating Procedures

1. Name and coverage

Three place panels will be established:

- Canterbury city place panel;
- Herne Bay town place panel; and
- Whitstable town place panel.

This builds on a recommendation in the city and town centre strategies to establish place panels that reflect distinct local identities, priorities and stakeholder networks.

To retain shared learning on broader issues, the chairs (or nominated vice-chairs) will hold a ‘city and town centre coordination session’ once per year.

2. Purpose

The place panels are strategic partnership forums that help keep delivery place-led by bringing together councillors and senior local partners to provide strategic steer, advocacy and accountability for delivery of the city and town centre strategies.

They exist to:

- provide strategic steer on priorities, sequencing, enabling actions and advocacy to support delivery;
- help maintain a clear ‘handover picture’ through local government reorganisation and transition to a new unitary authority;
- support strategic advocacy, including coordinated messaging and (where appropriate) lobbying and engagement with regional and national partners to increase political and government interest in the three urban areas; and
- review and advise on the emerging project pipeline and action planning, ensuring these remain aligned to strategy principles and local priorities without becoming an operational delivery forum.

3. Guiding principles

The panels will operate using the following principles, aligned with good practice for place-based partnership boards:

- Strategic and outcomes-focused - discussions focus on priorities, sequencing, enabling actions and advocacy; chairs will keep conversations strategic and avoid operational detail;
- Place-led - recommendations reflect local priorities and lived experience through structured input routes (e.g., witnesses);
- Partnership-first - members commit to collaborative problem-solving and shared ownership of solutions beyond organisational interests;

- Subsidiarity and shared ownership - panels will seek to resolve issues through partnership action wherever possible and avoid routinely referring matters back to the council unless escalation is necessary;
- Transparent and accountable - clear records of recommendations, published updates, and a robust approach to conflicts of interest; and
- Adaptive and future-proofed - the panels review progress regularly and adapt to changing funding, opportunities and governance arrangements during and after transition.

4. Role and responsibilities

The panels will:

A. Provide strategic stewardship: act as a strategic sounding board, challenge and support for delivery, focusing on high-level priorities, blockers, opportunities and advocacy;

B. Light-touch pipeline review (initial 18 months): receive and review a draft project directory compiled from the strategy evidence and engagement; advise on strategic fit, gaps, overlaps, dependencies and opportunities for collaboration;

C. Action plan input: provide recommendations to inform future action plans for any new unitary council including priority themes and sequencing considerations;

D. Convene strategic partnerships: broker senior-level connections between organisations and establish time-limited working groups where needed to develop proposals or unblock issues, bringing recommendations back to the panel. To receive annual progress reports from the district Cultural Forum;

E. Monitor progress and learning: review progress at each meeting against agreed actions/next steps and identify where coordination or escalation is needed.

5. What the panels are not

The panels are not statutory decision-making bodies and do not replace formal council governance routes.

They are not delivery management groups. They do not oversee day-to-day project delivery or operational decisions.

Project recommendations do not mean they are approved or funded; it indicates strategic relevance and coordinated planning. It does not commit any partner to funding unless separately agreed.

6. Relationship to council governance

To provide democratic oversight and transparency, the panels' recommendations will feed into the council's governance cycle as follows:

- Canterbury City Council will own and approve the initial project directory and oversee the delivery of its own CCC city & town centre strategy action plan until the council's abolition. Panel recommendations will inform, but will not determine, council decisions;
- Initial project directory and action plan proposals have returned through CCC governance routes (including Overview Committee and Cabinet) for scrutiny, input and information prior to the formal establishment of place panels;
- The panels will produce concise recommendation notes to accompany governance reports, setting out: what was recommended; the rationale (strategy alignment, place benefit, deliverability); key partners/leads; and any dependencies/risks to manage through delivery; and
- Following local government reorganisation, governance and ownership arrangements, including whether panels take on a stronger stewardship role over the project directory and action planning, will be reviewed as part of the annual ToR review and transition milestones.

7. Membership

7.1 Composition

Each panel will include a cross-section of organisations and people who can contribute to strategic conversations and help drive change in each place. Membership will prioritise senior representatives from key strategic partners (with authority to commit resources or influence decisions), alongside councillors for relevant wards.

Once the panels have established themselves and their agenda further community input may also be secured through structured mechanisms (e.g. invite witnesses/ contributors). In this respect the panels may wish to invite strategic community/sector representatives where these can contribute at a strategic level.

The long-term ambition remains for each panel to be community-led with an independent (non-elected) chair and non-elected members in the majority. However, in the initial phase and through transition, panels will be viced-chaired by the relevant cabinet member to provide clear democratic leadership and visibility.

Council officers will attend to provide support/secretariat and can participate as observers/advisers, consistent with place-board good practice.

7.2 Member selection approach

Membership will be agreed using a transparent approach that avoids dominance by any single interest group:

- **Councillors:** Two councillors representing Canterbury City Council will be invited to participate on each place panel. This will be achieved via nominations from political group leaders, which are then ratified by Group Leaders or Appointment Committee in line with the appointments process for multi-agency partnerships[1]. The outcome will be reported to Full Council;
- **Strategic partners:** targeted invitations to senior 'anchor' representatives of key partner organisations (public, private, voluntary, education/skills, culture/heritage, transport, health and other anchor institutions), by CCC;
- **Community/sector representatives:** 'open call' from CCC to invite applications from individuals who will serve as non-elected members of the panels. They can contribute valuable skills and experience to strategic discussions. These appointments will be reported to Full Council for noting;
- **Refinements:** The Director of Place in consultation with the Canterbury City Council cabinet member, will have authority to modify (e.g. by invite or to recruit) the non-elected membership of panels as required from time to time; and
- **Conflict of interest safeguards:** declarations, management of interests, and stepping back where appropriate.

7.3 Other elected member involvement

Where relevant and appropriate, the panel may invite additional elected representatives (e.g. relevant KCC / CCC / Unitary Council Cabinet Members, Shadow Authority Members, Town Council Members). This is optional and will be kept under review.

8. Terms of appointment

Panel members will serve 3-year terms to maintain consistency during a time of unprecedented change in local government. To maintain continuity, it is recommended that, after the initial 3-year period, terms are staggered so that approximately half of the membership rotates each year after the first cycle.

Members may be reappointed for a further term where appropriate, subject to maintaining overall balance and representation.

[1] 1.8 Subject to there being unanimous agreement, the appointment of council representatives to outside bodies, multi-agency partnerships and other similar bodies will be made by the political group leaders and reported to the next ordinary meeting of Full Council. Where there is not consensus between the group leaders on the nominees the matter will be referred to the Appointments Committee for a decision. Appointments reserved for the Leader shall be made by the Leader or their nominated cabinet member.

9. Chair and Vice-Chair

9.1 Chair

Each panel will be chaired by a chair drawn from the non-elected core members. This will help to ensure the panel is visibly place-led, balanced and able to bring together a broad range of voices around the shared ambitions of the town and city centre strategies.

The chair's role is to keep conversations strategic (avoiding operational detail), convene senior partners, champion the place, and ensure recommendations are concise, evidence-based and actionable.

9.2 Vice-chair

The Vice-Chair will be the relevant Canterbury City Council Cabinet Member, providing a clear link between the panel's independent, place-led discussions and the council's formal decision-making processes.

The Vice-Chair will help ensure that panel discussions are well connected to council priorities, governance routes and delivery mechanisms, so that recommendations can be translated more effectively into action where appropriate.

10. Meetings and ways of working

Meetings will normally take place every 6 months. Agendas will be structured to prioritise strategic discussion, decisions on recommendations and agreed next steps.

A standard agenda template will initially be provided to all panels. Agendas will be prepared by CCC officers in consultation with the chair and vice chair. A cap on agenda items should be in place to ensure strategic focus is maintained. Member requests for agenda items will be subject to officer and chair agreement.

The panels may set up time-limited working groups to develop proposals and bring recommendations back to the full panel. Secretariat capacity will need to be carefully considered and council approval will need to be sought where this resource implication falls on the council.

To support shared learning on city and town centre issues, the Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable panels will hold one joint session per year (or a chairs' coordination session) on cross-cutting topics where helpful.

Witnesses / contributors:

- The chair may invite individuals to attend for specific agenda items as 'witnesses' or contributors to provide expertise and experience. This may include elected

members, community representatives, senior partners, or government departments such as MHCLG.
- Witnesses/contributors are not panel members and do not vote; their attendance is time limited to the relevant agenda item(s).

Annual open session:

- Each panel should consider holding occasional open sessions as part of its wider community engagement and consultation activity, providing an opportunity for members of the public to attend and contribute directly. Other panel meetings will continue to be supported by appropriate notes, actions and published updates. The open session will be chaired to keep discussion strategic and constructive.

11. Recommendations, decision-making and quorum

The panels will aim for consensus. Where needed, the chair may call a vote with simple majority of members present.

Each meeting will record clear strategic recommendations and actions. Minority views will be noted where requested.

A quorum will be set at 50% of appointed members. If a meeting is not quorate, the panel may discuss items but will record outcomes as “for note” and defer formal recommendations.

12. Conflicts of interest and conduct

Members will maintain a register of interests and declare relevant interests at meetings, with appropriate management measures (e.g. stepping back from relevant agenda items).

The panels will adopt a simple code of conduct reflecting public standards and transparency expectations used by comparable boards.

13. Secretariat and support

The council will provide officer support (agenda setting, actions, coordination) and will set out this support in a simple Service Level Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with each panel.

A nominated senior officer will attend as a core member to provide high level strategic guidance and ensure alignment with council delivery and transition planning.

14. Transparency and communications

The panels will publish short updates and maintain accessible information about membership, interests and key recommendations, reflecting good practice used by established place boards.

Notes and recommendations will normally be published within 10 working days, excluding exempt items (personal data, commercially sensitive information, or safeguarding-related content). Notes will be limited to a brief overview of items discussed, clear recommendations and/or matters noted, and agreed upon actions and parties responsible for them.

15. Review

The ToRs will be reviewed annually, and specifically after key transition milestones, to ensure it remains fit for purpose as governance arrangements evolve. Key transition milestones will include the outcome of district CGRs, the vesting of a shadow authority and the vesting of a unitary authority.

The annual review will include: (i) chairing arrangements, (ii) membership composition and balance, and (iii) governance/ownership arrangements for the project directory and action planning, including whether panels should take on a stronger role post LGR.

16. Post LGR structure

At a future point shadow unitary elections are likely to take place. In any transitional phase, it is proposed that shadow councillor representation be added to the panels. Depending on the outcome of the Community Governance Review, town councillor representation may also be added, and parish council elections may take place in currently unparished areas in 2028. Responsibility for local authority-led projects will then transfer to a new unitary council. An indicative approach to how a post LGR structure could look is set out below.

Figure 1: Indicative post-LGR structure

Chair Independent / non-elected member
Vice-Chair Unitary Cabinet Member
Elected member representation 3 unitary councillors from locality
Potential additional representation Shadow councillor during transition; town and/or parish councillors where established following the Community Governance Review
Strategic partners, community/sector representatives and officers To be reviewed annually by CCC and subsequently the Unitary Council

The period up to a future vesting day will provide time to test the place panel model, learn lessons and refine the panels before new unitary arrangements are fully in place. Refinements would also need to reflect similar arrangements within any unitary cluster (e.g. neighbourhood boards in Dover and Ramsgate). These would consider how the place panels sit alongside other neighbourhood area initiatives and the potential role of Neighbourhood Area Committees within the new unitary governance structure. Officers will engage with local authorities within any new unitary cluster to ensure that alignment of approach across those councils.

Appendix A – Best practice alignment

This place panel model mirrors key features of UK Government guidance for place-based boards and partnership governance, while tailoring roles during the initial period to maintain strategic focus:

- Panels remain advisory/recommendation forums with democratic oversight via formal governance routes; council retains decision-making and ownership of the initial council-managed project directory;
- Strategic focus is protected through chair duties, agenda discipline, and use of time-limited working groups rather than operational discussion in the main forum;
- Transparent processes for conflicts of interest, conduct and publication of recommendations and updates are retained;
- The ToR sets out an explicit review pathway post CGR and LGR for whether panels should take on stronger stewardship of the project directory and future action planning under the new unitary arrangements; and
- Community input is maintained through structured routes (witness/contributor invitations, potential annual open session) while keeping core membership senior and strategic.

Key reference documents

DLUHC: Towns Fund – supplementary guidance for Town Deal Boards (delivery phase) (published 8 Nov 2022)[2]

MHCLG: Pride in Place Programme – governance and boundary guidance (published 3 Dec 2025)[3]

MHCLG: Plan for Neighbourhoods – governance and boundary guidance (published 12 Mar 2025)[4]

[2] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/towns-fund-supplementary-guidance-for-town-deal-boards
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pride-in-place-programme-prospectus/pride-in-place-programme-governance-and-boundary-guidance
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-neighbourhoods-neighbourhood-boards-and-place-boundaries/plan-for-neighbourhoods-governance-and-boundary-guidance

Cabinet Report

5 October 2026

Subject: Adoption of Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan

Director and Head of Service: William Hicks – Director of Place and Richard Moore – Head Transport and Environment

Officer:

Martin Hall, Senior Environment Manager

Cabinet Member: Councillor Mel Dawkins, Cabinet Member Environment and Sustainability

Key or Non Key decision: Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the Cabinet.

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): All

Summary and purpose of the report:

Following involvement of the Open Space and Biodiversity Group, a three-month public consultation and presentation to Overview Committee, the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan – a nature recovery strategy, is coming to Cabinet seeking its adoption as a supporting document to the draft Local Plan.

To Resolve:

That Cabinet adopt the Canterbury district biodiversity plan 2026-2042/43.

Next stage in process:

Subject to Cabinet's adoption, the Biodiversity Plan will become a key strategy for the council, its partners and the Canterbury district. Its implementation will be monitored annually by the Open Space and Biodiversity Group and by the Scrutiny Committee. This monitoring will be reported to Defra in respect of the council's legal duties in relation to the council's Biodiversity Duty.

1. Introduction

Current position

The Canterbury district biodiversity plan – a nature recovery strategy has been developed by the Environment Team and is now ready for adoption, providing a strengthened framework to support the draft Local Plan.

Background

The Council's declaration of a biodiversity emergency in 2023 included an action to

develop a Canterbury district biodiversity plan as a nature recovery strategy.

Development and alignment

The plan was developed by the Environment Team, with input and steer from the Open Space Biodiversity Group (OSBG), chaired by Councillor Mel Dawkins.

Consultation on the completed draft was paused for a year while awaiting publication of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (KMLNRS), which was published in November 2025.

In December 2025, the draft Canterbury biodiversity plan was re-edited to ensure consistency with the Kent and Medway LNRS.

Consultation feedback

In February 2026, the strategy entered three months of public consultation. Feedback showed support for the plan's vision and principles, while also identifying areas requiring further clarity and emphasis.

- Greater clarity was requested on actions and delivery responsibilities.
- Respondents highlighted the importance of resources, monitoring, and community engagement.

Final position

The consultation feedback has strengthened the draft biodiversity plan. The plan is now complete for adoption and will support nature recovery and the Local Plan.

2. Detail

Purpose and scope

The Canterbury district biodiversity plan sets out the actions the council and its partners will take to support nature recovery. It provides a district-wide vision, in both mapped and narrative form, identifying the key habitats and species that will guide local priorities.

The plan has been prepared to support the emerging Local Plan and complement its objectives. Planning Policy officers have attended Open Space and Biodiversity Group meetings to advise on this relationship and have played an active role in drafting the plan.

Alignment with wider strategies

The plan is designed to align with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, launched in November 2025, which sets out five key county-wide purposes. The five purposes are to set priorities for nature recovery, provide practical measures to deliver the priorities, create a spatial vision for nature recovery across the county, share a vision, and provide a framework for action across the county.

The Canterbury plan applies these five purposes locally and complements other council environmental strategies, including the Green Infrastructure Strategy, Tree, Woodland and Hedge Strategy, Pollinator Strategy and Canterbury Riverside Strategy.

The plan is non-statutory. It does not safeguard land and does not create additional revenue or capital pressures for the council budget.

Habitats, species and evidence base

The plan identifies flagship habitats and species across Canterbury district and builds on existing work to restore key landscapes. It recognises the important contribution already being made by charities, voluntary groups and community-led initiatives.

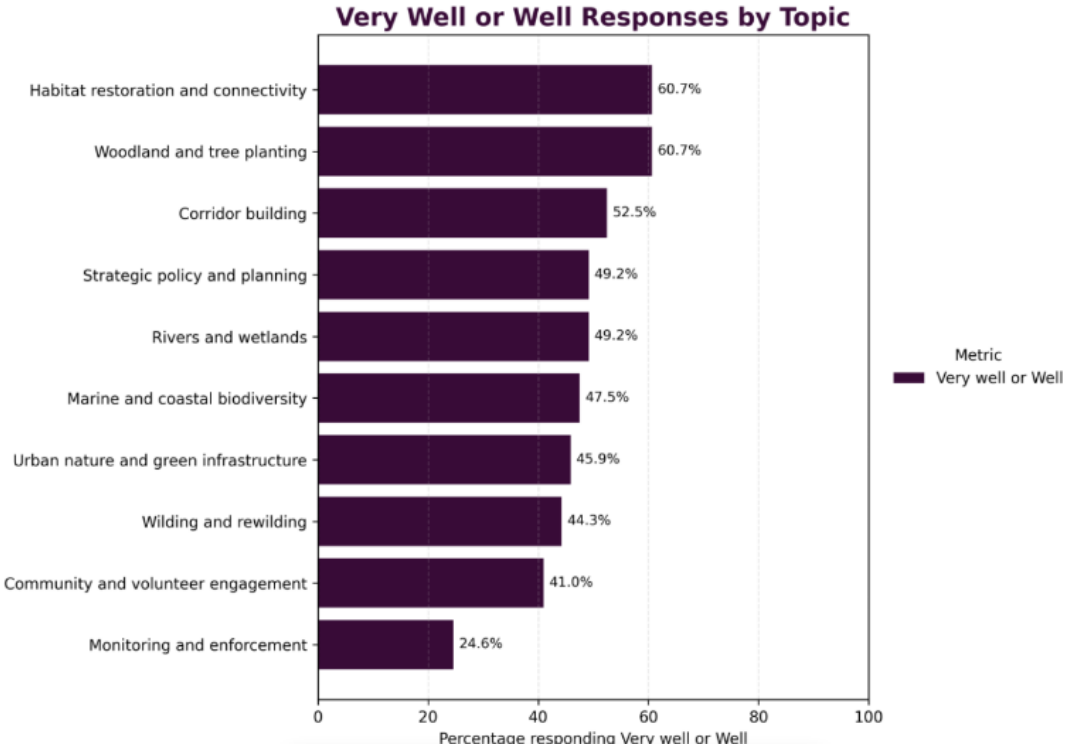
The plan also provides an overview of the district's landscapes, land cover, designated

nature sites, core biodiversity network areas and climate change vulnerabilities. It assesses the current status of nature in the district, including grasslands, wetlands and coastal areas, using a low, medium and high climate change sensitivity matrix to identify the areas most at risk. Rivers, streams, standing water and fens are identified as areas of extreme concern.

How the plan will be used

- focus delivery of Canterbury Biodiversity Grants;
- provide evidence and support for external funding applications;
- support Local Plan policy by evidencing the need for, and delivery of, 20% Biodiversity Net Gain; and
- inform the council's input into pre-application discussions and planning applications.

The graph below shows the proportion of respondents who felt each area was addressed well or very well.



Governance and Scrutiny

Delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy will be regularly reviewed by the Open Space and Biodiversity Group and reported annually to the Scrutiny Committee.

- The draft Biodiversity Plan was subject to three months of consultation, from 11 February to 6 May 2026.
- Three public meetings were held in Herne Bay, Whitstable and Canterbury to introduce the consultation and support people in responding.
- A total of 81 consultation responses and a further 20 written representations were received.

Consultation findings

Respondents were broadly supportive of the plan:

- 82% (50 respondents) strongly supported or supported the vision for nature in Canterbury district by 2042/43.

- 77.1% (47 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the strategy reflects the right level of ambition for biodiversity in the district.
- 75.4% (46 respondents) strongly supported or supported the action plan's potential to deliver a wilder district and local nature recovery.

Respondents were also asked how well the strategy addressed different areas of biodiversity action.

Feedback highlighted particular concerns about the strength of the marine, urban, rewilding, community and monitoring sections. These findings led to revisions to improve and strengthen those parts of the plan.

The consultation also raised useful challenges, including:

- the need for clearer action definitions and targets;
- the need for stronger emphasis on community and education-sector engagement and delivery;
- concerns about the focus on key organisations, including Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, and key sites such as The Blean, The Wantsum and Old Park;
- the need to strengthen cross-references to the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- challenge to the 20% Biodiversity Net Gain policy; and
- a perceived conflict with housebuilding proposed through the new draft Local Plan.

In response to the consultation report at Appendix 4, the plan has been revised to address these points where appropriate, including by making actions clearer, explaining the need to prioritise resources, and strengthening the links with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Relationship with the Local Plan

The perceived conflict between the biodiversity plan and the Local Plan has been addressed in the consultation response document. The response explains that the biodiversity plan was developed following the council's 2023 biodiversity emergency declaration, while the Local Plan is being prepared separately under its own legislation, national policy and guidance.

Comments made through the Biodiversity Strategy consultation can be considered where they relate to the strategy. However, only representations made through the relevant Local Plan consultations, including Regulation 18, Focused Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages, can be taken into account as part of the Local Plan examination.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

Regulation 19 Local Plan policies:

- SS1: Environmental Strategy for the district
- DS20: Habitats if international importance
- DS21: Habitat and landscape of national importance
- DS22: Habitats and landscapes of local importance
- DS25: Supporting biodiversity recovery
- DS27: The Blean woodland complex

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

(a) General consultations: The draft biodiversity plan has been subject to a three-month consultation. The consultation report is available at appendix 4.

(b) Overview Committee feedback

The issues raised by Overview Committee (10th September 2026) have been considered and where required, such as inclusion of Broad Oak Reservoir, have been added to the draft Biodiversity Plan. Listed in the table below are the issues raised and the response promoted.

Issue	**Response**
Establish relation with draft Local Plan	
Include reference to Broad Oak Reservoir and water management	Agreed. The reservoir has been added to wider action BA7.To note, CCC officer attend the Broad Oak steering group and will be joining working groups. Officers also in discussions with consultants on biodiversity net gain matters.
Consider effects of climate change	The impact of climate change on the key habitats is covered under the Climate Change Sensitivity pages 42, 53, 64, 74 and 84.
Local authority maintenance practices and staff training	Pollinator Action Plan promotes training for contract staff. Training took place in 2025. The Biodiversity Action Plan BA17 continues this positive engagement and training.
Include farm ponds restoration	As the action plan captures strategic or larger scale projects this issue can be sit in existing action BA3.
Examine funding / resources	A note has been added to the action table to give clarity on the s106 funding situation. After adoption, the action plan will be used to secure external grant aid and funding.
Include resident gardens	The action plan captures strategic or larger scale projects.
Promote the engagement of landowners and councillors in pre-applications	Pre App meetings are confidential between the planning authority and the applicant.
Consider the inclusion of major infrastructure projects	Such projects will be addressed by the panning system and subject to local plan policies. As such, this issue is covered by BA2.

(c) Post adoption, the delivery of the biodiversity plan will be monitored by the Open Space and Biodiversity Group and will form a standing item within the annual environmental reporting to the Scrutiny Committee

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

Option 1: Adopt the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan – recommended

Cabinet resolves to adopt the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan – a nature recovery strategy. This option would:

- meet the commitments made when the council declared a biodiversity emergency;
- Provide key evidence for the Local Plan examination and support delivery of relevant draft Local Plan policies; and
- demonstrate the council's commitment to meeting its legal biodiversity duty.

Option 2: Do not adopt the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan – not recommended

Cabinet resolves not to adopt the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan – a nature recovery strategy. This option is not recommended because it would:

- fail to address the commitments made through the council's biodiversity emergency declaration;
- weaken support and evidence for draft relevant Local Plan policies; and
- leave the council more exposed when reporting on its biodiversity duty.

Option 3: Request a redraft and further consultation – not recommended

Cabinet recommends that the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan – a nature recovery strategy is redrafted and subject to further consultation to reflect Cabinet's comments on the draft plan.

This option is not recommended because the plan has already been subject to a lengthy and successful consultation. Amendments have been made throughout the plan to respond to points raised and to strengthen areas identified for improvement. This would also mean an adopted Strategy is unlikely to be available as evidence for the Local Plan examination.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 respects the council's biodiversity declaration supports delivery consistent with the Regulation 19 Local Plan policies and informs the council's biodiversity duty.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

None identified

(b) Legal

None identified

(c) Equalities

None identified

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

Positive contribution to the environment with more land being better managed for biodiversity. Positive contribution to carbon emissions with more land providing nature-based solutions to carbon sequestration.

Other implications

(g) Planning including building regulations

Supports the draft Local Plan and would be part of the evidence base for the Local Plan examination.

Contact Officer: Martin Hall, Senior Environment Manager

Background documents and appendices

Annex 3: Final draft of plan
Annex 4: Consultation report

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:

No

Appendix 1 Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Please provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal under each of the headings below. If none, please say so.

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals	Positive	Delivery of nature-based solutions (woodland management and tree planting) can contribute to carbon sequestration.	n/a
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.	Neutral	The delivery of the Biodiversity Plan will not increase the council's emissions of carbon dioxide.	n/a

Topic	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation of impact If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	Mitigation
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide	Neutral	The delivery of the Biodiversity Plan will not increase the council's emissions of other climate change gases.	n/a

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought
- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade
- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation of impact	Mitigation
Positive	Working with partners to deliver nature-based solutions for biodiversity will have a positive impact on flooding, e.g. more space for water storage in wetlands, lakes and ponds.	n/a

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal? If yes, please give a brief description.

No.

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

[can be deleted if not relevant after the MT stage]

Please be aware that in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, this document will be made available to the public.

You should treat this as a live document and keep it under continuous review. You should do this by recording any issues you identify, along with any actions you take to minimise their impact.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance to help you in completing this form.

For the purposes of this form, we refer to your policy, function, project or service as a proposal.

We have contact with two groups who can be useful sounding boards as part of any consultation or pre consultation engagement. They are the Disability Advisory Board (DAP) and the Ethnic Minority Independent Council (EMIC), both are local groups. You can contact Matthew Archer for further advice.

Date of initial assessment	
Division	Place (Transport and Environment)
Proposal to be assessed	Delivery of nature based solutions to deliver new habitats
New or existing policy or function?	Existing
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	Both
Statutory or non-statutory?	Both
Your name	Martin Hall
Your job title	Senior Environmental Manager
Your contact telephone number	07599 234149
Decision maker (e.g.Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Cabinet
Estimated proposal deadline	

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	Adoption of the Canterbury district Biodiversity plan – a nature recovery strategy.

What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example “x% of customers are female” or “x% of customers are aged over 60”	

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC’s PSED Technical Guidance		
Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No	
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No	

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation
Age	None		
Disability	None		
Gender reassignment	None		
Marriage and civil partnership	None		
Pregnancy and maternity	None		
Race	None		

Religion or belief	None		
Sex	None		
Sexual orientation	None		
Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.	None		

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	n/a
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	n/a

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	n/a

If a consultation exercise is required as part of your proposal, please complete the consultation planning form on iCan.

Please update the section below if:
- You have amended your proposal
- You have new information
- You have undertaken consultation

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.

Have you made any changes to your initial assessment? If so, please give brief details	
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	

Should you need to revisit your assessment more than once, please ensure that you provide details of any changes or new information and the date these amendments were made

canterbury city council

Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan

A nature recovery strategy

October 2026

Foreword

The Canterbury Biodiversity Plan is a document for all of us. Whether you are a farmer, business owner, developer, community group, or resident, this document has been created to bring us together as we strive to protect and enhance biodiversity across the district.

The plan aims to raise awareness, inspire action, and unite communities. In turn, it will build stronger, better-connected ecosystems that are more resilient to the challenges of the biodiversity and climate change crisis. I love living here. We are all extremely lucky to have such a variety of wildlife in the Canterbury district, from our coastlines and marshes to our chalk streams and woodlands; there is truly something for everyone to enjoy.

Protecting these natural assets for the future is an urgent priority for the council, our partners, and the entire community. Therefore, this strategy acts as a call to action for anyone reading to get involved and support our attempts to enhance biodiversity, whether in your front garden or on a landscape scale!

During the formulation of this strategy, we consulted extensively with residents, the council's Biodiversity Group, councillors from all political parties, and external partners. We updated the action plan to directly reflect their feedback. As a result, we have provided greater clarity on issues such as funding, established a stronger focus on monitoring delivery of the action plan, and introduced new educational initiatives. We also took on board feedback regarding how this strategy aligns with Local Plan and development goals.

As a council, we recognise the inherent dichotomy in our responsibilities. Because we act as the local planning authority, we must constantly balance the statutory duty to deliver housing and infrastructure through our Local Plan allocations with our commitment to protecting the natural environment.

These two priorities do not always align, particularly when development decisions intersect with environmental concerns. While this strategy cannot remove those competing pressures, it provides a clear and transparent framework.

To build a resilient natural environment, we too must be adaptable to a changing climate and emerging ecological threats. Therefore, the Canterbury Biodiversity Plan does not rigidly prescribe actions that may become unsuitable in ten years' time. Instead, it has been carefully crafted to deliver tangible, immediate outcomes for biodiversity while retaining the flexibility to grow and reshape itself against future challenges.

Six core principles form the foundation of this strategy, helping to build a framework for decision-making. These have been developed alongside key stakeholders, including the Kent Wildlife Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and the Canterbury Open Space and Biodiversity Group (OSBG). Accordingly, one of these core principles focuses entirely on partnership working. This reflects the reality that delivering this strategy is a collective responsibility, not the duty of a single organisation alone.

This strategy was developed in response to the Biodiversity Emergency declaration made by the council in 2023, and it will act as a supporting document to the new Local Plan. It also links directly to the Kent Local Nature Recovery Strategy to connect natural habitats, aligning with Lawton's Nature Principles: 'more, bigger, better, and joined up'. Furthermore, the council has a statutory obligation to demonstrate we are meeting our Biodiversity Duty under the Environment Act 2021. This document represents a considerable step toward fulfilling that duty.

Councillor Mel Dawkins
Councillor for St Stephens
Cabinet member for
Environment and Sustainability



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PHOTO CREDITS
Sian and Simon Pettman, Hearts Delight Farm, Front Cover
Marbled white butterfly on page 4
Stodmarsh on page 5
Kingsmead Playing Field on page 18
Reculver on page 24
Heath Fritillary on page 34
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Stour at Fordwich on page 70
Kingsmead Field on page 77
Public domain, Species on page 7, 61, 68, and 79

Part 1: A shared vision for nature's recovery



The vision

By 2042/43[1], nature will thrive across Canterbury district's land, rivers, wetlands and coast. A strong, connected network of nature-rich places will support species recovery, help habitats expand, and build resilience to climate change. Nature recovery will be embedded in every part of Canterbury City Council's work with the land it manages playing a clear role in restoring biodiversity. Residents, businesses, schools, partners, communities and developers will all be active champions of this strategy — working together to restore nature now and for future generations.



A nature network across the Canterbury district

This is a map to visualise landscape-scale nature recovery in the Canterbury district. It shows seven key landscapes and their flagship species forming our ideal nature recovery network.



Legend

Woodland and Tree Super Corridor
Vision: A hyper-connected network of structurally diverse, ecologically dynamic woodlands (at core), traditional orchards, wood pasture parkland and wilder hedgerows. Connects to Wilder Coast and Stour Valley biodiversity recovery zones.

Wilder coast and Marshlands
Vision: A hydrologically and ecologically connected, dynamic network of intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, brackish and freshwater marshes and coastal floodplain grazing marshes that is resilient to climate change and sea level rise.

Stour Valley Nature Corridor
Vision: A continuous corridor or riverine and riparian habitats, including we woodland, wet meadows, damp scrub habitat, reedbeds and marshes. Dynamic natural processes are encourage and prioritised, with herbivores, beavers and the Stour itself exerting their influence, often blurring and blending the boundaries between land and water.

Biodiverse Downlands
Vision: A rich tapestry of open downland, scrub-grassland mosaics, woodland copses and belts, traditional orchards, chalk streams and wilder hedgerows. Low intensity herbivore movements drive economical dynamism and a shifting patchwork of habitats across large areas.

Wilder Whitstable, Wilder Herne Bay and Wilder Canterbury City
Vision: Urban green spaces with diverse, abundant communities or birds, butterflies and other invertebrates. Allotments and wild corners, ponds and thriving populations of reptiles, amphibians, birds and pollinators. New housing schemes that provide homes and habitat for Swifts, Starlings, Hedgehogs, Slow Worms and a host of other species. Habitat corridors that weave their way through streets and parks. Biodiverse roofs and pollinator-focussed urban planting schemes that boost bee and butterfly populations. Wild road and rail verges that teem with wildflowers and insects.

Connectivity Target Areas ⟷
Creation and enhancement of habitats to further improve connectivity between biodiversity improvement zones.

Flagship habitats and species of Canterbury district


Broadleaved decidous woodland


Meadows


Chalk grassland


Heathland


Acid grassland


Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh


Reedbeds


Scrub


Hedgerows


Maritime cliffs


Mudflats


Chalk rivers and streams


Ponds


Turtle dove

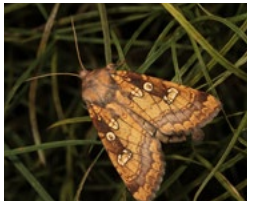

Swift

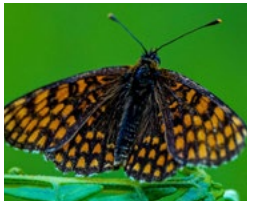

Nightingale


Redshank


Lapwing


Hog's Fennel


Fishers Estuarine Moth


Heath Fritillary


Beaver


Green Winged Orchid


Eelgrass


Dormouse


Water Vole


Shrill Carder Bee


Sand Martin


Reptiles and Amphibians


Skylark

Seven principles underpin this strategy

Prioritisation

To maximise resources, Canterbury City Council is focusing on three of the Nature Recovery Strategy's seven key landscapes: The Blean, Stodmarsh and the Wantsum Channel. The remaining landscapes are still important and will benefit from the actions set out in this strategy, but prioritising these three areas will help create the ecological critical mass needed to deliver meaningful nature recovery.

Urgency

The council's Biodiversity Emergency Declaration in 2023 recognised that human activities are leading to the extinction of animal and plant species at an alarming rate, with scientists predicting a mass extinction driven by human activity. There is an urgent need to act. The changes required will take many years, so we must start now.

Futureproofing

The catastrophic loss of biodiversity and the accelerating pace of climate change are interconnected, with significant overlaps between the causes and consequences of both crises. This strategy will ensure that the Council's actions to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change are developed and implemented in a complementary and coherent way.

Leadership

The district is privileged to have exceptional wildlife habitats, but this also gives us all a responsibility to manage and protect them. The Council's legal responsibilities, and its role as a local planning authority and major landowner, mean it is uniquely placed to lead nature recovery action across the district.

Partnership

The council cannot address these issues single-handedly. The causes of biodiversity loss are complex, and the actions needed are numerous and wide-ranging. Tackling this crisis requires the support and buy-in of many stakeholders. The Council will therefore work with a broad range of partners to address the biodiversity crisis. This Biodiversity Plan has been developed in close consultation with stakeholders and partners, who will continue to play a central role in its monitoring and implementation.

Working at scale and being proactive

Actions must focus on identifying opportunities to expand and connect existing nature-rich areas and deliver practical change on the ground. This will not happen by itself; it requires forward-thinking, long-term commitment and proactive collaboration between a range of stakeholders.

Responsiveness

As referenced under urgency, the threats facing the natural environment are increasing at an accelerating pace. This strategy must be responsive, with actions that are adaptable enough to respond to change. The strategy will be reviewed regularly to monitor progress and adapt the actions to changing evidence, threats and opportunities.

Our actions

The actions to be taken forward have been developed with partners through the Open Space and Biodiversity Group and reflect the actions first identified following the declaration of a Biodiversity Emergency. To ensure credibility, the actions reflect available resources, including people and funding, and, where appropriate, focus on adding value to the extensive partnership work already under way. The actions will be monitored annually to reflect changes in available resources.

There are 31 actions that will help deliver the ambition of this strategy. They have been grouped into six areas:

- **Strategic policy working** – embedding biodiversity into Canterbury City Council's strategies and policies.
- **Partnership working** – implementing the strategy with partners both within and outside the council, as it cannot be delivered by the Environment team alone.
- **Delivery** – identifying the additional resources and delivery mechanisms required to implement the strategy.
- **Community working** – supporting everyone to take action that improves biodiversity.
- **Funding** – identifying the funding streams that will be sought to deliver this strategy. The action plan will develop as new funding sources become available.
- **Audit and planning** – tracking work streams while implementing policy and adapting it for the future.

Additional notes

The actions are listed below. Those that are relevant are also included in the subsequent chapters for each habitat.

Each action includes a set of KMLNRS references. This is not an exhaustive list of the measures that relate to each action; instead, it indicates the objectives that the action seeks to deliver. A full list of KMLNRS potential and wider measures can be found in Appendix 4.

Where an action's term is not labelled 'ongoing', short, medium and long term refer respectively to one to three years, four to eight years, and eight years or more.

Where s.106 funding is shown, marked with an asterisk (*), this is subject to confirmation.

	Action	Lead and partners	Term	Estimated cost and source
Strategic policy working				
BA1	Reflecting the Declaration of a Biodiversity Emergency in the Corporate Plan the council will seek to transfer 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, into future versions of the council (LGR).	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Short	N/A[2]
BA2	Following their adoption, ensure the delivery of Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan policies DS25 (securing Biodiversity Net Gain at 20%) and DS27 (The Blean Woodlands complex). KMLNRS action ref: CON 2.1, LM 1.1, LM 4.1, WTH 1.1, WTH 1.2, WTH 2.1, WTH 2.2, WTH 4.2, WTH 4.4, WTH 5.4	• Senior Environment Manager • Planning Policy Team • OSBG • Wilder Blean Steering Group	Medium	N/A
BA3	Undertake a strategic review of landowners' and farmers' willingness to deliver biodiversity actions and present results in the form of a "Willingness Map." KMLNRS action ref: LM1.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG • Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Medium	N/A
BA4	Maintain and report on the continued delivery of the Pollinator Action Plan, Tree and Woodlands Strategy, Open Space Strategy, and the Green Infrastructure Strategies. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • Planning Policy Team • OSBG	Short	N/A
Partnership working				
BA5	Support the council and Kent Downs National Landscape's duty to 'further' the aims of the National Landscape. KMLNRS ref: GL1.1, GL1.2, GL1.3, GL 5.1, GL 5.2	• Senior Environment Manager	Short	CCC £5,000 p.a.
BA6	Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership (RSPB, KWT, FC, CCC and WT) to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery through the delivery of 10 key schemes over the next five years. KMLNRS ref: WTH 1.1, WTH 2.4, WTH 2.1, WTH 2.2, WTH 2.5, WTH 4.1, WTH 4.2, WTH 4.3, WTH 5.1, WTH 5.2, WTH 6.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG • Wilder Blean Group	Medium	N/A

	Action	Lead and partners	Term	Estimated cost and source
BA7	Work in partnership to deliver the Stour Valley Restore initiative, promote biodiversity opportunities along the Great River Stour at Wincheap Meadows, Bingley Island and Fordwich Meadows, and explore the Broad Oak Reservoir biodiversity gain and the establishment of a Great Stour Regional Park. KMLNRS action ref: FW 1.2, FW 3.2, FW 2.4, FW 3.3, FW 4.1, FW 4.2, FW 5.2, FW 7.1, FW 7.2, FW 9, LM4.1, LM 3.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Medium	External - £1.5m S.106 - £50,000*
BA8	Support partnership opportunities for landscape-scale works within the Wantsum Channel, connections to The Blean and Pegwell Bay E3 initiative, the Forest of Kent initiative, and Canterbury to Coast. KMLNRS action ref: FW 9.1, LM 2.1, LM 3.1, CL 2.4	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG • Forest of Kent Group	Medium	External - £15,000-50,000
BA9	Partner with Foreshore Services and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) on the development and delivery of coastal and marine biodiversity projects, including Eel Grass meadow restoration at Seasalter, investigating the provision of artificial high tide roosts at Long Rock, and the placing of artificial micro reefs within the intertidal areas of Herne Bay. KMLNRS action ref: CL 1.4, CL 2.2, CL 2.3, CL 2.4, CL 3.2, CL 5.2	• Senior Environment Manager / Foreshore Manager • OSBG • ZSL	Medium	External - £25,000
BA10	Liaise with Highways England and other highway authorities 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. KMLNRS action ref: CON 3.2, CON 3.3, CON 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG • CCC Transport • Statutory consultees	Medium	N/A
BA11	In association with the Rights of Rivers initiative, develop initiatives promoting the improved condition of the district's waterways and ensuring nutrient neutrality, including working with Natural England to support their restoration of Stodmarsh. KMLNRS action ref: FW 3.2, FW 4.1	• Senior Environment Manager / Foreshore Manager • OSBG • Statutory consultees	Medium	External (Nature Restoration Fund)

	Action	Lead and partners	Term	Estimated cost and source
Delivery				
BA12	Promote the delivery of the 20 km long Canterbury Hedge and other tree planting initiatives across the district – seeking to plant and manage a minimum of 3 km of hedgerow in the next five years. KMLNRS action ref: WTH 1.3, WTH 2.1, WTH 2.3, WTH 2.4, WTH 2.5, WTH 5.4, WTH 8.1, WTH 8.3, URB 2.3	• Senior Environment Manager	Short	CCC - £17,500 (Y1 and Y2)
BA13	Support biodiversity and community outputs delivered by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) by funding a minimum of 12 volunteer task days on council owned sites and increasing KSCP's support / training for the district's Friends of Groups. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, GL 3.1, GL 4.1, WTH 2.5, SH 2.3, WTH 6.2, FW 4.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager	Short	CCC - £5,000 p.a.
BA14	Utilise the KMLNRS to identify and promote positive land management and the delivery of biodiversity outcomes at key landscapes and sites such as The Blean complex, Seasalter, the Wantsum Channel, Old Park, and Larkey Valley Woods. KMLNRS action ref: GL 2.2, 4.1, SH 2.1, SH 2.2, SH 2.3, WTH 1.1, WTH 5.1, WTH 5.2, FW 9.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG • Friends of Old Park & Chequers Wood	Short	CCC – tbc s.106 – tbc* CIL - tbc
BA15	Grant aid the delivery of biodiversity projects to a maximum of £15,000 per annum – to further community local measures for nature recovery. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Ongoing	CCC - £15,000 p.a.
BA16	Put measures in place to establish Wraik Hill and Old Park as BNG Land Banks, with associated 30 years conservation covenants / funding. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, GL 4.1, GL 3.1, GL 3.2, SH 2.1, SH 2.2, SH 2.3, WTH 1.1, WTH 5.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Short to medium	CCC - £25,000 (Y1 and Y2)

	Action	Lead and partners	Term	Estimated cost and source
BA17	Support Contracts and CANENCO's delivery of biodiversity positive grounds maintenance through provision of training and increased awareness. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, WTH 2.5, URB 1.1, URB 1.2, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • Contracts manager • Canenco manager • OSBG	Short to medium	N/A
BA18	Referencing measures in the KMLNRS, scope and communicate landscape scale strategic opportunities across the district for habitat creation / defragmentation through natural regeneration. KMLNRS action ref: GL 1.2, GL 2.2, GL 3.2, WTH 1.2, WTH 2.1, FW 4.1	• Senior Environment Manager	Ongoing	External - £5m s.106 - £0.5m*
Community working				
BA19	Targeting schools, universities and parish councils to promote applications to the CCC Biodiversity Grants and manage biodiversity initiatives. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, URB 1.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Medium	N/A
BA20	Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the Canterbury Riverside Strategy. KMLNRS action ref: FW 4.1, LM 4.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Ongoing	s.106 - £100,000* External - £100,000
BA21	Continue to support and advise Friends of Groups across the district and establish new groups where there is demonstrable need and/or demand. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, URB 2.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Ongoing	N/A
BA22	Engage with the Canterbury district biodiversity network to reach wider communities, schools and university, giving an annual update on key biodiversity actions and the delivery of the biodiversity plan. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1	• Senior Environment Manager • CDBN	Ongoing	N/A

	Action	Lead and partners	Term	Estimated cost and source
Funding				
BA23	Work with partners on the development and utilization of Nature Investment Zones to deliver the local and strategic actions of this and related strategies. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1	• Senior Environment Manager • Climate Change Principal Policy Officer	Short	CCC - £30,000 p.a.
BA24	Provide support, where requested, to Neighbourhood Planning Groups or Parish Councils undertaking Neighbourhood Plans, about the inclusion of recovery measures. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1	• Key Strategy Group	Short	N/A
BA25	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. KMLNRS action ref: GL 2.2, GL 4.1, SH 2.1, SH 2.2, SH 2.3, WTH 1.1, WTH 5.1, FW 9.1, CL 2.4	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Short - medium	N/A
Audit and planning				
BA26	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. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, URB 2.1, URB 2.3, URB 3.2, WTH 2.4, CON 3.2	• Senior Environment Manager • Climate Change Principal Policy Officer • OSBG	Short (assess), Medium (delivery)	N/A
BA27	Undertake annual audit of the biodiversity plan's delivery through representation to the OSBG, Overview Committee, Biodiversity duty reporting, and produce annual report. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Short	N/A

	Action	Lead and partners	Term	Estimated cost and source
BA28	Review provision of Local Nature Reserves in relation to growing population. Complete audit and then prioritise action. Consider focusing on unprotected chalk grassland. KMLNRS action ref: GL 1.1	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Short	N/A
BA29	Enable the enforcement of best practice tree planting and maintenance on all development sites. KMLNRS action ref: WTH 2.5, WTH 5.4, WTH 2.3, URB 1.2, URB 2.1, URB 2.3, URB 3.1, CON 2.3	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG	Medium	N/a
BA30	Reference KMLNRS in the provision of SuDS and semi natural open space, and delivery of 20% canopy cover and 20% BNG, making maximum use of the opportunity to strengthen habitat connectivity in pre-application and planning decisions. KMLNRS action ref: FW 2.4, URB 2.1, URB 2.3, URB 2.5, URB 3.1, WTH 2.3, WTH 2.5, WTH 5.2	• Senior Environment Manager • OSBG • Statutory consultees	Ongoing	N/A
BA31	Consider adaptive measures (species selection, land management / use etc.) to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and embark on initiatives to achieve Wilder Canterbury City, Wilder Whitstable and Wilder Herne Bay. KMLNRS action ref: LM 4.1, WTH 2.5, FW 2.5, FW 3.3, URB 1.1, URB 1.2, URB 1.3, URB 2.1, URB 2.2, URB 2.3, URB 3.1, URB 3.4	• Senior Environment Manager • Climate Change Principal Policy Officer	Medium	N/A

Implementation

Delivering the strategy's vision will require the efforts of many individuals and organisations. While Canterbury City Council can commit to delivering the actions, fully realising the strategy's ambition will require partners, local communities, landowners, schools and colleges, businesses, residents and others to set ambitious targets, work together and take action.

Lead
Canterbury City Council will be leading the way by example and will be ambitious in delivering this Biodiversity Plan. The Council will have embedded biodiversity restoration and enhancement into all its operations and into its decision-making. The land it holds will be in a better condition for nature. It will be an advocate for nature in the district, encouraging everyone to play their part in delivering this strategy. The Council will bring partners and communities together to work towards our common vision for nature recovery and will ensure biodiversity is protected in council policy, including the Local Plan. It will also seek funding to deliver this strategy.

Agency based	Community based
Developers will ensure that their development enhances nature, delivering the priorities of this strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain of 20%. They will be ambitious in their plans for nature, proposing and ensuring that nature recovery is considered in all greenspaces in the development through the provision of a range of wildlife habitats . Additional features such as bird boxes, swift boxes and hedgehog highways will contribute to nature recovery. They will recognise the importance of access to nature in their developments and will be ensuring where possible that residents enjoy the benefits of being close to nature.	**Communities** will be joining people together to enhance their local nature. They will understand the priorities near to them and they will have developed and implemented local projects, with more being planned. They will have enthusiasm for what can be achieved and will be enjoying the results of successful nature recovery. They will be better connected to nature and will be seeking to carry out nature surveys to understand local nature and wildlife and setting up community groups in their area.
Landowners and land managers will understand the part their land can play in helping deliver local nature recovery and what actions they can take to improve biodiversity. Landowners will have already come forward to develop positive enhancement projects and these will be underway. These will showcase what can be achieved, inspiring other landowners to do likewise. Specifically, they may enter agri-environment schemes to increase biodiversity, work to support species like farmland birds, join up hedgerows, and manage and restore existing habitats.	**Residents** will understand and appreciate the nature of the district and what needs to be done to restore it. They will be excited by the possibilities for restoring and enhancing nature and will appreciate improved health and mental wellbeing through being able to access the natural world. They will be taking action to improve nature in their own gardens and through volunteering.

Agency based	Community based
Partners, such as the Kent Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Woodland Trust, the Kent Downs National Landscape, Forestry Commission and others, will develop innovative and ambitious projects for nature recovery. They will be working together and with Canterbury City Council to build on their successes. Even more bold plans will be developed. New partners, seeing the success of the initiatives, will be inspired to act.	**Universities, colleges and schools** will actively engage in promoting biodiversity on their own land, will carry out research and will provide educational opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of local wildlife and the natural environment. Schools can help deliver biodiversity by planting trees in school grounds, taking children to experience nature, improving school grounds for nature, and conducting environmental education activities.
Parish Councils will develop local action plans and projects for biodiversity to increase it in their parishes. They could consider how to include Biodiversity in their Neighbourhood Plan. They can bring local communities together to improve biodiversity and also seek funding for biodiversity projects.	**Businesses** will understand how they can contribute to nature recovery and will be acting and seeking opportunities – through funding and sponsoring local biodiversity projects, supporting employees to take action and volunteer, enhancing nature on their premises and sourcing sustainable products.

Monitoring and reporting

The CCC Environment team will review this action plan regularly and track its progress. Biannual reports will be submitted to the CCC Open Space and Biodiversity Group, enabling key councillors and stakeholders involved in the district's biodiversity work to scrutinise progress.

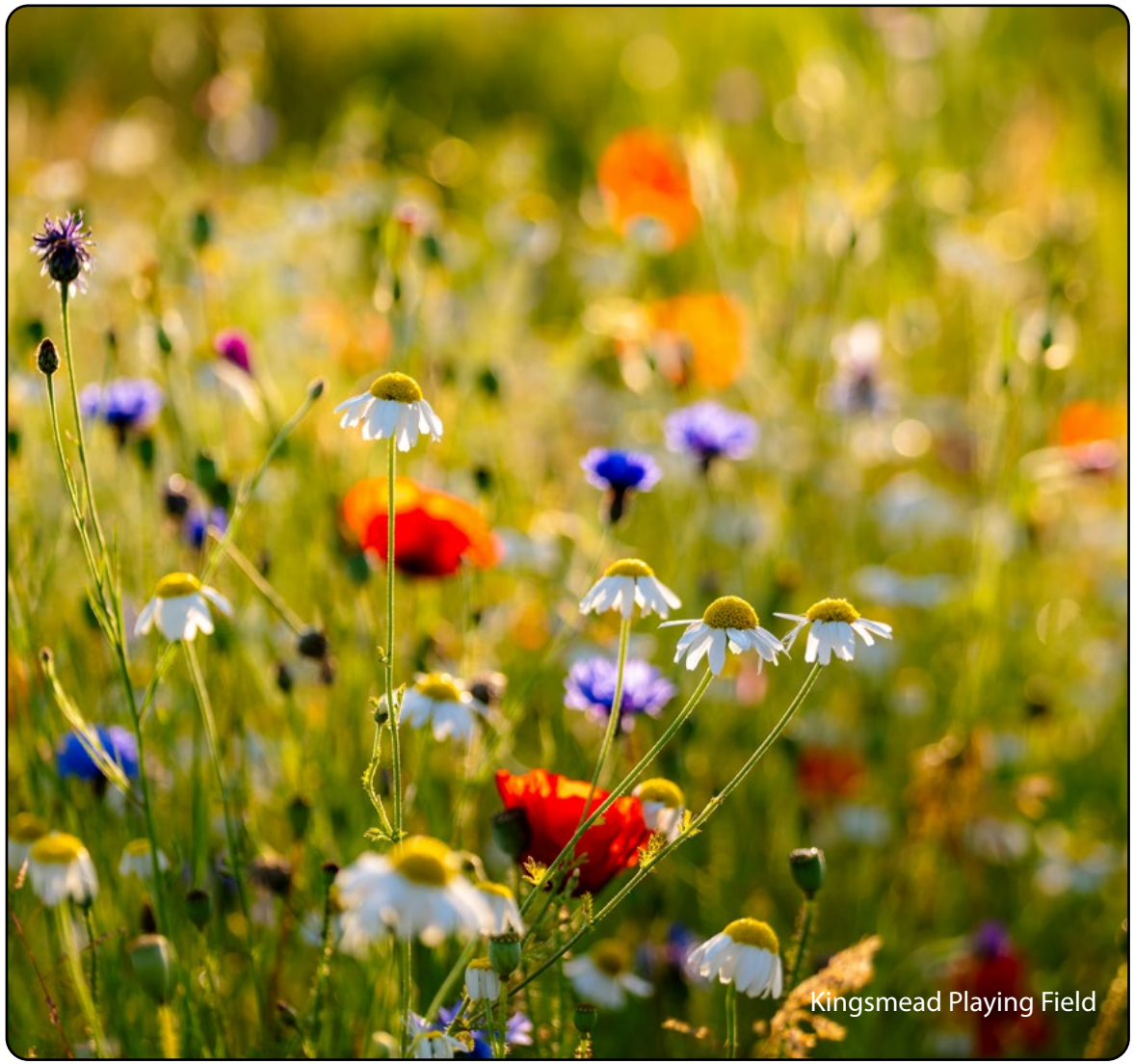
In addition, reflecting Local Government Review and the establishment of the new East Kent Unitary, the strategy will be reviewed and updated in 2030.

The Environment Act 2021 places a legal duty on local planning authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity across all their functions, from land management to planning. To demonstrate compliance with this duty, Canterbury City Council has submitted two biodiversity duty reports to Defra. The next report is due in 2031. Evidence of the delivery of this strategy and other related strategies will play a key role in that report.

Other CCC reporting mechanisms can also be used to monitor progress against this strategy's action plan. These could include adding a Biodiversity Assessment to the Climate Change Impact Assessment that accompanies committee reports. This will enable councillors to take biodiversity impacts into account when considering reports, in line with the council's broader climate change emergency declaration.



Part 2: About this strategy


Kingsmead Playing Field

The need for this strategy

According to the Natural History Museum's Biodiversity Intactness Index, things are not going well for biodiversity with the UK being ranked the 189th most nature depleted country of 240 global territories. England retains only 47% of its original biodiversity. The Index's suggested safe level is 90%.

Alongside our neighbouring local authorities, Canterbury district is fighting back. Our natural world is under pressure as never before. There is a need to take urgent action to halt the decline and to restore biodiversity, and with a changing climate, the pressure is only going to intensify.

Reflecting on the issues set out above, the catalyst for this strategy was Canterbury City Council's unanimous adoption of a Biodiversity Emergency Declaration on 19 October 2023. This followed the Council's Climate Change Emergency Declaration in July 2019. There is both a need and an opportunity to address the biodiversity and climate crises together, and the Council is committed to helping lead nature recovery across the district.

The State of Nature in Kent report (2021) showed that nature is under increasing pressure and that a range of factors is driving historic and continuing decline. These include the intensification of farming, direct habitat loss from development and infrastructure, pollution, a decline in land management for nature, and the impact of invasive non-native species. The remaining areas of habitat are often small and isolated, making them vulnerable and limiting the ability of species to move between them.

In response to these pressures in Kent, the report recommends that councils adopt a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement, above the Government's mandatory 10% requirement.

Legislative changes have also strengthened the case for this strategy. The Environment Act 2021 requires the Council to protect and enhance nature, and to report on the action it takes. It also introduced new responsibilities for councils, including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which became mandatory for some new developments in 2024. BNG requires qualifying developments to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before. Given the historic decline in biodiversity across the district, reversing this decline quickly is critical.

The Biodiversity Emergency Declaration recognises this urgency and calls for action. Reflecting the pressures identified in the State of Nature in Kent report, the aims of this strategy, and related council strategies such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Pollinator Action Plan, Canterbury City Council is adopting a 20% net gain requirement for new developments in the district through its new Local Plan.

This strategy sets out the range of biodiversity found in Canterbury district and identifies the action needed to protect it and support nature recovery. It will guide key areas of the Council's work and decision-making, provide supporting evidence for the District Local Plan, and complement the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (KMLNRS).

Kent and Medway local nature recovery

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), launched in November 2025, sets out five purposes:

- An agreed set of ambitious priorities for nature recovery.
- Practical and deliverable measures to support those priorities.
- A spatial strategy that identifies what action is needed and where it should be focused, so action is directed to where it will deliver the greatest benefits.
- A shared vision for nature recovery and the use of nature-based solutions across Kent and Medway.
- A framework for joined-up action, developed with those who will be central to its delivery.

Canterbury district's nature recovery vision and actions have been informed by the KMLNRS. Plan 5a in this strategy shows the close alignment between the district's nature recovery vision and the KMLNRS Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB).

The Council cannot achieve nature recovery in the district alone, as many of the pressures affecting nature are outside its control. This strategy will act as a catalyst for action across the district, involving residents, communities, landowners, businesses and partners. It identifies local actions that the Council, its partners and local stakeholders can take to support nature recovery at district level.



What is nature recovery?

Across the UK, action to promote nature recovery is increasing rapidly. Key drivers include the UK's commitment to the global '30 by 30' ambition, which aims to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030, and the requirement to prepare and publish local nature recovery strategies at county level.

The independent review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network, Making Space for Nature ('The Lawton Review', 2010), led by Sir John Lawton, concluded that biodiversity habitats do not form a coherent, resilient ecological network capable of responding to climate change and other pressures.

It is not enough to preserve nature in small, isolated sites and call them 'nature reserves'. Wildlife populations need to increase, and species then need to be able to move across the landscape. For this to happen, a local nature recovery network needs to be planned and delivered – a series of connected spaces, like the Woodland and Tree Super Corridor and Wilder Coast and Marshlands, are needed. The 'Areas that Could Become of Importance for Biodiversity' map and associated Measures demonstrates where and how this landscape can be created and maintained. We need to plan at a strategic level and deliver at both the strategic and local levels.

This was summarised by the Lawton Review as: 'More, bigger, better and joined.' The goals of 'more, bigger, better and joined' form the foundation of Canterbury District's Biodiversity Plan as well as the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Creating a local nature recovery network needs planning at a strategic scale and delivery at both a local and strategic level.

The actions need to address five areas:

Creation of new sites – New habitats will need to be created – to extend sites, to link sites or to create wildlife corridors.

Increase the **size** of current wildlife sites ensuring they are better able to hold meta populations and be able to withstand local pressures and change in management.

Improve the **quality** of sites which already support nature through managing them better for nature. The core network of protected biodiversity sites must be in a good condition as these are the reservoirs from which nature can spread. E.g. The Blean for Heath Fritillary butterfly, Seasalter for breeding waders and the Great Stour for beaver and water voles.

Connections across the landscape. Improve the connections between sites by creating corridors or 'stepping stones' of habitats and areas. These will help nature move between sites and expand their range by populating new areas.

Reduce the pressures on key wildlife sites by improving the wider environment. This includes buffering wildlife sites, which means making sure that the areas around wildlife sites are managed to help to protect them and to increase biodiversity.

How this strategy has been developed

Creating this strategy has been a collaborative process. It has been guided by the Canterbury Open Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group (OSBG) which includes elected Canterbury City Council members along with the Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB.

Our vision for nature recovery across the district is shown on page 6. To develop this vision, a range of evidence was reviewed and combined with local knowledge.

Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory data and Natural England Habitat Network mapping has been reviewed. This is important data which the council needs to have to ensure it is fulfilling its legally required biodiversity duty.[3] The Kent Habitat Survey (2012) has also been reviewed to highlight habitat areas which aren't included in the Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory. Final outputs from the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy have also been reviewed and reflected in the document.

The areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity in the Canterbury district are shown in Plan 5a on page 32.

Other Canterbury City Council strategies have also informed this strategy and been referenced in it. Shared objectives across these strategies are shown in Appendix 1.

A draft of this strategy was consulted on between February and May 2026. CCC officers promoted the consultation through a press release, social media, emails and three public meetings. This public engagement sought views on biodiversity priorities in Canterbury district and tested the vision and actions set out in the document. A total of 81 online responses and 20 written representations were received, with most respondents already actively engaged in biodiversity.

Overall, the vision and actions received broad support, although respondents highlighted gaps and opportunities for improvement, particularly around monitoring and enforcement. There was also concern that greater volunteer and community engagement was needed.

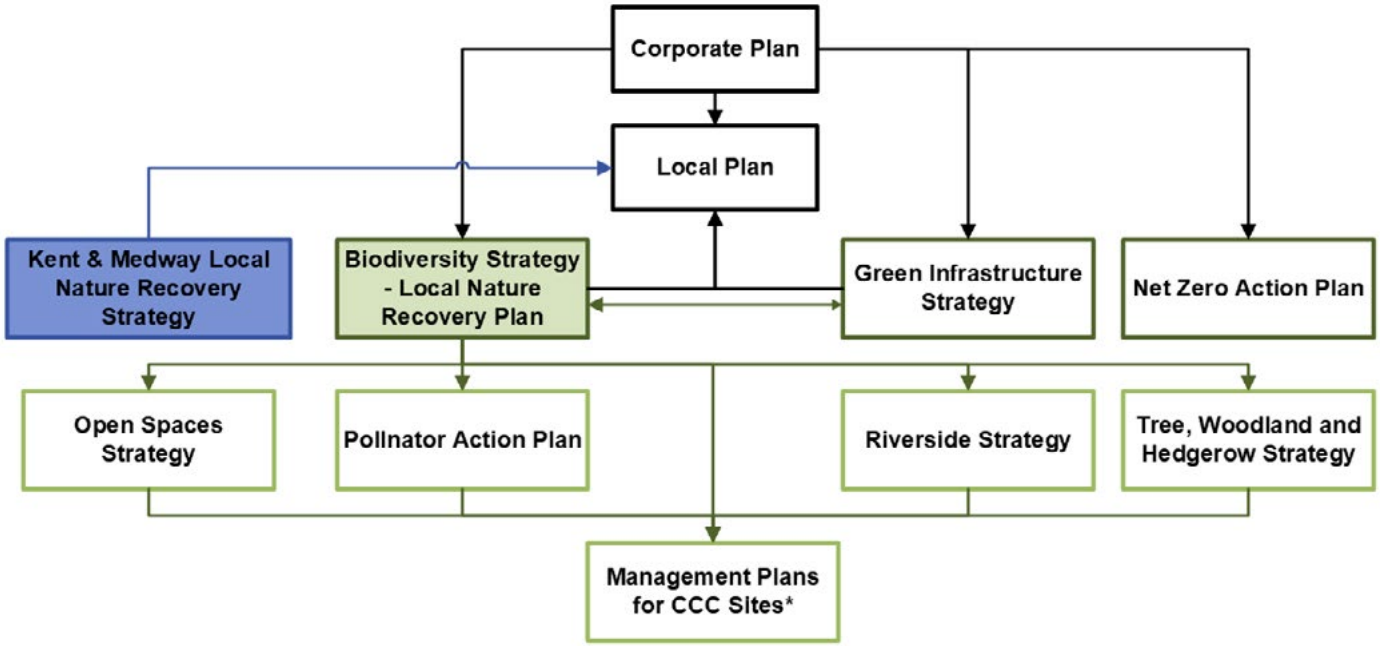
CCC officers shared and discussed the responses with the Open Space and Biodiversity Group (OSBG), before reflecting the comments in the strategy through further edits and amendments.

Following Cabinet's approval, adoption of the strategy will establish a local nature recovery strategy for Canterbury district from October 2026 onwards.

Strategic context (biodiversity)

Canterbury's Biodiversity Plan is an important strategic document for the council. It supports delivery of the council's Corporate Plan 2024–28, particularly the Greener priority, and contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 13: Climate Action; SDG 14: Life Below Water; and SDG 15: Life on Land. It also provides evidence for the Local Plan and sits alongside the Green Infrastructure Strategy, with which it shared objectives.

Several strategies sit below the Biodiversity Plan and help deliver its shared objectives, additional actions and overall ambition. Appendix 1 shows the shared objectives and explains how each of the main strategies contributes to delivering them.



These bottom strategies and management plans deliver and provide more detail on strategies above them in the hierarchy. There are cross-linkages between them and shared objectives. See Appendix.

Part 3: An overview of Canterbury district



Reculver

The landscapes of Canterbury district[4]

From the coast in the north, through the extensive woodland of The Blean, through the river valley of the River Stour to the downlands of the south to the Wantsum Channel in the east - the landscapes of Canterbury are diverse. This, in turn, helps to support the wide range of biodiversity found in the district.

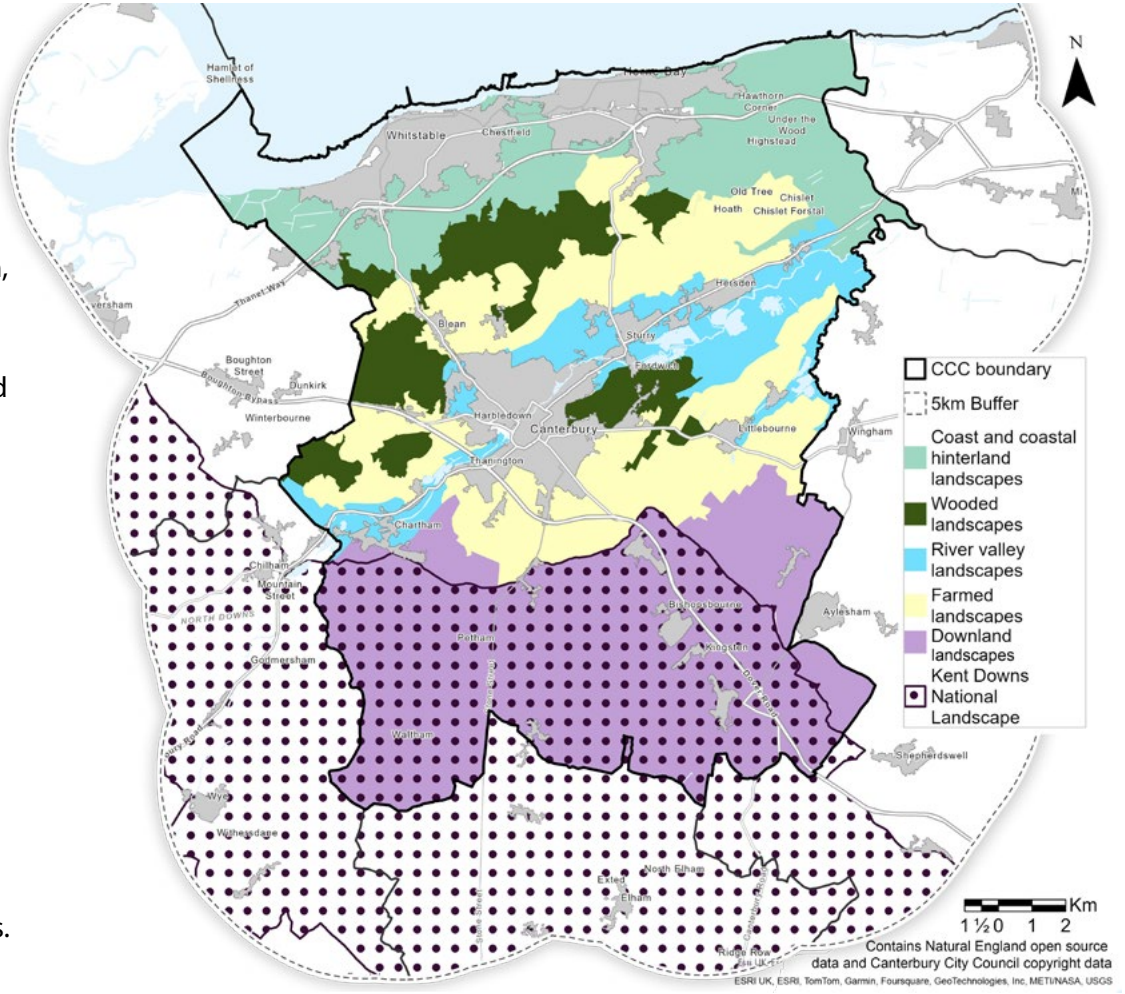
The landscapes of Canterbury run in broad sweeps across the district.

Overview of coastal and coastal hinterland landscapes

To the north of the district are coastal landscapes. Some undeveloped areas remain within the coastal towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable, including at Long Rock which lies between the two towns and is an area of shingle and wet grassland and an important site for bird species and moths. To the east of Herne Bay lie Bishopstone and Beltinge Cliffs and Reculver Country Park.

To the west of the towns at Graveney and Seasalter and along the eastern boundary bordering the Wantsum Channel is a low-lying, open landscape of grazing marshes and ditches which is important for overwintering birds.

To the south of the towns is a transitional landscape between the coast and The Blean woodlands, of undulating mixed arable lands with trees, hedgerows and some small pastures. This landscape is experiencing



Plan 1: Overview of Landscapes of Canterbury district

urbanisation from development and the intrusion of the A299, which creates a barrier for some wildlife, although there is one green bridge across the road at Chestfield Golf Course.

Overview of wooded landscapes

The Blean woodland complex is the most extensive of the wooded landscapes in southern England. The Blean lies on higher ground between the City of Canterbury to the south and the coast and coastal towns to the north, extending from the edge of the Wantsum Channel to the east to north of Chartham in the west. The woodlands here are extensive and, in part, well-connected and full of wildlife. Many of the woodlands are ancient meaning they are over 400 years old. Large areas are protected by national and international designations and owned and managed by conservation charities. There is an active project (The Wilder Blean) being taken forward with conservation partners and landowners to restore and connect habitats across The Blean woodlands.

Another wooded landscape lies to the east of Canterbury City. Chequers Wood and Old Park SSSIs are on the eastern outskirts of Canterbury City and valuable mosaic of ancient woodland, scrub and acid grassland. Further to the east are the woodlands, coppice and ancient deer park around Trenley Park Woodlands.

Overview of river valley landscapes

The Great Stour River cuts across the Canterbury district, entering at Chartham, flowing through the City of Canterbury and bringing nature into the city itself. The Little Stour is a much smaller river which flows from Littlebourne to join the Great Stour around Grove. The upper reaches are the Nailbourne – a river which only sporadically flows and which is sometimes dry. Both rivers are very rare chalk rivers.

Alongside the rivers are floodplain meadows, woodlands, including pockets of rare wet woodland, orchards, pastures and lakes formed from former gravel workings.

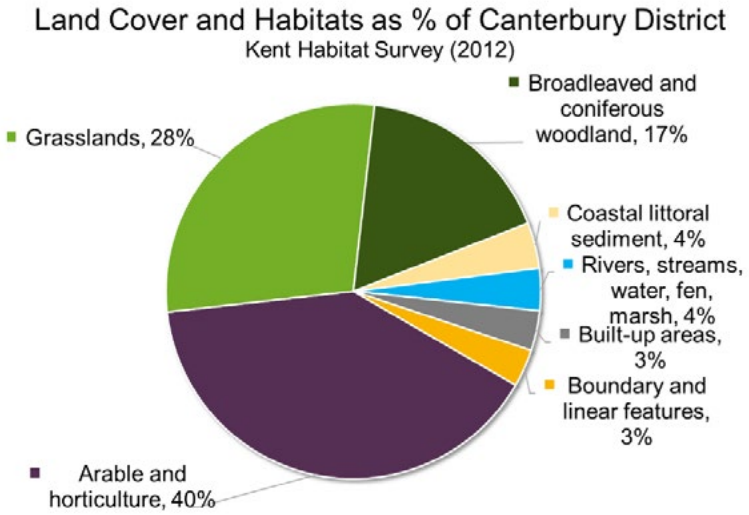
Overview of downland landscapes

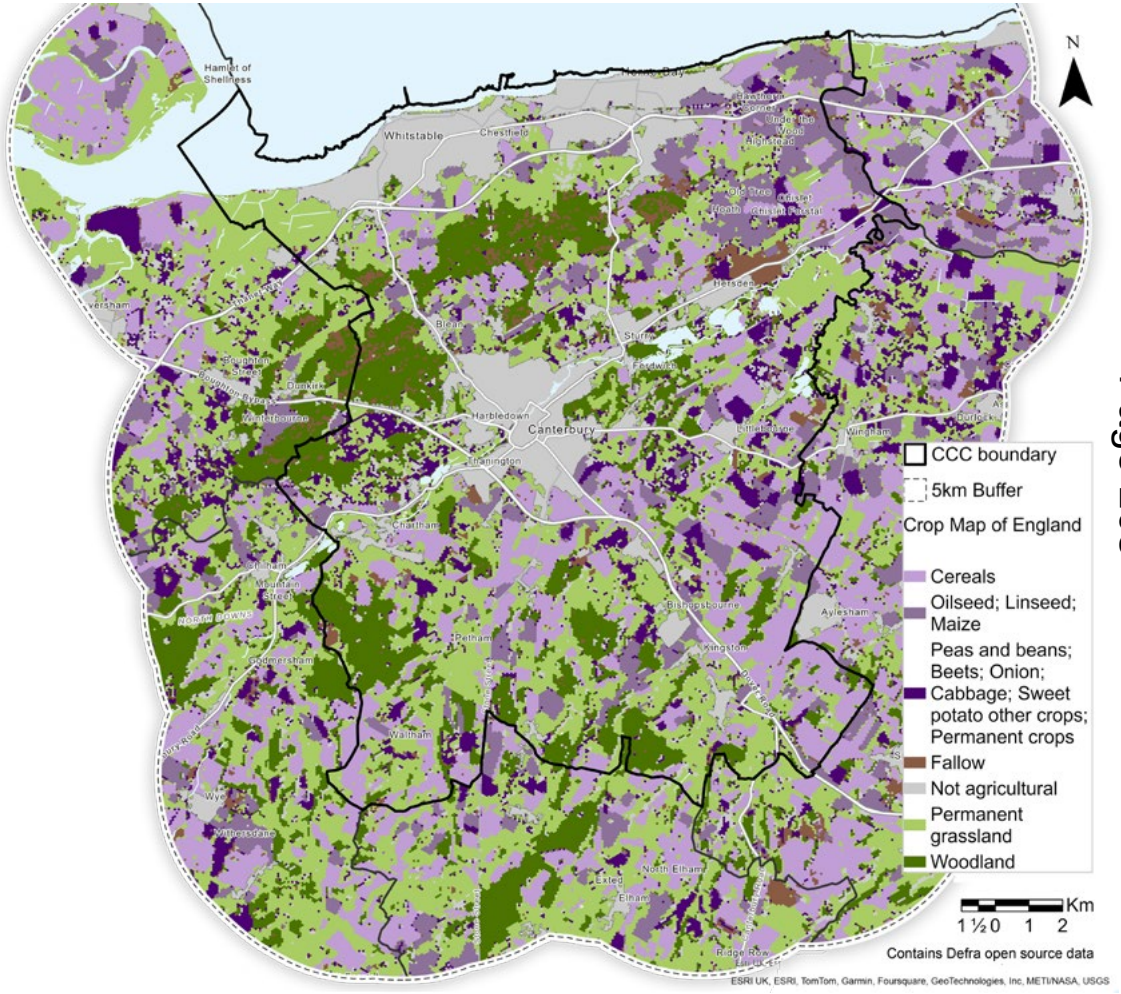
In the south of the district are the downland landscapes. Part of this area is recognised for its outstanding landscape beauty and is within the Kent Downs National Landscape. The downlands are a landscape of rolling hills and valleys, extensive woodland and hedgerows, especially on the western side of Canterbury district. It is here that there remain small areas of chalk grassland with their numerous orchids and other wildflowers, along with ancient woodlands. The eastern side is more open, with areas of large arable fields.

Land cover

The Kent Habitat Survey (2012) recorded that around 40% of the district is under arable and horticultural management (growing crops and fruit). As shown in Plan 2, most of this is in the eastern part of the district and south of the City of Canterbury.

Grasslands are the next highest land use cover, at 28%. These are to the north of the City of Canterbury and along the western side of the district and in the Kent Downs National Landscape. These are also the areas where there are the most woodlands.





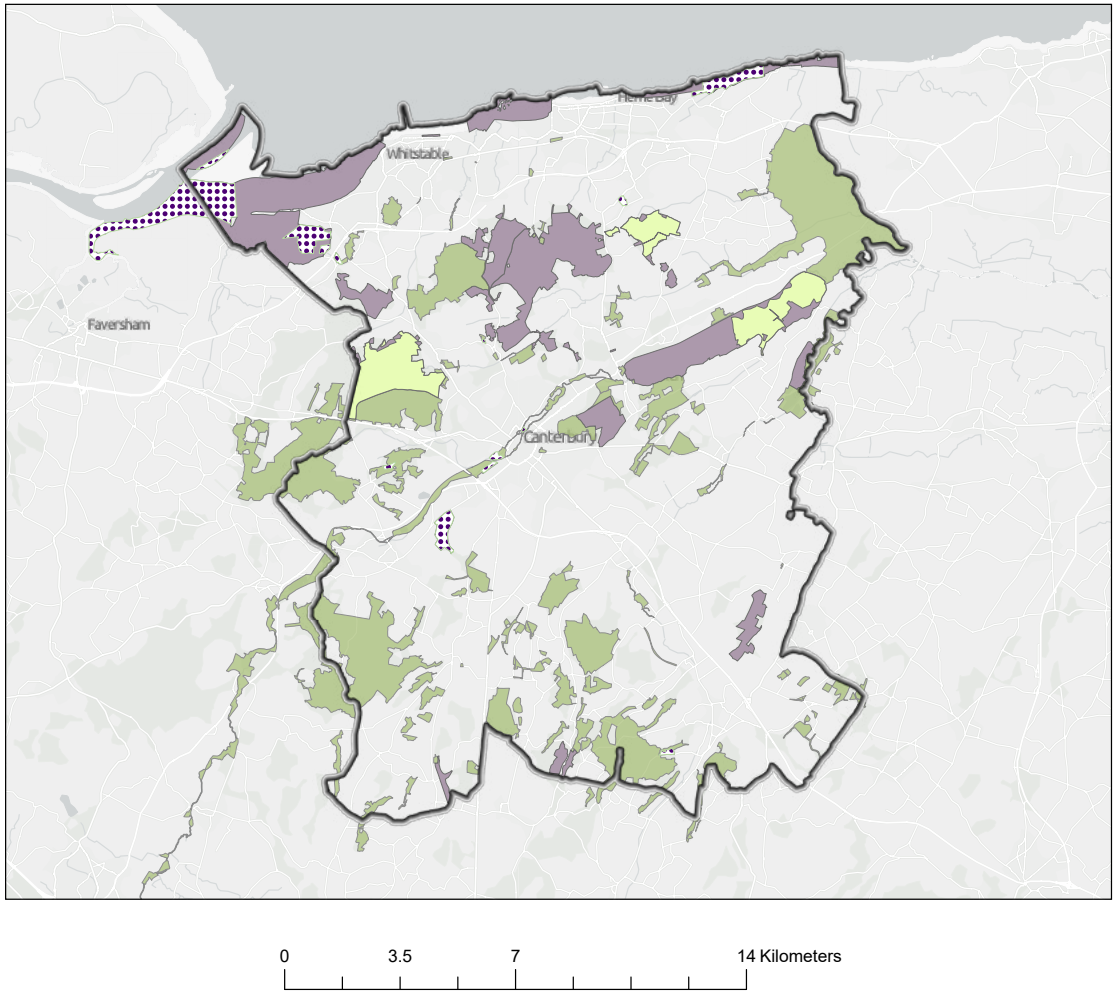
Plan 2: Overview of land cover Canterbury district

Designated nature sites

The richness of Canterbury's biodiversity is recognised in the number of sites which are designated for their nature conservation interest at a local, national and international level. Some sites fall within several designations.

Nationally Important Sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are of national biodiversity importance. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) represent the best examples of SSSIs.

Locally Important Sites: Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are locally designated sites which are important for people and wildlife. There is usually public access. Local Wildlife Sites are also sites which are identified as being of local significance for nature.



Plan 3: Overview of Locally and Nationally Designated Sites

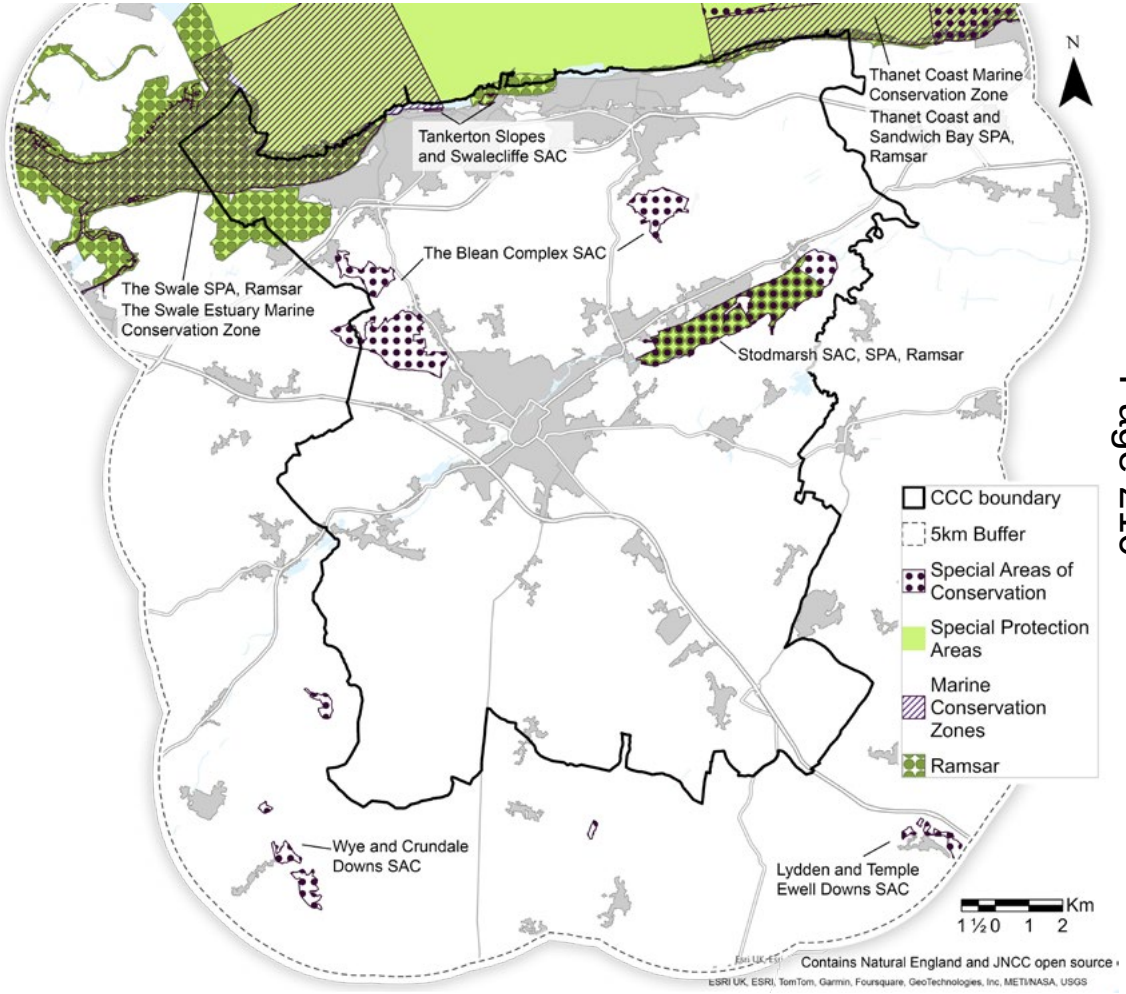
Internationally Important Sites: Several sites in Canterbury district are designated for their international significance. Special Protection Areas (SPA) are protected to safeguard the habitats of migratory and particularly threatened birds; Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are protected for their habitats and Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance.

Marine Conservation Zones: There are two nationally designated Marine Conservation Zones in the district: The Swale Estuary Marine Conservation Zone and the Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone.

Summary of designated sites

Designation	Number	Area in district
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	14	3,601 ha
Special Area of Conservation (overlaps SSSIs)	3	1760 ha
Special Protection Area 1 (overlaps SSSIs)	3	1069 ha
Ramsar (some overlap SSSIs)	3	1083 ha
National Nature Reserve (overlaps SSSIs)	2	708 ha
Local Nature Reserves (some overlap SSSIs)	11	401 ha
Local Wildlife Sites	49	3,953 ha

The designations totalled above overlap in many cases. The total of land designated for nature in Canterbury district is 7584 hectares, or 22% of Canterbury district.



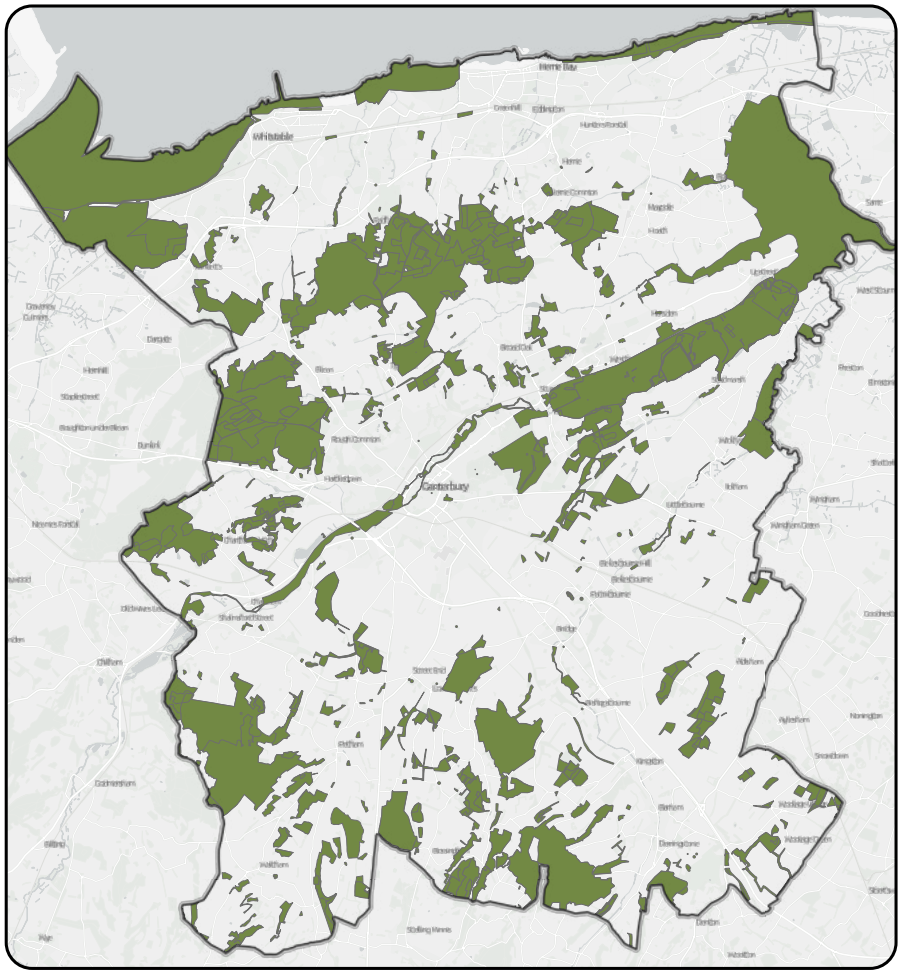
Plan 4: Overview of internationally designated sites

Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity in the Canterbury district

The KMLNRS has mapped Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) and Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB).

The APIB map captures all land in the Canterbury district that has legal or policy protection for its habitats or species. This includes Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and local nature reserves. The marine and coastal landscape has the highest level of protection, followed by the extensive ancient woodlands of the Blean.

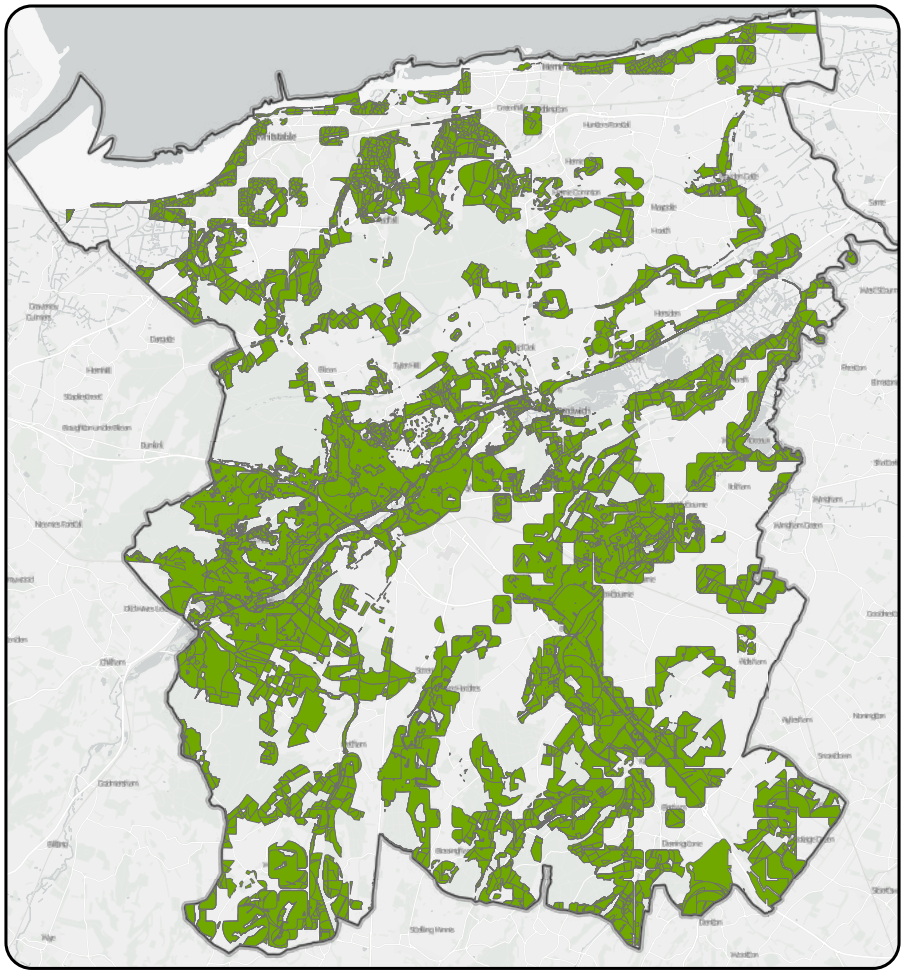
The APIB map identifies the core areas of existing biodiversity interest across the district, and maintaining these areas is a priority. The ACIB plan identifies areas outside the APIBs that, together, form opportunities to create new habitats and support species management, helping to connect and buffer the most important areas for biodiversity. Together, the APIB and ACIB inform the district's nature



Plan 5: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity

recovery vision and actions. We have therefore listed representative KMLNRS potential and wider measures alongside the actions promoted in this strategy:

- KMLNRS potential measures: actions or opportunities identified through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy process, such as habitat creation, restoration, enhancement, buffering, or better ecological connectivity.
- KMLNRS wider measures: related actions that may not be specific mapped KMLNRS priorities but still support the same aims— for example policy protections, management changes, partnership work, funding mechanisms, or complementary local initiatives.



Plan 5a: Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity

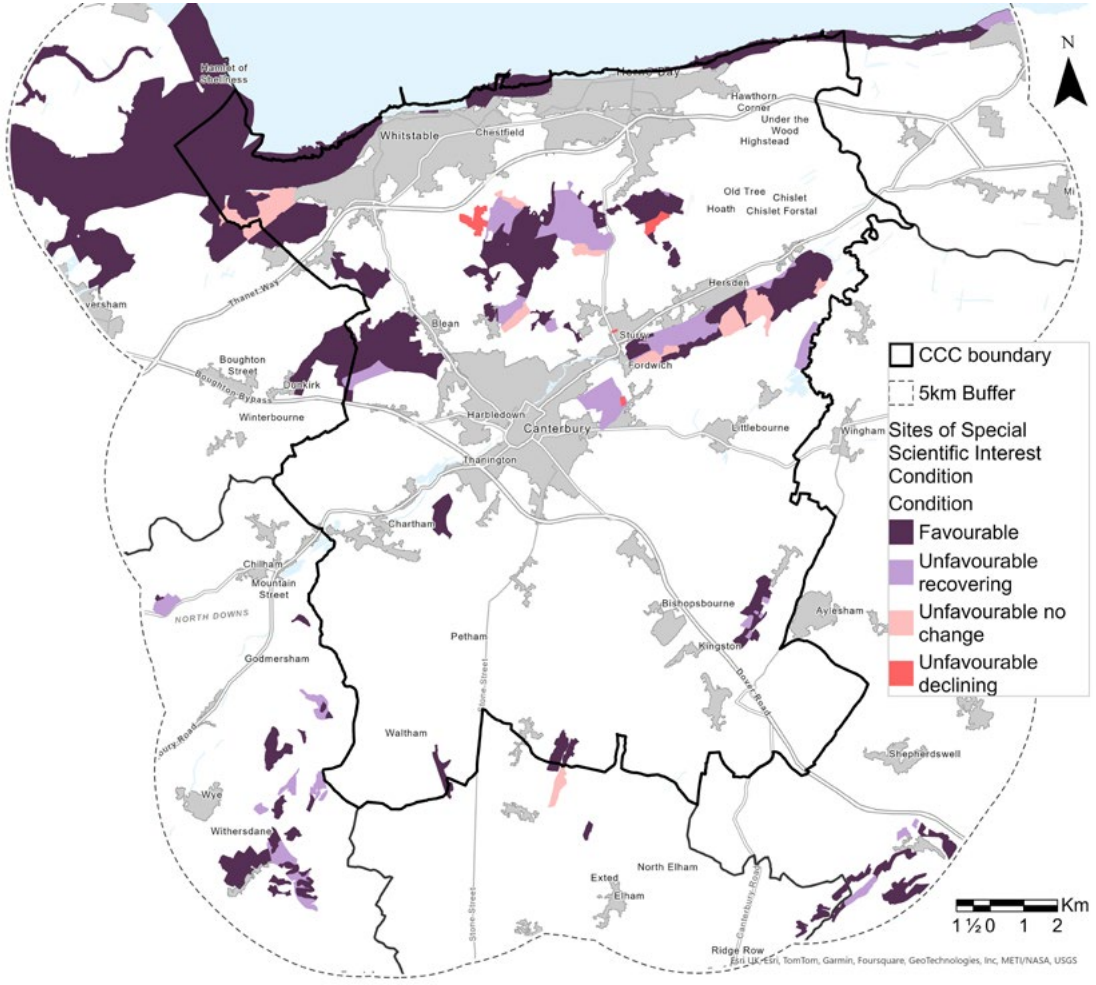
Condition of nationally important areas

Sites of Special Scientific Interest form the top tier of the core biodiversity network. These sites are assessed for their condition, although some of these assessments may have been carried out several years ago, they still provide information on the condition of the sites for biodiversity. The quality of the SSSIs in Canterbury district is 71%, which is slightly below the government's target of 75% of SSSIs in favourable condition. This compares with 69% for Kent in 2020.[5]

Some SSSIs etc are in the ownership of organisations managing them for wildlife and Canterbury City Council and nature conservation management on these sites is therefore secure.

Condition of Sites of Special Interest in Canterbury district[6]

Condition (Natural England data 2024)	Area hectares	%
Favourable	2,568	71%
Unfavourable recovering	648	18%
Unfavourable no change	327	9%
Unfavourable declining	58	2%



Plan 6: Sites of Special Interest – condition of units

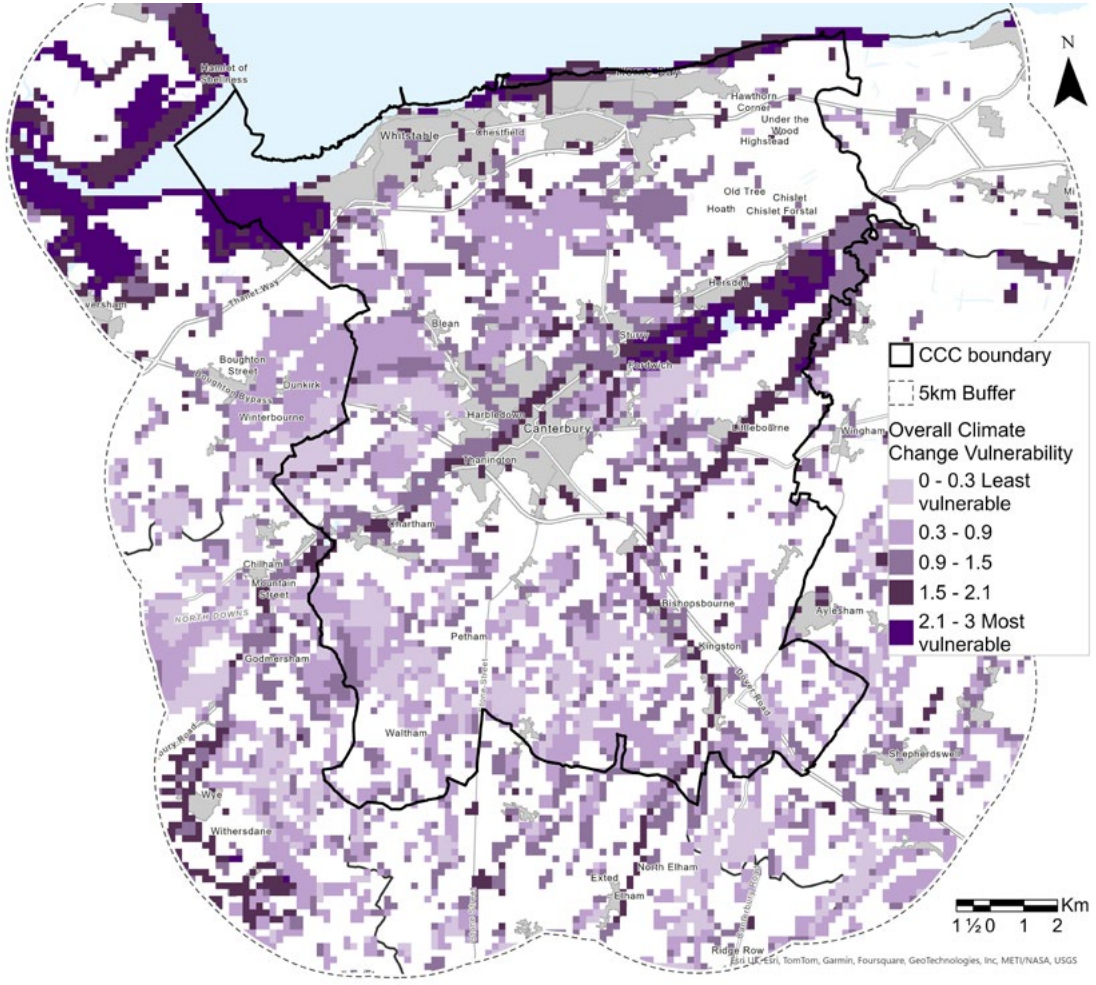
Climate change vulnerability

Climate change will create direct and indirect pressures on biodiversity. Many species and habitats are strongly influenced by temperature and rainfall and the interactions between these.

Natural England's climate change vulnerability model estimates the vulnerability of priority habitats on land. Areas which are not priority habitats are not included. Four measurements are used which together estimate climate change vulnerability:

- **Sensitivity to change** – each habitat type is classified as having high, medium or low sensitivity to climate change.
- **Habitat fragmentation** – measures how isolated areas of the same habitat are and how permeable the surrounding landscape is. Larger patches of habitat can support larger populations and are less susceptible to extremes, and better connections allow species to move in the landscape.
- **Variation in height and aspect** – less variation can increase vulnerability.
- **Management and condition** – poor condition and existing negative impacts can increase vulnerability.

Habitats which are highly sensitive with low capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, score higher and are more vulnerable.



Plan 7: Natural England climate change vulnerability model

Habitats which are less sensitive to climate change impacts and are more able to adapt are less vulnerable and score lower.

The guiding principles developed by the UK Biodiversity Partnership for biodiversity adaptation action guide to what is needed for biodiversity as the climate changes:

- Conserve existing biodiversity through conserving protected areas, high-quality habitats and the range and ecological variability of habitats and species
- Reduce sources of harm
- Develop ecologically resilient and varied landscapes through conserving and enhancing local variation within sites and habitats and making space for the natural development of rivers and coasts
- Establish ecological networks through habitat protection, restoration and creation
- Make decisions based on analysis of the causes of change and respond to changing conservation priorities
- Integrate adaptation and mitigation measures into conservation management, planning and practice

Overview: Highly vulnerable habitats - highly sensitive habitats with low capacity for adapting to climate change.

Areas	Reasons
Rivers and river corridors – River Stour, Little Stour and Nailbourne.	Rivers and river valleys are moderately sensitive.
Wetland areas – Stodmarsh and Seasalter.	Wetlands are sensitive (Seasalter maximum sensitivity and Stodmarsh moderate sensitivity).
Areas of highly fragmented habitats eg between The Blean and Whitstable/ Herne Bay, south of Canterbury.	In some areas habitat condition is not optimal and does not support adaptation to climate change.
Coastal habitats.	In some areas habitats are fragmented.

Overview: Moderately vulnerable - medium sensitivity and medium capacity to adapt to climate change, or low sensitivity but also a low capacity to adapt to change.

Areas	Reasons
Edges of larger blocks of habitats.	Greater fragmentation at the edges of larger habitat blocks.

Overview: Less vulnerable - Low sensitivity habitats and high capacity to adapt to climate change.

Areas	Reasons
Woodlands - The Blean and woodlands to the southwest of district.	Better connected habitats, less fragmentation.
	Habitats have low sensitivity to climate change.
	Condition is good

Part 4: Canterbury district's habitats and species



Heath Fritillary Butterfly

This section sets out the status of nature in Canterbury district, as far as is known. It highlights the habitats and some of the iconic species of the district.

Those habitats which have been identified by the Kent Nature Partnership as being priority habitats. These are marked with a green leaf.

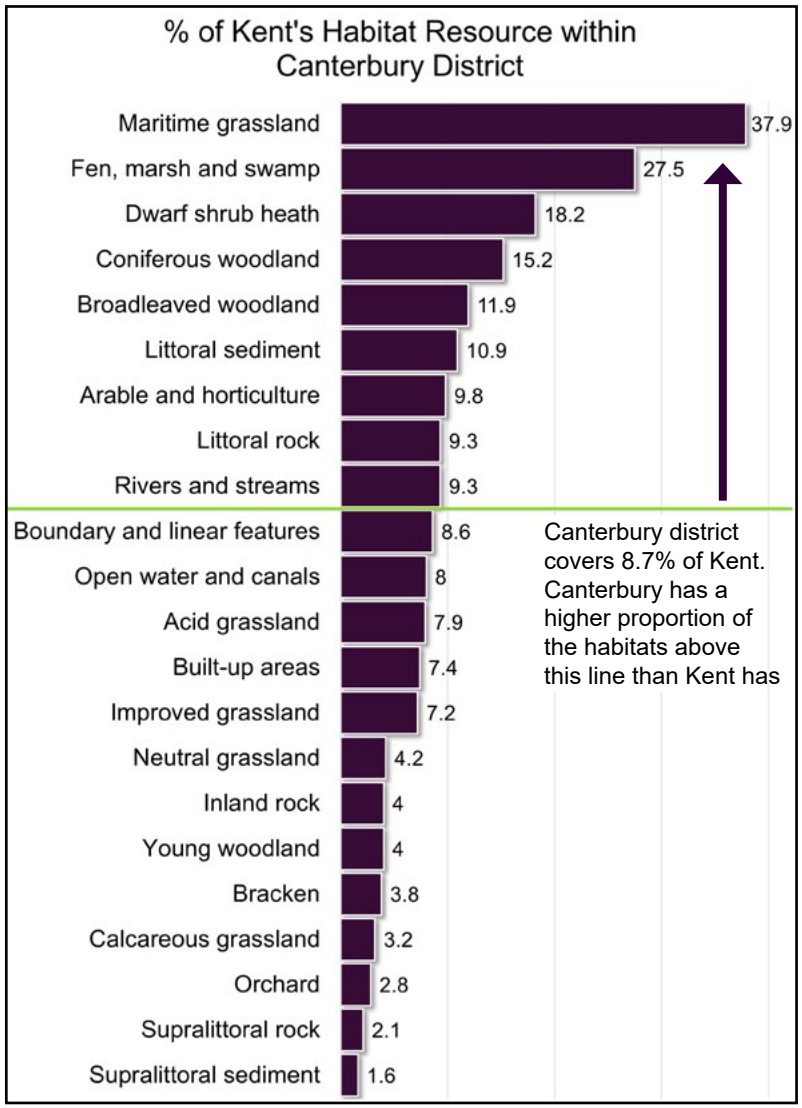
Those habitats which are UK priority habitats are marked with a purple leaf.

The Kent Nature Partnership has also highlighted priority and indicator species. These are marked with a purple butterfly.

The information available on trends, condition, pressures and threats to habitats and species is often at a Kent scale, rather than for Canterbury district. The most relevant information has been used, but further understanding at a district level will help to improve this strategy in the future.

The habitats and species on the next page are important in Canterbury district and are included in this strategy.

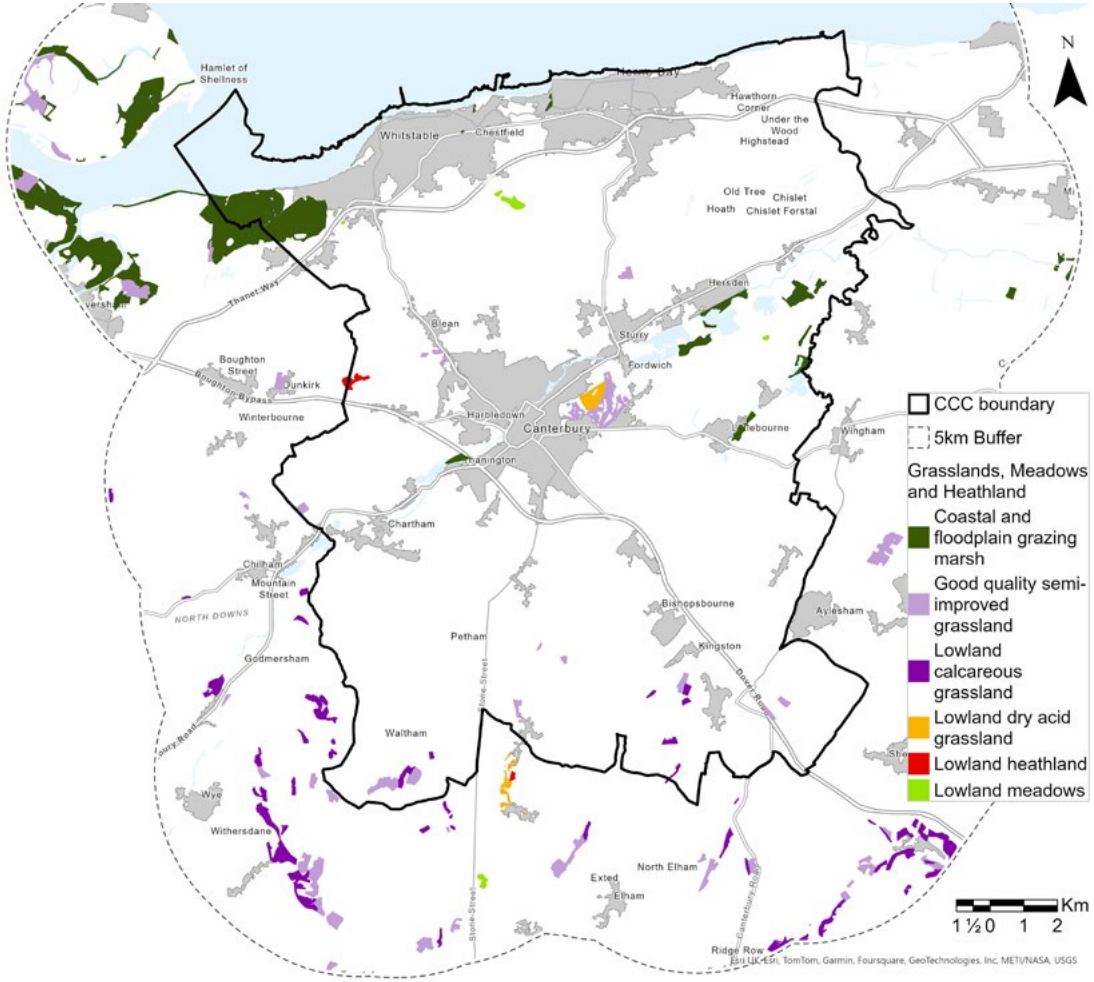
The chart to the right shows what percentage of the overall Kent resource of habitats is within Canterbury district.[7]



Grasslands, Meadow and Heathland Habitats

At 86% of all Canterbury district's grassland, improved grassland is the most abundant. However, the grasslands which are of the greatest importance for nature are those which have not been improved through adding fertiliser, using herbicides or through re-seeding – 14% of the district's grasslands. These often still contain a wide range of flower and herb species which, in turn, support an array of insects, including pollinators, and other wildlife. They can also be an important part in a mix of other habitats, such as scrub and woodland.

There are also many areas of grassland in other places – in parks, along roadsides and suburban streets as well as in thousands of gardens. While these are not usually of high conservation value, their nature conservation value can still be increased to support more wildlife and can become important for pollinator species. Action taken in many small grassland areas can add up to a large impact and benefit as shown through the widespread adoption of 'No Mow May' and 'Let it Bloom in June'.

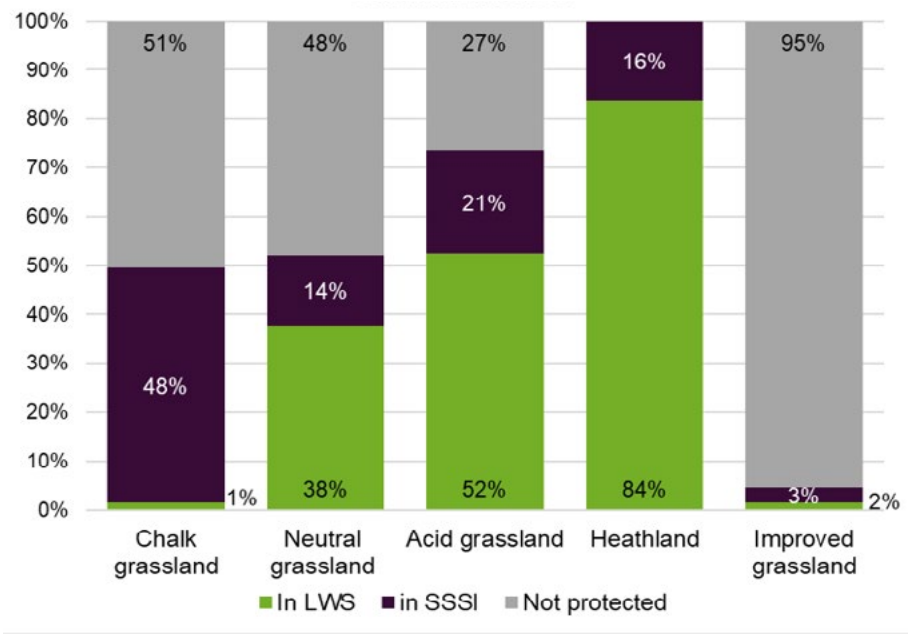


Plan 8: Grassland Habitats – Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory

Summary of grassland, meadow and heathland habitats in Canterbury district[8]

Habitat	Hectares	% of Kent's habitat in Canterbury district	% of all Canterbury's grassland habitat which is of this type	% cover of whole district	% in Local Wildlife Site or Site of Special Scientific Interest
Chalk grassland	61	3.2%	0.6%	0.2%	50%
Neutral grassland	1210	4.2%	12.4%	3.6%	52%
Acid grassland	40	7.9%	0.4%	0.1%	74%
Heathland	13.5	18.2%	0.1%	0.04%	100%
Improved grassland	8414	7.2%	86.4%	24.7%	5%
Total	**9739**	**-**	**100%**	**28.6%**	**-**

Proportion of grassland, meadow and heathland habitats in local wildlife sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest



Chalk grassland

Also known as calcareous grassland, this habitat is found on the Kent Downs in the south of the district. This grassland is iconic for Kent, with southern England being a stronghold for this internationally rare habitat. The habitat can be made up of a great diversity of rare and distinctive plants, including many species of orchid. Varied insect life is also found in this grassland including scarce species such as Adonis Blue.

Lowland meadows

These grasslands on neutral soils were traditionally managed as hay meadows, with grasses and flowers mingling together, and buzzing with insect life. Unfortunately, these types of grassland were the most productive to be improved for grazing or grass production. This is one of the habitats which has suffered the greatest loss in the last 80 years.

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Floodplain grazing marsh is created by draining river floodplains, while coastal grazing marsh is created through draining saltmarsh. The range of species in the grassland can be varied – sometimes there is a wide range of species but often the variety is quite low. The quality of the habitat largely depends on the intensity of farming, as these grasslands are productive pastures. The mix of grassland criss-crossed with drainage ditches, hollows and ponds, which is sometimes flooded, makes this a valuable habitat.

A range of species, such as water voles and water-loving rare insects are associated with it. Grazing marsh is also used as feeding and roosting habitat by internationally important populations of waterfowl.



Common Spotted Orchid

Climate change brings particular threats to this habitat. The early onset of the growing season may create less favourable conditions for the nesting birds associated with this habitat. Increases in water abstraction could alter the water table and lead to further drying. Changes in sea level could result in areas being lost and lead to saline water entering the habitat.

The largest area of grazing marsh is at Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes, west of Seasalter. Smaller areas of marsh are found along the River Stour and the Wantsum Channel.

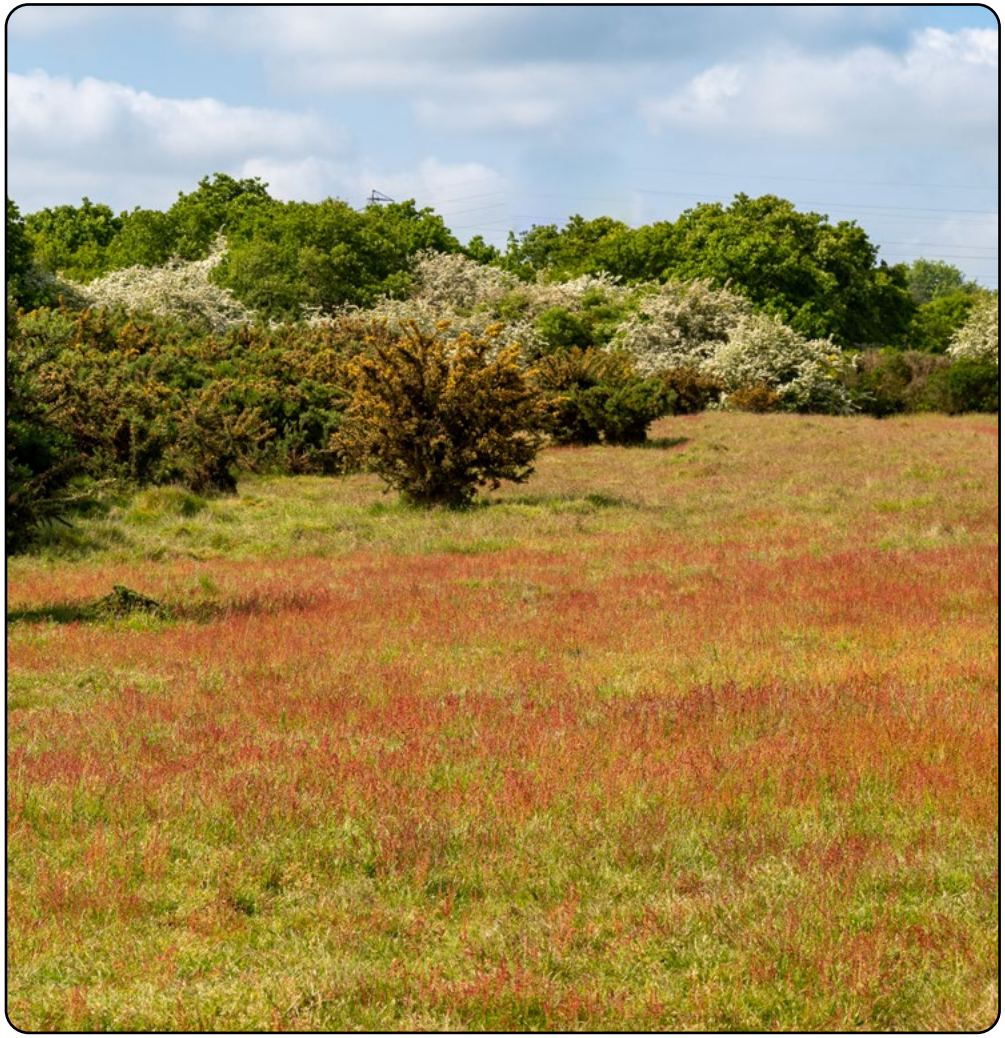
Acid grassland and heathland

Acid grassland is made up plant species which can tolerate sandy or gravelly acidic soils. It is rare in Kent, but there are some small areas within Canterbury district. The largest is within Chequer's Wood and Old Park SSSI to the east of Canterbury City. Some areas might be bare, with mosses and lichens. This habitat also supports some uncommon insect species including beetles.

Heathland is not grassland but is included in this section as it is often inter-mixed with acid grassland. It is a habitat of small, woody shrubs. To be heathland at least a quarter of the plants must be heather. It is a very rare habitat in Kent, and also in the Canterbury district; however, 18% of all of Kent's heathland is in Canterbury, making this an important habitat in the district. The main areas are in The Blean with some areas in the south of the district where acid soils lie on top of the chalk.

Semi-improved grassland

Semi-improved grassland has been partially improved for agriculture or other uses but still retains some of its biodiversity value. This grassland does not have the same level of nature interest as the other types of grassland described, but it is useful for conservation as it could be restored to support more wildlife, especially where it is near to other more valuable habitats.



Old Park Site of Special Scientific Interest

Our grassland, meadow and heathland species



Fisher's Estuarine Moth

- **Coastal grassland**
- A very rare moth, which feeds exclusively on the also very rare Hog's Fennel



Green-winged Orchid

- **Neutral and chalk grassland**
- A rare plant of unimproved grasslands



Redshank

- **Coastal grazing marsh**
- A bird of marshes and mudflats. As its name indicates - it has red legs.



Lapwing

- **Coastal and freshwater grazing marsh**
- A bird of wet grassland. Distinctive 'peewit' call. Forms large flocks.



Hog's Fennel

- **Coastal grassland**
- A very rare coastal plant restricted to north Kent and only a few other places in the UK



Shrill Carder Bee

- **Urban and coastal grassland**
- A very rare bumblebee only found in a few places in the UK



Skylark

- **Grassland**
- An iconic bird of grassland and farmland

Threats and pressures on grassland, meadow and heathland habitats

The following threats and pressures cause the loss or reduction in the nature conservation value of these habitats. The State of Nature in Kent Report shows that these threats and pressures are relevant to Kent and therefore very likely to be relevant to Canterbury district. However, information on the extent and impact within Canterbury district is not available.

Land management: Grasslands need to be managed for conservation with grazing – with the right level of animals – often the best way of doing this. Without management, scrub establishes. The Kent Habitat Survey recorded that this was the cause of the biggest loss of chalk grassland between 2003 and 2012. However, in the current farming economy it is often difficult to secure animals. Farmers are also reluctant to graze their stock on urban fringe sites or where there is public access due to fears over the safety of stock. Conversely, intensification of grazing, along with the addition of fertilisers and a move to silage from hay production also reduce the range of flowers. This, in turn, affects the number of pollinating insects. For wet grassland, including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, changes to land drainage can be negative.

Fragmentation: In many cases there are only small areas of these habitats left, and they are often isolated. This makes them particularly vulnerable – smaller sites are inherently more vulnerable to loss, and plant and animal species cannot move the distances between the sites. Roads and other barriers also decrease the connections between the sites.

Direct loss: Grasslands can be lost to development, roads, quarrying or a wide range of other development. Some grasslands may be ploughed for arable land or changed to other farming. Trees and woodlands are planted on grassland – it is important that new tree planting does not destroy valuable grassland habitats.

Increase in nutrients: The wide range of plants found in these grasslands and in heathland is due to the soil having low nutrients. Many plant species in these grasslands are very sensitive to an increase in soil nutrients and two thirds of wildflowers need low or medium levels of nitrogen. They are quickly lost when fertilisers are added and robust species such as Nettles take their place. Agricultural improvement has led to the estimated loss of 97% of lowland meadows since 1935.

Air pollution: Nitrogen which is deposited directly from the air and in rain also enriches the soil. This can be a significant route for nutrient increases in heathland and acid grassland, which are less likely to be improved for agriculture. Air pollution also creates more acidic conditions, upsetting the delicate balance of the habitats.

Climate change sensitivity of grassland, meadow and heathland habitats[9]		Chalk grassland	Lowland meadows	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Acid grassland	Heathland
	Overall climate change sensitivity	**Low**	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Medium**
Cause	**Potential impacts**					
Hotter summers	Flowering and seeding could change significantly, taking place earlier in the year.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Increase in bracken.				✓	✓
	Less favourable feeding and nesting conditions for birds associated with wet grassland habitats.			✓		
Drier summers	Drier conditions and drought will favour some species, for example deep-rooted species, and lead to changes in the composition of species. Loss of fungi, lichen and mosses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Habitats reliant on water could suffer due to less water.		✓	✓		✓
	Increased risk of fires.		✓		✓	✓
Wetter and warmer winters	More frequent flooding and increased nutrients could lead to changes in species. Flooding can increase risk of pollution.		✓	✓		✓
	Higher moisture and nutrients available in the soil leading to a change in species and increase in more competitive species.	✓			✓	✓
	Warmer winters could reduce frosts, essential for regeneration of heathland				✓	✓
Sea level rise	Loss of habitats due to sea level rise and ingress of saline water.			✓		
Economic	Changes in the economics of grazing and land management due to climate change impacts could lead to greater loss or could lead to abandonment.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

What our review of evidence has shown

Many grassland sites are small, dispersed and unprotected. We must act at scale to protect, expand and connect these habitats.
Biodiverse grassland, meadow and heathland habitats in the district are small and often each site is a considerable distance from nearby similar habitats. It is essential to protect the remaining non improved amenity grassland core sites as Local Wildlife Sites and ensure they are in good condition. We must also work to connect these sites through landscape-scale projects, working with partners. Priorities are The Blean, the River Stour corridor, The Wantsum, the Kent Downs National Landscape and in and around Old Park and Chequers Wood.

There is some protection of grassland, meadow and heathland habitats but not all areas are managed for nature conservation or in a good condition.
All the heathland and three quarters of the district's acid grassland are within a Local Wildlife Site or Site of Special Scientific Interest, and much is also in the custodianship of charities in The Blean. However, only around half of chalk grassland and neutral grassland is designated. Also, being within a Local Wildlife Site does not guarantee that nature conservation is being prioritised. Much of the lower quality grassland has no protection at all. Some parts of Sites of Special Scientific Interest – although highly protected – are not in favourable condition, for example parts of the Graveney Marshes around Seasalter.

Lower quality grassland habitats are also beneficial – and there are a lot of them. Increasing the diversity and wildlife abundance of these grasslands could have a significant impact.

The nature conservation value of grassland everywhere across the district could be improved. This could be through planting or wildflowers or improving management through relaxed mowing regimes.

We must work with partners to effect meaningful change.
Nature conservation grasslands need management through grazing or cutting. Whether this happens often depends on the wider agricultural context – farming economics and whether grants are available for landowners. Influencing this is not in the control of Canterbury City Council. However, the Council can work with and support others such as the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership to encourage and support landowners. Natural England's East Kent grasslands project has targeted southern parts of the district over 25-30 years to create species-rich grasslands and create landscape-scale networks of linked wildflower grasslands. This work is now showing impressive results for many species including butterflies and farmland birds. The Council can continue to advocate for such projects.

Ensure loss of lower quality grassland through development is compensated for and improvements made.
Biodiversity Net Gain and policies in the Kent and Medway LNRS will help to ensure grassland suitable for wildlife will be created, with developers being encouraged to include wildlife-rich new grasslands in developments.

Actions supporting grassland, meadow and heathland habitats and species

- BA6: Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership (RSPB, KWT, FC, CCC and WT) to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery through the delivery of 10 key schemes over the next five years.
- BA7: Work in partnership to deliver the Stour Valley Restore initiative, promote biodiversity opportunities along the Great River Stour at Wincheap Meadows, Bingley Island and Fordwich Meadows, and explore the Broad Oak Reservoir biodiversity gain and the establishment of a Great Stour Regional Park.
- BA8: Support partnership opportunities for landscape-scale works within the Wantsum Channel, connections to The Blean and Pegwell Bay E3 initiative, and Canterbury to Coast.
- BA14: Utilise the KMLNRS to identify and promote positive land management and the delivery of biodiversity outcomes at key landscapes and sites such as The Blean complex, Seasalter, the Wantsum Channel, Old Park, and Larkey Valley Woods.
- BA17: Support Contracts and CANENCO's delivery of biodiversity positive grounds maintenance through provision of training and increased awareness.
- BA20: Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the Canterbury Riverside Strategy.
- 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.
- 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.
- BA30: Reference KMLNRS in the provision of SuDS and semi natural open space, and delivery of 20% canopy cover and 20% BNG, making maximum use of the opportunity to strengthen habitat connectivity in pre-application and planning decisions.

Related actions in Canterbury City Council strategies

Green infrastructure strategy

- Urban greening, managing greenspaces for biodiversity, including parks and amenity greenspaces.
- Managing CCC owned land to maximise biodiversity.
- Improving biodiversity in and around Old Park.
- Landscape-scale biodiversity: including chalk grassland (Kent Downs National Landscape) and heathland (The Blean).
- Sets out strategic green corridors along which to improve biodiversity.

Pollinator action plan

- Grassland management for pollinators; improving floristic diversity.
- Creating new flower-rich grassland in rural and urban areas.
- Creating pollinator corridors.

Canterbury tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy

- Principle that tree expansion should not take place on high biodiversity value grassland or heathland.

Canterbury riverside strategy

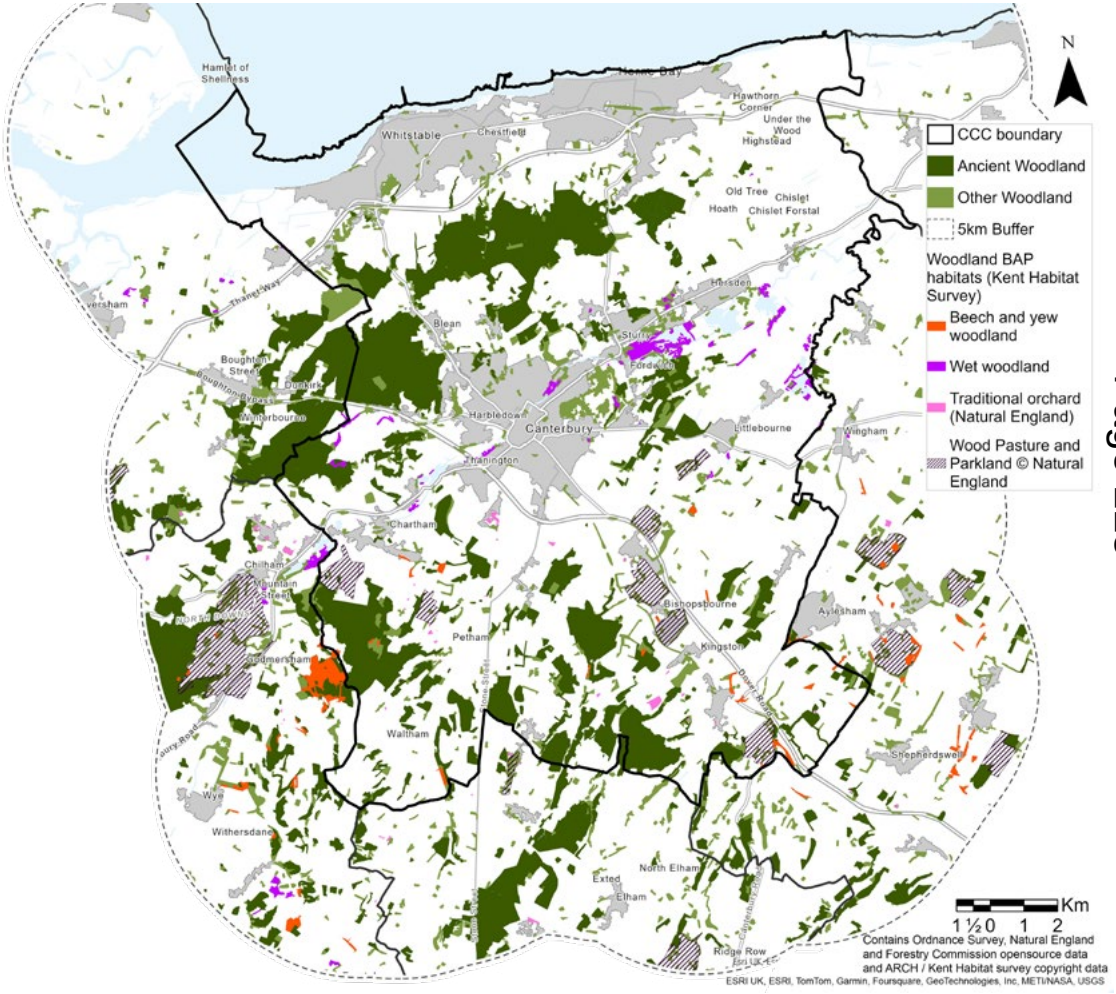
- Riverside habitat enhancement, including for pollinators.
- Management of riverside Local Nature Reserves and other greenspaces.

Woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub

Canterbury district has some of Kent's largest and most connected blocks of woodland, making them outstanding for wildlife. The district has more than its share of many woodland priority habitats, including all of Kent's internationally protected oak-hornbeam woodland. The Kent Habitat Survey recorded that 15.6% of the district is woodland.

There are large blocks of connected woodland in The Blean, stretching across the entire area between Whitstable and Herne Bay and City of Canterbury and westwards into neighbouring Swale borough. Similarly, to the southwest of Canterbury City are many woodlands which connect across the Kent Downs National Landscape. These link to The Blean at Chilham. To the east of the City of Canterbury lies a network of woodlands along the Stour Valley. These extend into City of Canterbury through the Chequers Wood and Old Park Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Around three-quarters of Canterbury district's woodlands are ancient (76%). Ancient woods have persisted since 1600 and are relatively undisturbed by human development. As a result, they are unique and complex communities of plants, fungi, insects and other microorganisms.

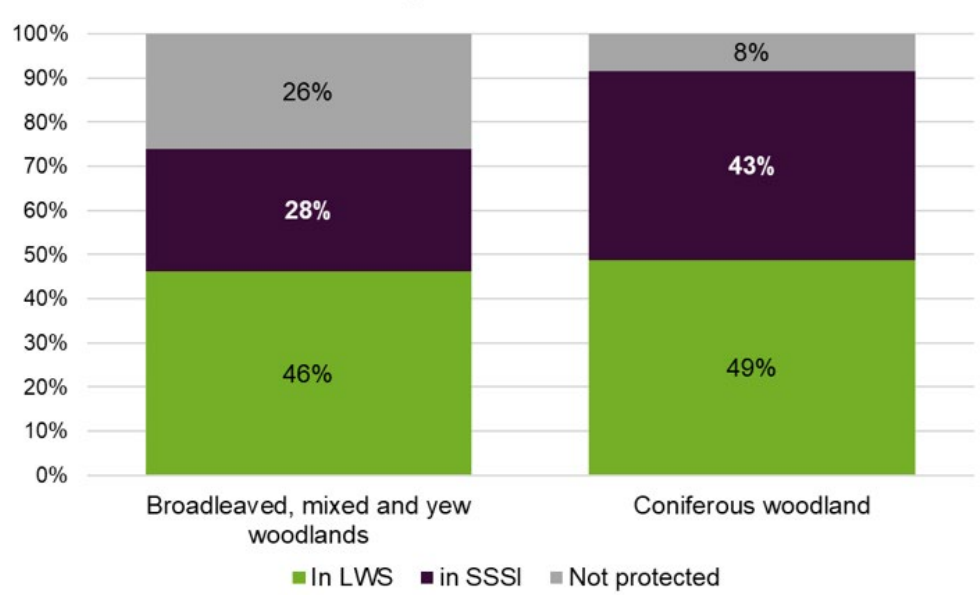


Plan 9: Woodland Habitats

Summary of woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub habitats in Canterbury district[10]

Habitat	Hectares	% of Kent's habitat in Canterbury district	% of all Canterbury's grassland habitat which is of this type	% cover of whole district	% in Local Wildlife Site or Site of Special Scientific Interest
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodlands	5292.0	11.9%	91.2%	15.6%	46%
Coniferous woodland	510.1	15.2%	8.8%	1.5%	49%
Total	**5802.1**	**-**	**100%**	**17%**	**-**

Proportion of woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub habitats in local wildlife sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest



Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

This woodland can take many forms and have a wide range of trees and species associated with it. Deciduous woodland may be of ancient or recent origin and can either arise from natural regeneration or having been planted. These woodlands have a canopy of large trees, often Oak or Ash trees, with smaller trees and shrubs growing beneath. There can be an array of wildflowers, including in some woodlands, carpets of bluebells. They can support a multitude of insect species, including butterflies, and are home to many bird species. These woodlands are found throughout Canterbury district.

Lowland Beech and Yew woodland

Lowland beech and yew woodland is found in isolated patches on the chalk plateaus in the south of the district and is a distinctive feature of the Kent Downs National Landscape. It is particularly valuable for insect species which need dead wood and can be home to very rare orchids.



Ancient Woodland – Chequers Wood

Wet woodland

Wet woodland grows on poorly drained or seasonally flooded land. Trees such as Alder, willows and birches thrive in this habitat. Wet and decaying wood create ideal areas for rare insects along with mosses, liverworts and fungi. This habitat is scarce in Kent and has been declining. In Canterbury District this habitat is found around Fordwich and Stodmarsh and in smaller areas alongside the Great Stour and other rivers and streams.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are important landscape, heritage and habitat features and connect wildlife. In some parts of the district there are species-rich hedgerows of high wildlife value. In other areas there are distinctive shelterbelts, traditionally grown to protect growing fruit. Hedges in urban areas link green spaces. Hedgerow trees are also an important element of hedgerows.

Hedgerows have declined due to arable intensification and insensitive or lack of management. Diseases such as Dutch Elm disease have hastened their decline and Ash dieback will have an increasingly detrimental effect.

There is no data on the length or condition of hedgerows in the district but the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment shows that networks of good condition hedges remain in some areas, for example near The Blean. However, hedgerows have become significantly degraded between Whitstable and Herne Bay and to the east and south of the City of Canterbury.

Traditional orchards

Traditional orchards are with large, spreading trees, planted at low densities with grazing livestock. Individual trees are long-lived. They host a range of species such as bats which roost in hollow trunks and woodpeckers. Species rely on the fallen deadwood including reptiles and amphibians and insect species such as rare beetles. There are some traditional orchards in the south of the district mainly in the Kent Downs National Landscape.



Traditional Orchard

Wood-pasture and parkland

Wood pasture and parkland have been managed through grazing, with scattered trees across the landscape. They are an important part of cultural and landscape heritage and often have high biodiversity value. Trees are often pollarded – cut around 2.5 metres from the ground – to prevent grazing animals from eating regrowing wood. These are often ancient trees, although the area may not be listed as ancient woodland. There are several areas of wood-pasture and parkland habitat in the south of the district.

Scrub habitat

Scrub is often regarded as a habitat between the transition from grassland to woodland. However, it can be an extremely valuable habitat in its own right and a habitat which supports many species. Rare bird species such as Nightingale and Turtle Dove depend on this habitat. Mammals, reptiles, insects and birds all use scrub for shelter, breeding and food sources.

It often forms part of other habitats. Sometimes this can be detrimental if scrub is allowed to spread unchecked, for example growing over species-rich grassland. However, if it is managed, scrub can be a valuable component of the wider habitat. It can also form a useful transition zone around woodlands.

There is no information on the extent of scrub habitats in Canterbury district.



Wood Anemones in Ancient Woodland – Old Park

Our woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub species



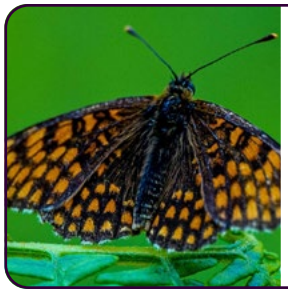
Dormouse

- **Woodland and Hedgerows**
- Endangered mammal, lives in coppice woodland



Nightingale

- **Woodland and Scrub**
- Known for their melodic song, these birds are confined to southern England



Heath Fritillary

- **Coppice woodland**
- One of the UK's rarest butterflies, with a stronghold in The Blean



Reptiles and Ambhibians

- **Woodland, Hedgerows and Scrub**
- Range of species found in woodland edges, clearings and scrub



Lady Orchid

- **Chalk Woodland**
- A rare plant of chalky woodlands



Turtle Dove

- **Scrub and Farmland**
- One of the UK's rarest farmland birds, these birds also need scrub to nest

Threats and pressures on woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub habitats

Ash dieback: Ash dieback[11] is the most significant tree disease to affect the UK since Dutch Elm disease. It will lead to the decline and possible death of the majority of native Ash trees in Britain. The fungus spreads more readily in woodland settings where trees are in close proximity. While some trees may have some tolerance to the disease, research suggests mortality of between 70-85% in a woodland setting.[12] There is currently no cure for Ash dieback and no clear method for stopping its spread.

Increased pests and diseases: The number and range of pests and diseases is likely to increase as the climate changes, with Kent likely to be on the frontline and affected before the rest of the UK.[13] Some of the pests and diseases of concern can have devasting effects on woodlands.

Management of woodlands: Managed woodlands can support a greater variety of wildlife than those which are unmanaged, particularly where management such as coppicing has stopped. Managing a woodland, if carried out appropriately, can create a range of habitats and structural diversity. Conversely, lack of management, or inappropriate management, can have a significant detrimental effect on the biodiversity of woodlands.

Invasive non-native species: Some wet woodlands are affected by invasive non-native species such as Australian Swamp Stonecrop or Himalayan Balsam. Our native Bluebell is at risk because it hybridises with its introduced Spanish cousin. Other species such as Rhododendron, Cherry Laurel and Periwinkle can dominate woodlands leaving less room for native flora.

Recreational use: Access to woodlands is important for health and wellbeing, but sometimes if the level is too high it can lead to trampling and disturbance of wildlife, especially by dogs. Fly tipping, litter, dumping of garden waste and fires can also damage woodlands.

Wood lotting: Wood lotting is where small parcels of woodlands are sold to new owners. Plots may fall out of management or may be managed inappropriately. When this occurs over large, connected areas of woodland it becomes an issue. There is some evidence that this has taken place in the district, but the extent is unknown.

Climate change sensitivity of woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub habitats[14]		Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Lowland beech and yew woodland	Hedgerows	Wet woodland	Wood-pasture and parkland	Traditional orchards
	Overall climate change sensitivity	**Low**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Low**
Cause	**Potential impacts**						
Hotter summers	Increased sun-scorch on leaves and stress on trees.		✓			✓	
	Longer growing season, leading to change in species composition, growing patterns and for some habitats increased management requirements.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drier summers	Drought conditions leading to stress on trees. Particular stress on veteran and ancient trees.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Changes in species composition of trees and flora.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Wetter and warmer winters	Higher survival of over-wintering insect pests leading to greater population and stress on trees and increased prevalence of diseases.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Fewer frost and winter chills affecting dormancy and success of berry germination			✓			✓
	Waterlogging of soils causing die-back in trees.	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Wetter soils lead to root instability and loss of trees, especially in high winds.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Economic	Changes in the economics of agriculture potentially leading to intensification.			✓			✓
	Management could become more difficult in winter.				✓		
	Increased planting of non-native species	✓	✓				

What our review of evidence has shown

Canterbury district is outstanding for its woodland. It is not only important in Kent but also in southeast England

Many areas of Canterbury district have high numbers of trees and woodlands, higher than the Kent average. In some areas, notably The Blean and in the Kent Downs National Landscape, these are in large joined up blocks. There are also significant areas of ancient woodland and in some parts of the district most of the woodland is ancient.

There are opportunities to work at a large scale to make significant impacts for nature

Canterbury's extensive woodlands provide opportunities to make a significant impact through co-ordinated biodiversity action. An example of this is The Blean where multiple partners are working together. There are opportunities to further expand and connect woodlands and to restore once ancient woodlands which are now conifer plantations. Other priority areas include the Kent Downs National Landscape and east of Canterbury City around Chequers Wood.

Trees are under increasing threat

Trees face increasing numbers of pests and diseases, including Ash dieback, and many others. They also face threats from climate change due to flooding, drought, high winds and extreme temperatures. Increasing genetic diversity of tree stock and the variety of species in woodlands is important to help trees to adapt to these threats. Management of woodlands can also help to make sure woodlands are more resilient.

There are opportunities to expand trees, woodlands and hedgerows, but this must be done in the right way

Expansion of trees, woodlands and hedgerows should be in keeping with the landscape and should not take place on sites which already have valuable habitats, for example flower-rich grasslands. Hedgerows are important features to connect to form wildlife corridors. Natural regeneration can be preferable to planting trees in many cases. If trees are planted, it is essential to choose the right tree for the right place and to make sure they are looked after following planting.

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows provide many benefits

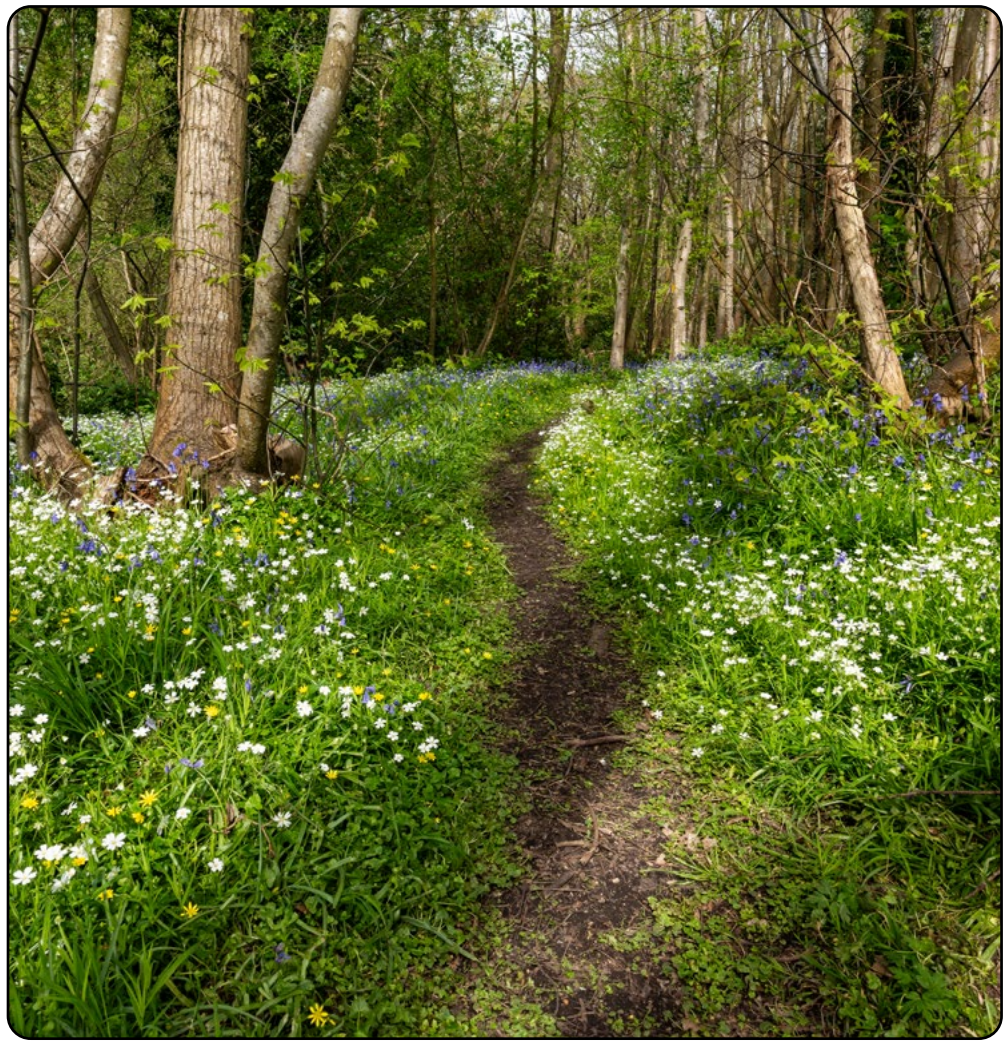
Trees store carbon, support biodiversity and pollinators, clean the soil and water and provide food, fuel and wood. They help create places which increase health and mental wellbeing. Trees are also important in urban areas, providing cooling, cleaning the air, supporting nature and making attractive places for people to live. Ensuring that developers provide more trees in new housing sites is important to create attractive places to live.

Scrub habitats are also important for wildlife, but we know less about them

Scrub is a transition phase between grassland and woodland. It provides shelter, food, and breeding areas for birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals, bats and pollinator species. Certain types of scrub are important for one of our rarest birds, the Turtle Dove. However, we have less information on where there is scrub and the quantity of it as it often forms a part of other habitats.

Actions supporting woodlands, trees, hedgerows and scrub habitats and species

- BA3: Undertake a strategic review of landowners' and farmers' willingness to deliver biodiversity actions and present results in the form of a "Willingness Map."
- BA6: Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership (RSPB, KWT, FC, CCC and WT) to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery through the delivery of 10 key schemes over the next five years.
- BA8: Support partnership opportunities for landscape-scale works within the Wantsum Channel, connections to The Blean and Pegwell Bay E3 initiative, and Canterbury to Coast.
- BA12: Promote the delivery of the 20 km long Canterbury Hedge and other tree planting initiatives across the district – seeking to plant and manage a minimum of 3 km of hedgerow in the next five years.
- BA14: Utilise the KMLNRS to identify and promote positive land management and the delivery of biodiversity outcomes at key landscapes and sites such as The Blean complex, Seasalter, the Wantsum Channel, Old Park, and Larkey Valley Woods.
- BA25: 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.
- BA29: Enable the enforcement of best practice tree planting and maintenance on all development sites.



Ancient Woodland – Chequers Wood

Related actions in Canterbury City Council strategies

Green infrastructure strategy

- Retention and planting of trees on development sites.
- Protection and management of ancient woodlands
- Landscape-scale biodiversity: including woodlands – The Blean and East Kent Woodlands.
- Urban greening including street trees.
- Managing CCC owned land to maximise biodiversity.
- Improving biodiversity in and around Old Park.
- Sets out strategic green corridors along which to improve biodiversity, including trees and woodlands.
- Expand Duncan Down and protect Gorrell Wood.

Canterbury tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy

- Increase canopy cover across the district – in the form of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.
- Prioritise natural regeneration of trees.
- Increase street trees, including in new developments.
- Protecting existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
- Increase the length and quality of hedgerows.
- Measures to protect and respond to the threats to trees and woodlands from pests and diseases and the impacts of climate change.
- Woodlands in CCC ownership to be managed for wildlife, tree health and longevity.
- Provide information and support for communities and partners to develop and deliver projects around trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

Pollinator action plan

- Use of flowering trees to provide for pollinators.

Canterbury riverside strategy

- Trees along the riverbank can help to provide cooling to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Native planting in some sections of the river as part of enhancements.
- Protection of scarce wet woodland along the river.

The coast and sea

From Graveney Marshes in the west, through to Reculver in the east, the coastline and offshore marine areas of Canterbury are incredibly special places for nature.

Large sections of the coast and sea are protected for nature. Offshore lies the Outer Thames Estuary Marine Protected Area, protected for supporting red-throated diver, common tern and little tern.

Closer inland are two Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) – The Swale Estuary MCZ and the Thanet Coast MCZ. These are nationally designated sites to protect the diverse species they support in the variety of sediments and for their reefs.

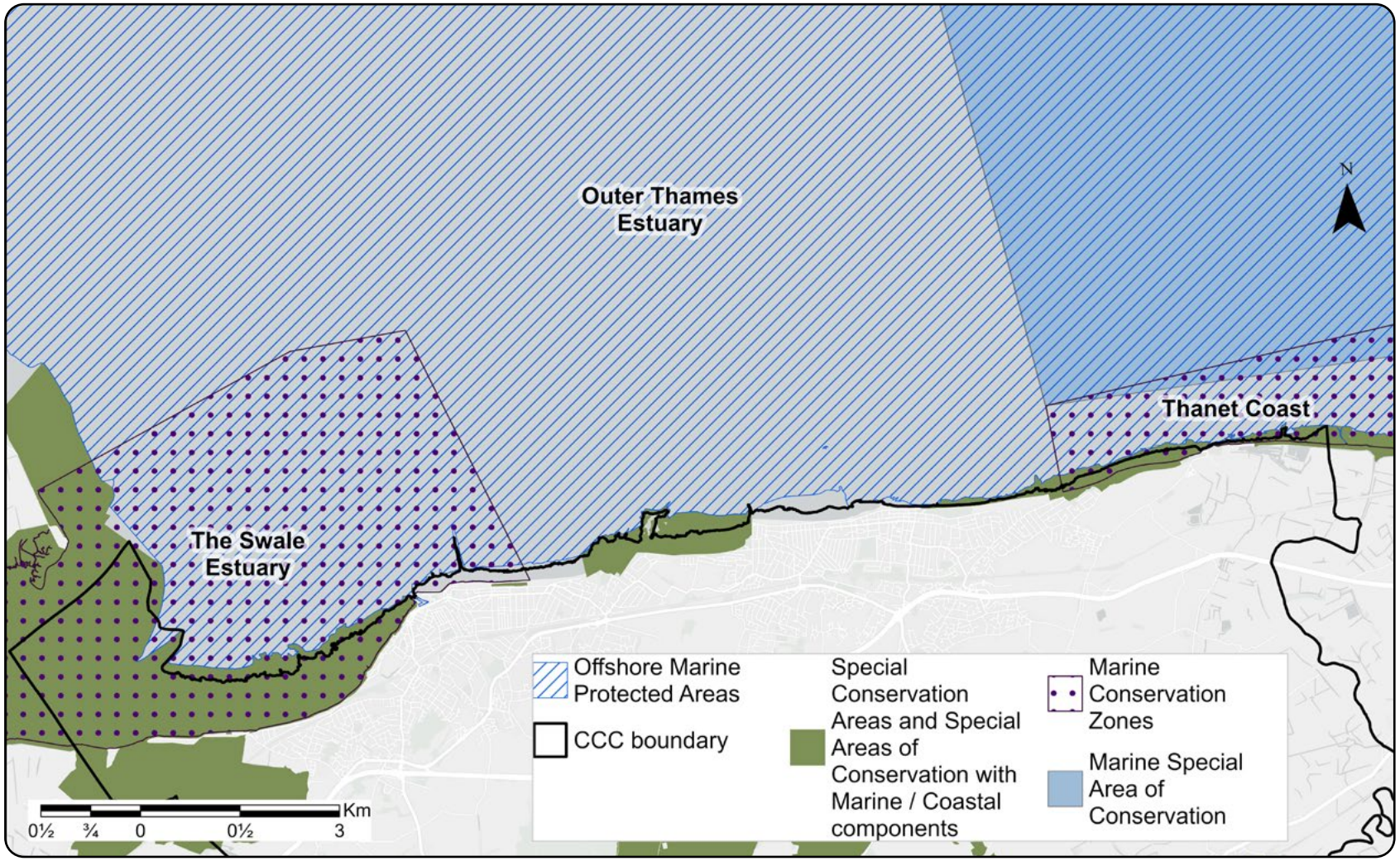
There are further inshore and land-based Special Protection Areas covering the eastern and western sections of the coast, designated for their international importance for overwintering birds. There is also a Special Area of Conservation - Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe – designated for the Fisher's Estuarine Moth which inhabits the coastal grassland.

Although large sections of the coast are developed there are very important areas for wildlife even near to urban areas, for example at Long Rock, Tankerton Slopes and Beltinge and Bishopstone Cliffs.

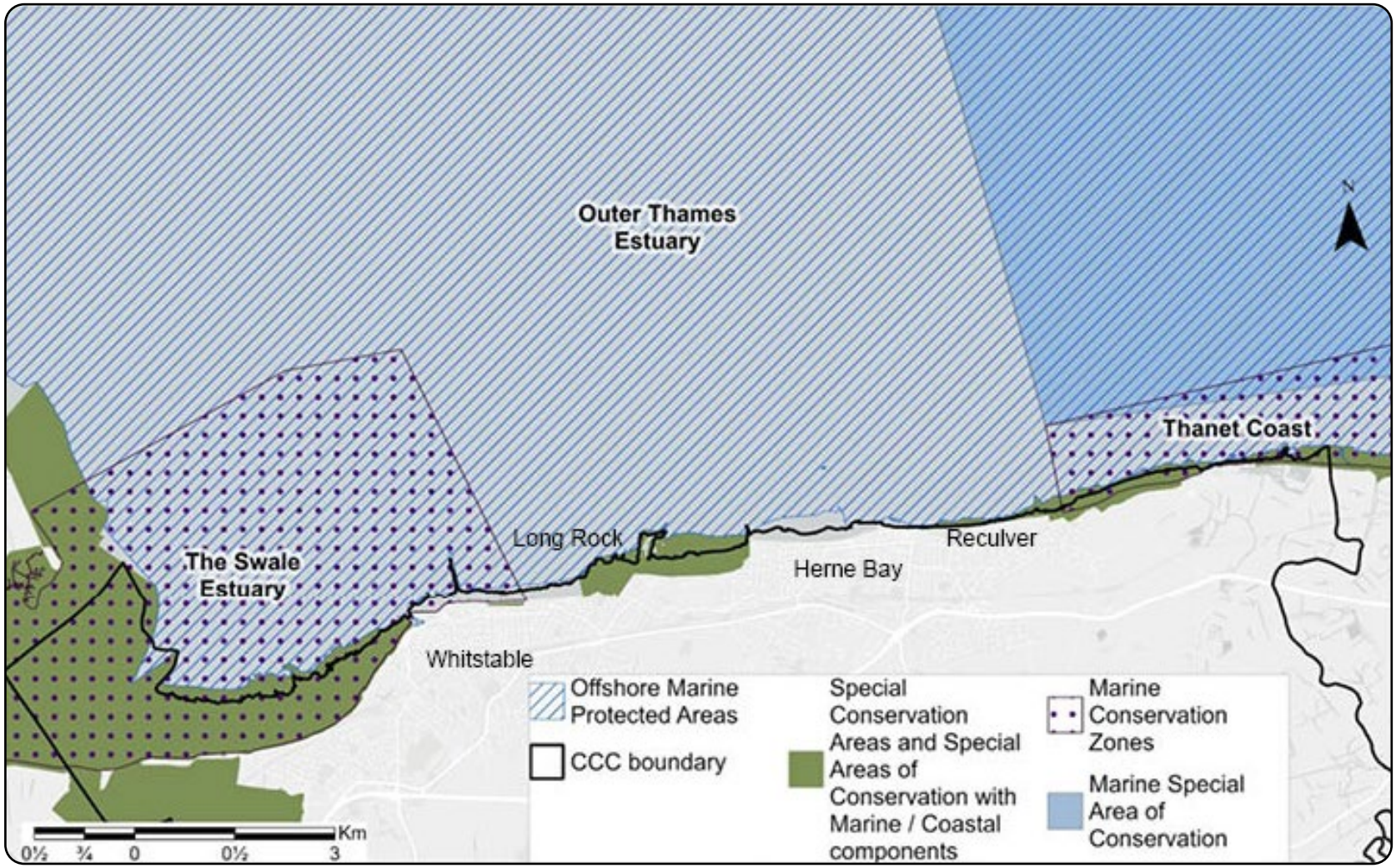


Seasalter mudflats

Plan 10: Coastal and marine protected areas



Plan 11: Coastal and marine habitats



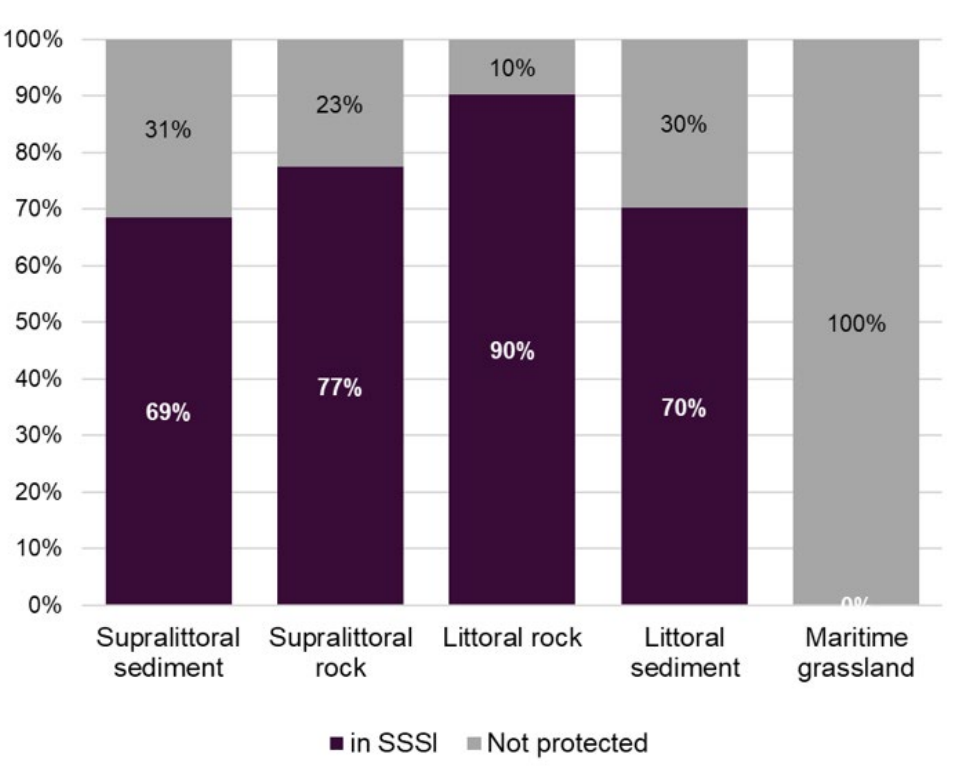
Summary of coastal habitats in Canterbury district[15]

Habitat	Hectares	% of Kent's habitat in Canterbury district	% of all Canterbury's coastal habitat which is of this type	% cover of whole district	% in Local Wildlife Site or Site of Special Scientific Interest
Supralittoral sediment*	40.3	1.6%	2.8%	0.1%	69%
Supralittoral rock*	4.6	2.1%	0.3%	0.0%	77%
Littoral rock#	67.2	9.3%	4.7%	0.2%	90%
Littoral sediment#	1310.0	10.9%	91.3%	3.9%	70%
Maritime grassland	12.6	37.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0%
Total	**1389.8**	**-**	**100%**	**4%**	**-**

* Supralittoral is above the high tide line and is not submerged by water

littoral is the shallow water which extends from the shoreline

Proportion of coastal habitats in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (no habitats are in Local wildlife sites)



Mudflats, beaches and sandbanks

The large areas of exposed mudflat at low tide are incredibly important feeding areas for overwintering birds. Much of the coastline is protected due to the high numbers of these birds. These birds feed during the winter on the north Kent coast ready for their spring migration north. If they are disturbed from feeding, for example by dogs being exercised on the beach, they may not gain enough weight for the journey to their breeding grounds. For this reason, the Bird Wise projects operate in Canterbury to raise awareness of the importance of not disturbing the birds.

Another important and threatened habitat is seagrass beds. These provide essential nursery grounds for fish, food for birds, and habitat for a range of invertebrates. They play a vital role in the health of marine habitats. Many seagrass species also help absorb and store carbon meaning they can also play an important role in tackling climate change. There remain some small areas of seagrass in the eastern end of the district.

There are also some very small areas of coastal vegetated shingle, but this is fairly limited in comparison with other areas of Kent. Nonetheless it is an important habitat which supports some very rare and specialised plants.



Oystercatchers are one of the birds which feed on exposed coastal mudflats

Long Rock (Swalecliffe) is a particularly interesting area and is internationally protected. This very small spit has both fresh and saline waters, with a range of very specialist plants and animals. It is also one of the locations of the incredibly rare Hog's Fennel, which supports the equally rare Fisher's estuarine moth. These species are found in only a handful of locations in Kent and Essex. This area is also popular for recreation, but this can be detrimental to the wildlife. A project has been implemented to help to prevent damage to the habitats and disturbance of birds.

Despite the coastline being protected by sea defences and therefore highly modified from its natural state, nature still finds a home on the boulders and armoury. Areas such as Hampton Pier, which was once set up to farm oysters, has now been reclaimed by nature and has some interesting and unique habitats.

The Transforming the Thames initiative is already leading marine bodies and local authorities on measures to plant Eel grass meadows.

Maritime cliffs

Bishopstone Cliffs to the eastern end of the district are sandstone cliffs, which as well as being important for wildlife, including nesting sandmartins, are significant for their fossils. The cliffs are highest to the east but there are sloping landward areas at Beltinge Cliff and The Downs east of Herne Bay, west of Hampton Pier and at Tankerton (Whitstable).

There are extensive areas of species rich coastal grasslands on the tops of the cliffs. In some of these areas is found Hog's Fennel and Fisher's Estuarine Moth as well as other coastal grassland species. Invasive plants such as blackthorn and Alexanders are out competing many grassland species to form monocultures. This needs to be reversed.

Offshore

There are reefs off the coast, particularly blue mussel beds off Whitstable. They are a complex habitat that provide food and shelter for many species.

The area is also renowned for its oysters – however, the once extensive beds of native oysters are severely threatened. The Pacific oyster, native to north-east Asia was introduced to the UK by the government in 1964 to offset the decline of the native oyster. It was believed they would not reproduce due to low sea temperatures. However, they are now breeding and are a problem on the Canterbury coastline, causing a threat to a range of native species including the blue mussels.



Bishopstone Cliffs

Our coast and sea species



Sand Martin

- **Coastal**
- The smallest of the martins, these birds breed in cliffs, returning each year from Africa.



Lapwing

- **Coastal and freshwater grazing marsh**
- A bird of wet grassland. Distinctive 'peewit' call. Forms large flocks.



Redshank

- **Coastal grazing marsh**
- A bird of marshes and mudflats. As its name indicates - it has red legs.



Hog's Fennel

- **Coastal grassland**
- A very rare coastal plant restricted to north Kent and only a few other places in the UK



Fisher's Estuarine Moth

- **Coastal grassland**
- A very rare moth, which feeds exclusively on the also very rare Hog's Fennel



Eelgrass

- **Coastal grazing marsh**
- A sea grass that forms dense meadow beneath the sea and important habitat for rare species.

Threats and pressures on coast and sea

Climate change and sea level rise: Climate change will have a profound impact on coastal and marine habitats and species. These are particularly vulnerable. From increased erosion, loss of habitat, warming seas and changes in the distribution of species, the changes will be significant. Most of the coastline is hard engineered so coastal squeeze will be a considerable challenge to address- in the district.

Pollution: Water flows from the Oyster Coast Brooks into the sea. The quality of the water has a direct impact on the habitats and species of the coast and sea. There are also sewage outfalls on this coastline. If there is too much sediment from watercourses or outfalls, this can cause smothering. If there are too many nutrients this can exacerbate algal blooms.

Non-native species: Non-native species can out-compete native wildlife. Some species may become more prevalent due to climate change. The Pacific oyster is a threat to marine life and there are others non-native species, including the slipper limpet and Manilla clam. Cord grass also out competes and displaces native vegetation, reducing food sources for native species. It also alters sediment composition impacting the distribution of invertebrate prey for birds and fish.

Recreational pressure: The coast is popular for recreation, all year round. This results in pressures on over-wintering birds particularly from dogs. Habitats and species can also be trampled. Activities on the water such as jet skiing can also be detrimental to wildlife.



Climate change sensitivity of coast and sea[16]

There is evidence that the seas around the UK are warming with a trend around 0.3°C per decade over the past 40 years. The sea level has also risen by around 12-16cm since 1900.

There is also evidence that there are more storms and an increase in wave height. This has an impact on coastal geomorphology and rates of erosion and accumulation of material along the coastline.

Sea level rise also results in 'coastal squeeze'. This happens where there is a hard structure along the coastline which means that any intertidal habitat can't retreat inland and is eroded. This is the case in Canterbury district.

Climate change is having a range of other effects on coastal and marine habitats and species. Seabirds are showing a decline across the UK, plankton species and communities are altering and the range of marine mammals is changing. All of these effects are changing the balance of ecosystems.

Finally, a warming climate can make conditions more favourable for invasive species such as the Pacific oyster, which is already a problem on the Canterbury coastline.

What our review of evidence has shown

Protecting important coastal habitats is not enough on its own

Canterbury's coast and sea support internationally-important habitats and species. The evidence shows that many of these habitats require active recovery and management, not just protection. Priority opportunities include recovering seagrass beds, native oyster and blue mussel populations, saltmarsh, vegetated shingle and maritime grassland. Recent local successes demonstrate that targeted action and partnership working can deliver significant benefits for biodiversity.

Active management is needed to maintain important grassland habitats

Some of the district's most valuable coastal habitats are being affected by invasive and dominant plant species. Coastal grasslands, which support rare species such as the Fisher's estuarine moth, require ongoing management to prevent species such as blackthorn from outcompeting specialist wildlife. Improving habitat condition through active management will be just as important as protecting sites from development.

The coast provides potential opportunities for education and engagement

The coastline is an ideal place to connect people with nature. Habitat recovery projects, citizen science, educational activities and community involvement can all help build support for biodiversity and encourage responsible use of the coast. Engaging local communities through initiatives such as school projects, volunteering and learning opportunities will be important in delivering long-term improvements for wildlife.

Partnership working will be essential

Many of the opportunities identified by the review will require collaboration between conservation organisations, coastal managers, local communities, researchers and the fishing industry. Partnership working will be critical to securing funding, sharing expertise and delivering biodiversity recovery across Canterbury's coast and marine environment.

Actions supporting the coast and sea

- BA9: Partner with Foreshore Services and the Zoological Society of London on the development and delivery of coastal and marine biodiversity projects, including Eel Grass meadow restoration at Seasalter, investigating the provision of artificial high tide roosts at Long Rock, and the placing of artificial micro reefs within the intertidal areas of Herne Bay.

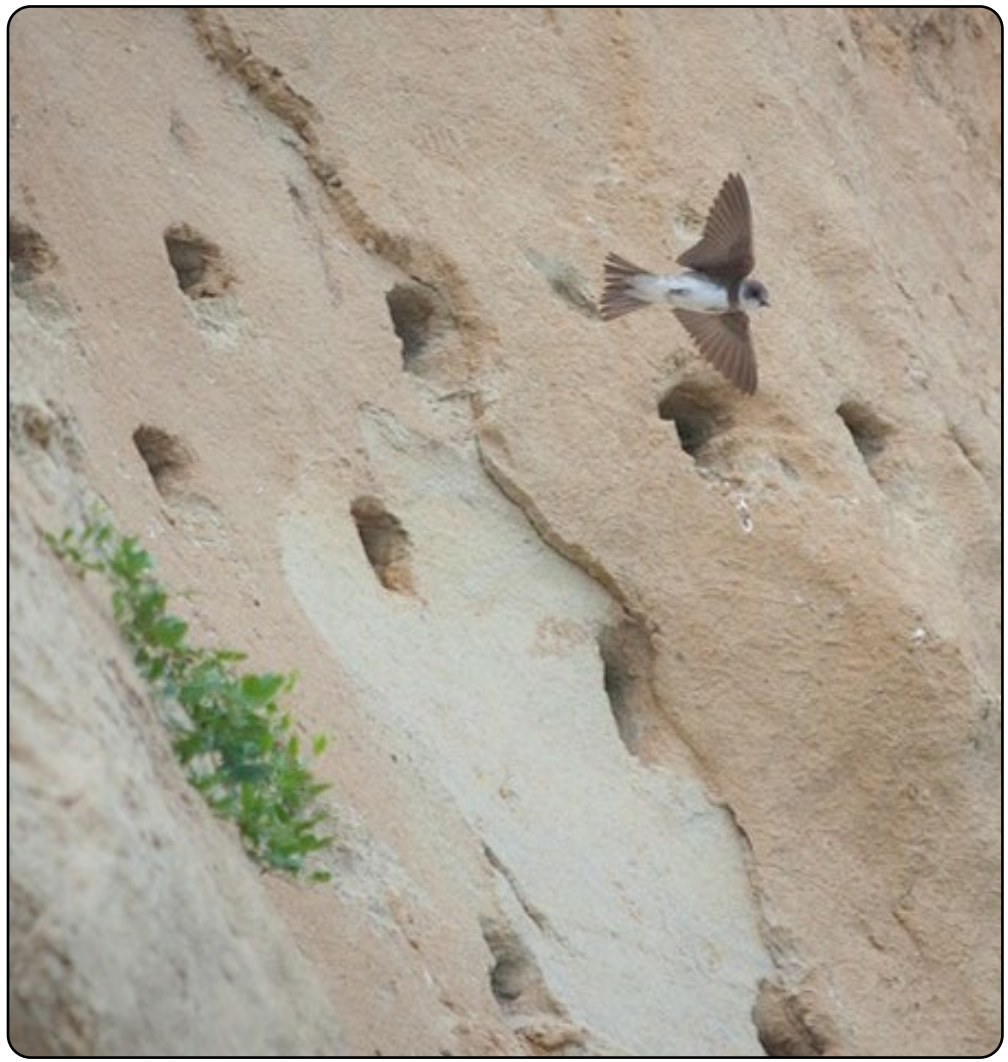
Related actions in Canterbury City Council strategies

Green infrastructure strategy

- Delivery of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring strategy to protect coastal birds from recreational disturbance.
- Improvements to the Oyster Coast Brooks, which will reduce pollution entering the sea.
- Management measure at Long Rock to minimise negative recreational pressure.
- Measures to improve water quality inland, which has an impact on water flowing into the sea.

Pollinator action plan

- Supporting the rare pollinator species associated with coastal grassland, including the Fisher's Estuarine Moth and rare bumblebee species.



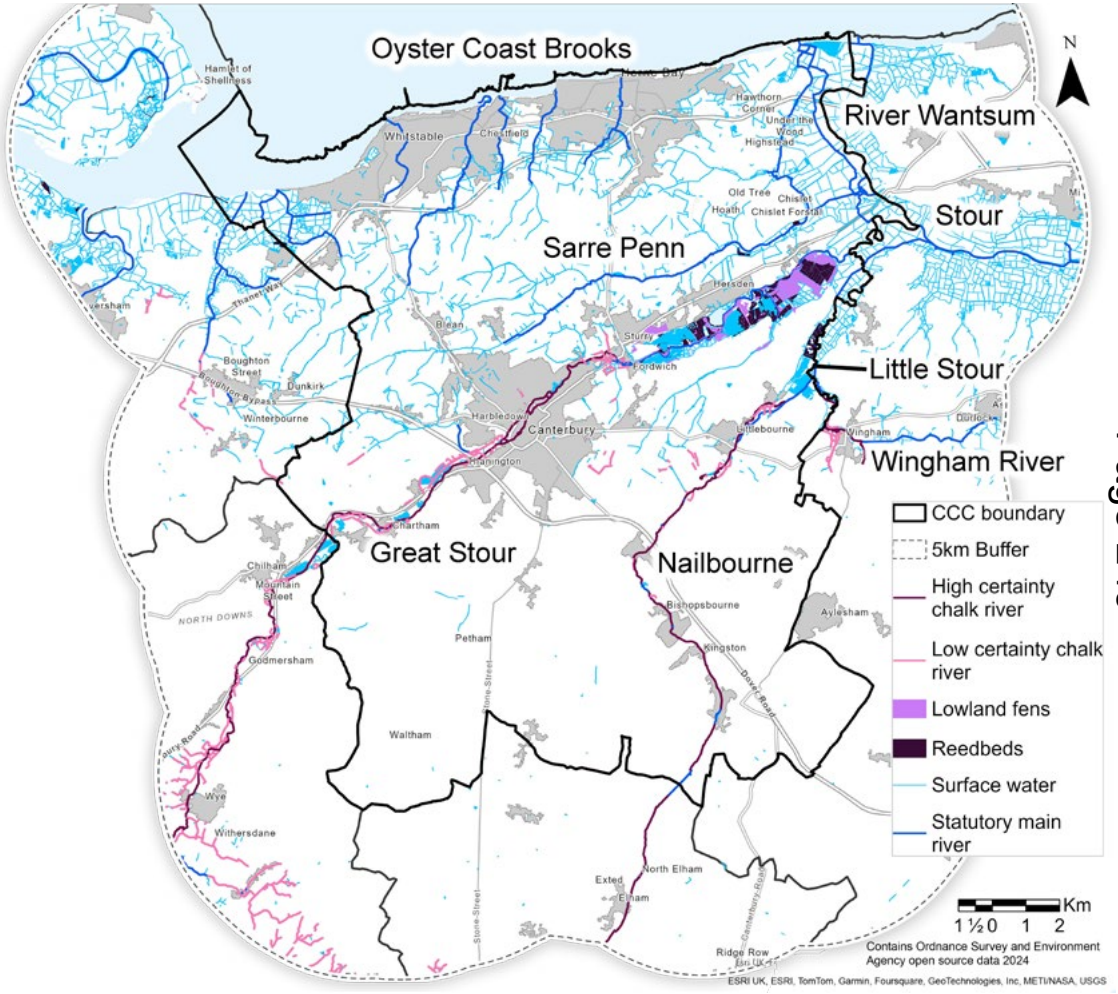
Sand Martin, Bishopstone Cliffs

Rivers, freshwaters and wetland habitats

The Great Stour is the largest river in the district. It flows through rural areas into Canterbury and then through Stodmarsh and Hacklinge Marshes. For part of its length, it is chalk river – one of several such watercourses in Canterbury district. Smaller watercourses flow into it – the Sarre Penn, Whitehall Dyke, Little Stour and Wingham River and the River Wantsum. On the coast there are a series of short watercourses, known collectively as the Oyster Coast Brooks, which flow from south to north. Several are now culverted and flow underground.

The complex of lakes, ponds, ditches and wetland habitats around Stodmarsh is internationally protected. This is the largest single group of wetland habitats, but there are other areas around the Little Stour and at Thanington and Chartham.

The Wantsum Channel, with the River Wantsum flowing through it, and the Seasalter Levels are expanses of low-lying wetland, with many drainage ditches, dykes, ponds and pools. There are fewer ponds and watercourses in the south of the district in the chalk downland areas due to the under-lying permeable chalk.

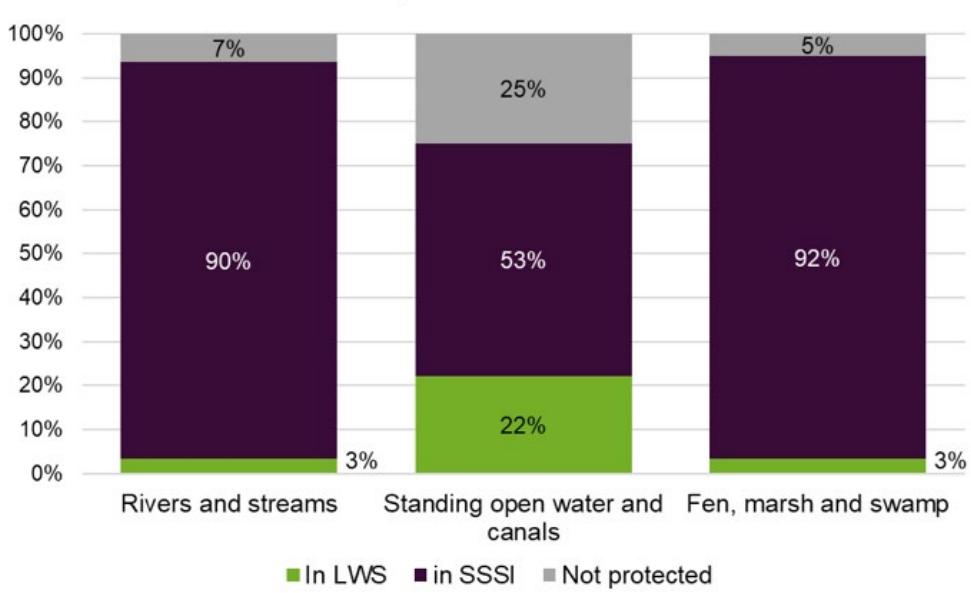


Plan 12: Rivers, freshwaters and wetland habitats

Summary of rivers, freshwaters and wetland habitats in Canterbury district[17]

Habitat	Hectares	% of Kent's habitat in Canterbury district	% of all Canterbury's grassland habitat which is of this type	% cover of whole district	% in Local Wildlife Site or Site of Special Scientific Interest
Rivers and streams	609.5	9.3%	49.5%	1.8%	3%
Standing open water and canals	370.8	8.0%	30.1%	1.1%	22%
Fen, marsh and swamp	250.0	27.5%	20.3%	0.7%	3%
Total	**1230.3**	**-**	**100%**	**4%**	**-**

Proportion of rivers, freshwaters and wetland habitats in local wildlife sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest



Chalk rivers and streams

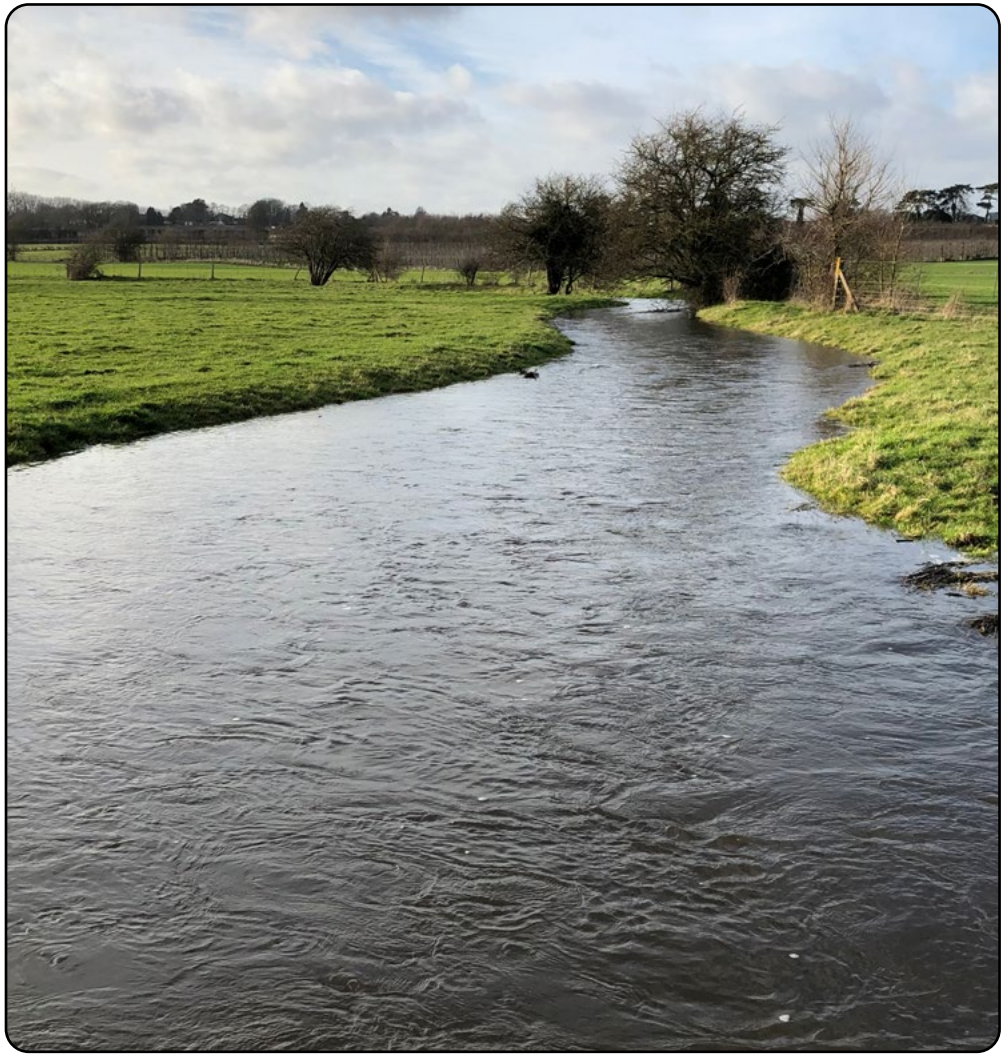
There are several chalk rivers and streams in the district. They are extremely rare with only an estimated 200 worldwide. They are mainly fed by underground water which means that the flow is more constant than other watercourses. The water is also very clear as it has been filtered by the chalk. This means they are particularly good for wildlife, including birds such as Kingfishers, fish including Brown Trout and eels, specialist plants such as Watercress and a host of aquatic insects.

Some of the rivers in the district show the typical characteristics of chalk watercourses – the Great Stour as far as Fordwich and the Nailbourne and the Little Stour. Others are classified as chalk streams but don't have typical characteristics, including the Whitehall Dyke west of Canterbury City and the Wingham River.

The Nailbourne is a particular type of chalk stream called a winterbourne. Winterbournes do not flow all the time and will appear at certain times – usually in the winter, when the water table is high enough.

Ponds and lakes

Ponds are important for a huge range of wildlife including birds, mammals, fish, amphibians and insects. Some live in ponds, some use them for food, shelter and to complete their lifecycles.



River Nailbourne in flood

Historically ponds were common on farmland and in villages as a water supply. However there has been a large decrease in ponds with an estimated 75% lost since 1945.[18]

It is not known how many ponds there are in Canterbury district or whether there has been any change in numbers in recent years. There are ponds mainly in the northern part of the district and especially in the Wantsum Channel, Seasalter Levels around Fordwich and Littlebourne and also across The Blean. There are fewer in the south of the district where the under-lying geology is chalk. In this area, dew ponds were created in the 18th and 19th centuries. These are human-created small ponds on top of chalky hills to provide water for grazing livestock.

There are also larger lakes in the district. These are concentrated around Stodmarsh and Littlebourne and Thanington and Chartham areas. These are often the result of human activity, for example collapsed colliery workings and gravel extraction.

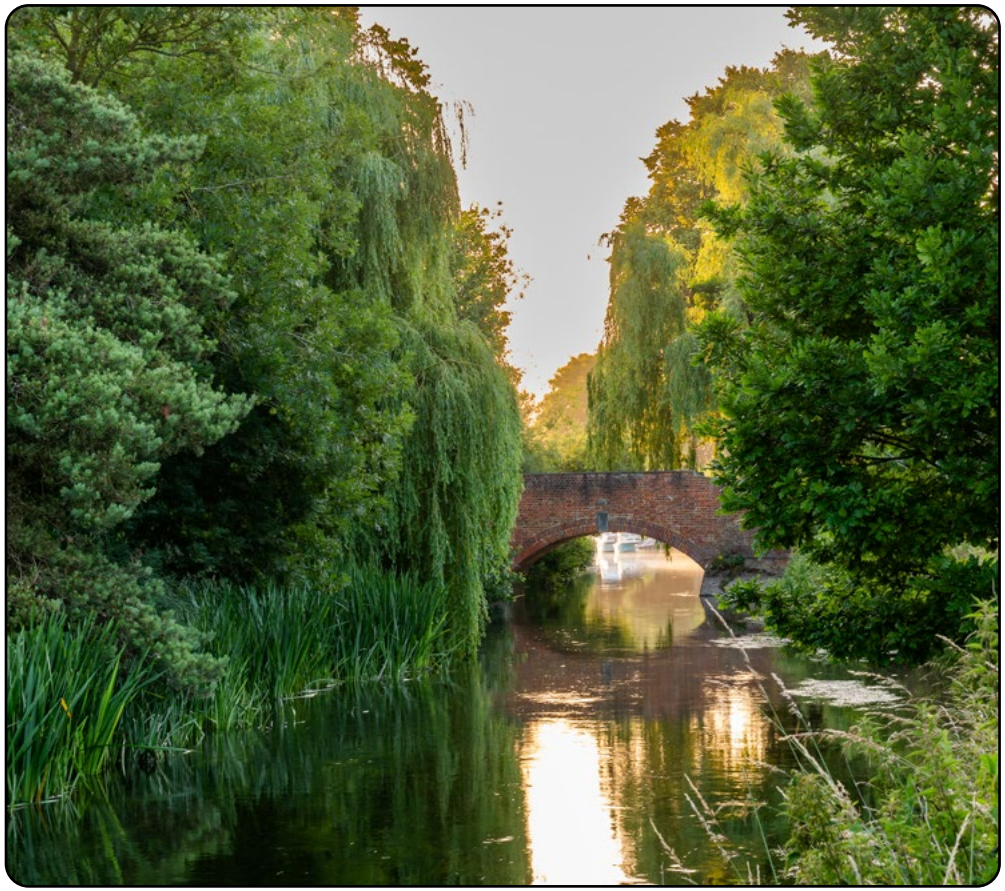
Reedbeds and fens

Reedbeds are wetlands that are dominated by common reed and where there is standing water for most of the year. They are usually found around lakes and pools but also on the edges of slow-moving rivers and streams and alongside ditches and marsh dykes. They support specialist species including Reed

Warbler, Bearded Tit, one of the UK's most threatened birds the Bittern and the nationally rare Water Vole.

Canterbury district has one of the largest areas of this habitat, around Stodmarsh and along the River Stour. There are other smaller areas around the lakes at Littlebourne, along the Sarre Penn and at Seasalter Levels.

Fens are wetlands that form peat and occur on waterlogged, alkaline soils where the water table is at or very near the surface. It is a very rare habitat in Kent but there are areas within Stodmarsh, along with other wet grassland which has a unique range of species.



River Stour, Fordwich

Our rivers, freshwaters and wetland species



Reedbeds

- **Wetlands**
- Reedbeds are home to a range of species - they support food and birds, insects and fish and provide places for water voles to burrow



Lapwing

- **Coastal and freshwater grazing marsh**
- A bird of wet grassland. Distinctive 'peewit' call. Forms large flocks.



Beaver

- **Rivers**
- Mammal found along the Stour river. Beaver dam building helps slow water flow.



Water Vole

- **Wetlands**
- These mammals are found in a range of wetland habitats but are under threat



Reptiles and Amphibians

- **Wetlands**
- All wetland habitats are important for amphibians and some reptiles, which use them at different phases in their life.



Desmoulin's Whorl Snail

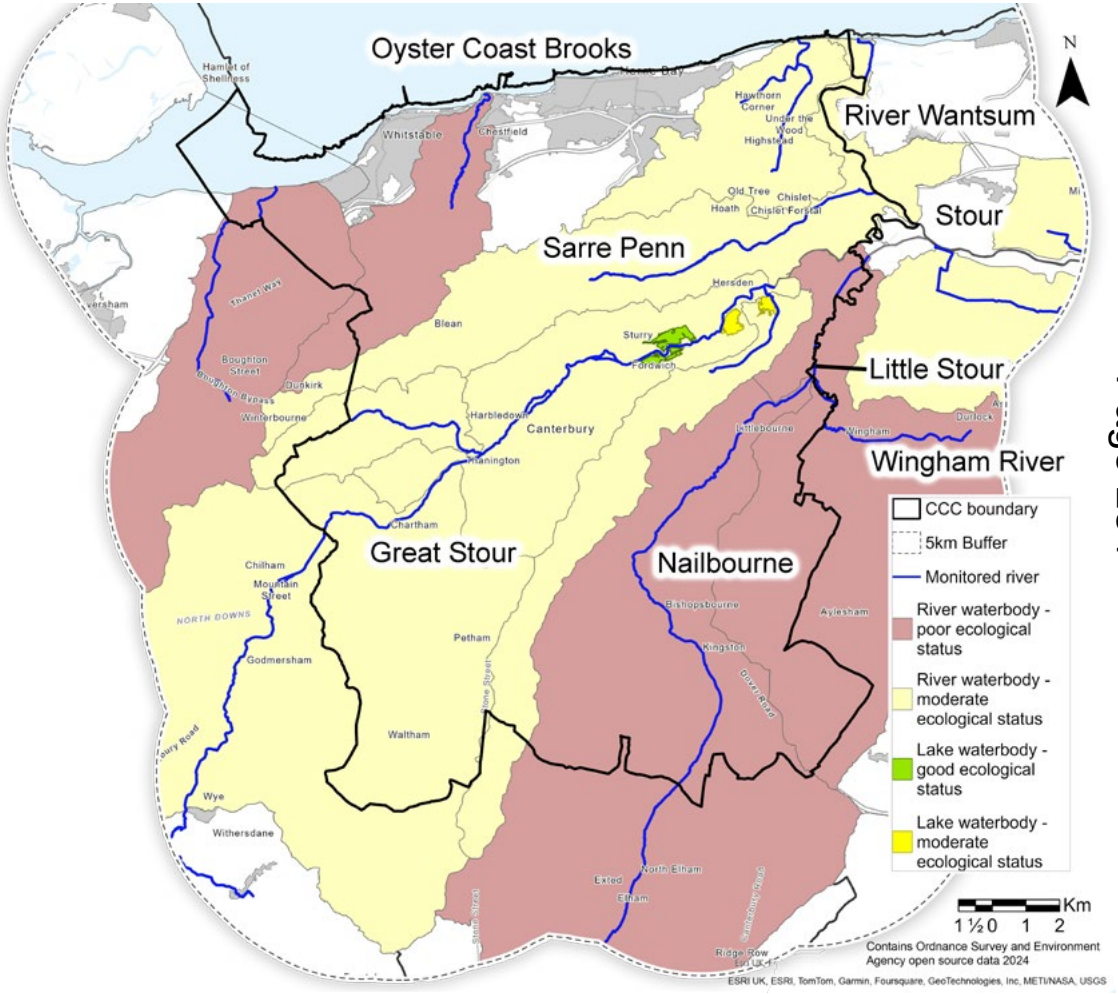
- **Wetlands**
- A rare snail found in Stodmarsh

Threats and pressures on rivers, freshwaters and wetland habitats

The following threats and pressures cause the loss or reduction in the nature conservation value of these habitats. Environment Agency data gives information on these threats and pressures within the district. The State of Nature in Kent Report gives information relevant to Kent; however, information on the extent and impact within Canterbury district is incomplete.

Plan 13 gives an overview of the ecological status of waterbodies which are monitored by the Environment Agency. Only one waterbody, Fordwich Lake is in good ecological condition and none of the river waterbodies are in good ecological condition. The main reasons are detailed below.

Water abstraction: East Kent is one of the driest places in the country. Groundwater not only supplies water for human consumption, but it also feeds the chalk rivers and streams. Abstraction of water for public, commercial and farming use, from groundwater and watercourses, has a direct effect on quality for wildlife and can lead to low flows in watercourses.



Plan 13: Ecological condition of Waterbodies

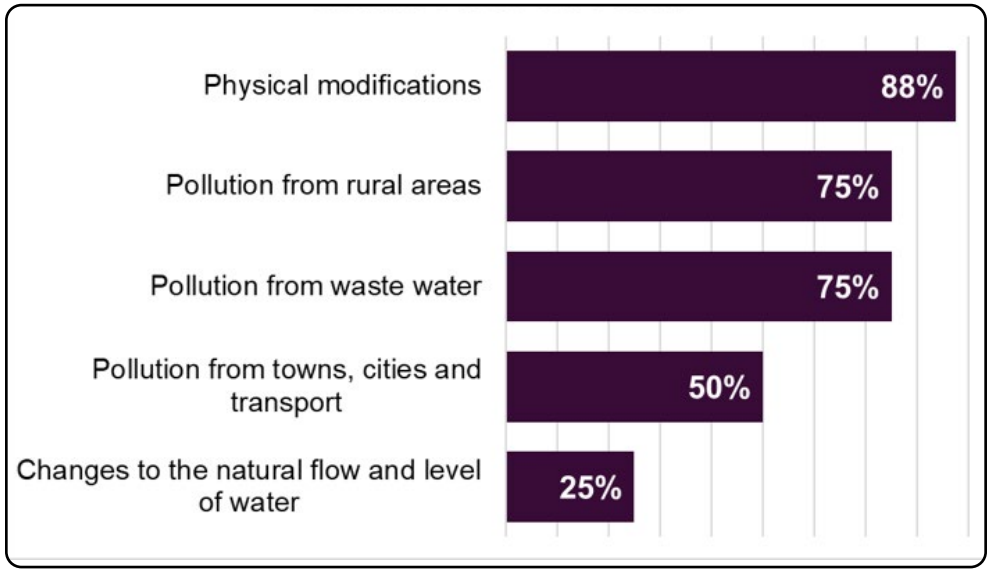
Hard engineering and structures on watercourses: Many watercourses in the district have been modified, culverted, have structures on them or have been engineered in other ways. In some cases, such as the Oyster Coast Brooks, the original watercourse is now completely underground. Hard edges and culverting reduce the wildlife value of the watercourse. Structures, such as weirs and dams obstruct fish migration and is a factor in low fish populations in the catchment.

High levels of nutrients: Phosphates in particular are high across the catchment, but nitrates can also be high. Water industry discharges are the biggest contributor to phosphorus in waterbodies. Although sewage is treated the final effluent can still contain levels of phosphorus that can be detrimental to the environment. In addition, permitted overflows after storms may mean that untreated wastewater enters the watercourse. Diffuse pollution comes from agriculture due to the runoff from fields. Private septic tanks can also result in pollution. An excess of nutrients causes eutrophication, which causes an excess in plant growth, including sometimes dangerous algal blooms, and a decrease in oxygen from reduced light and decomposing plants. This has a very detrimental effect on the wildlife of the waterbody, which the Stour Environmental Credits scheme is seeking to address.

Other pollutants: Other pollutants are present in the waterbodies in the district. Although sometimes in small amounts, some of these are harmful to aquatic life and can increase in concentration as they move up the food chain.

Reasons for river waterbodies in Canterbury district not reaching good ecological status (eight river waterbodies)

Reasons for river waterbodies in Canterbury district not reaching good ecological status (eight river waterbodies)



Invasive non-native species: Pond habitats, but not exclusively, are also affected by aquatic invasive non-native flora, such as Australian Swamp Stonecrop, New Zealand Pigmyweed, and Parrot's Feather. These plants out-compete native species and can be very prolific, especially where there are also increased nutrients.

Direct loss: Ponds and wetlands can be filled in or be lost due to silting up or land can be drained for farming or development.

Climate change sensitivity of rivers, freshwaters and wetland habitats[19]		Rivers and streams	Standing water	Reedbeds	Fens
	Overall climate change sensitivity	High	High	Medium	High
Cause	Potential impacts				
Hotter summers	Increased water temperature affecting the abundance of some species. Decline in cool-water species.	✓		✓	
	Changes in the timing of the seasons could affect individual species and consequently whole food webs.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Low flows or reduced water levels reducing extent or causing temporary loss of habitat, leading to increased competition, unfavourable conditions for fish and other species and increases in eutrophication for some habitats.	✓	✓		
Drier summers	Drying out of the habitat leading to loss of species and dominance by species which prefer drier conditions and loss of species which depend on this habitat.			✓	✓
	Increased abstraction of water will put habitat under even greater stress.	✓			
	Greater abundance of non-native invasive species.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wetter and warmer winters	Increase nutrient loading having impacts on species and habitats. Increased silting and sediment.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	More flooding making it more difficult to manage sites.			✓	✓
	Increased connectivity between sites means that floods can increase spread of non-native species.	✓			
Sea level rise	Saline intrusion for sites near the coast.		✓	✓	✓

What our review of evidence has shown

Poor ecological status of waterbodies and scarcity of water are significant concerns in the district.

Most waterbodies – rivers and standing waters – are in poor ecological condition. There are many factors contributing to this. The main reasons are physical modifications and pollution from rural land and wastewater treatment. Most of the these are not entirely within the control of Canterbury City Council, but the council can support others in taking action to improve water quality. Actions within the Canterbury Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Strategy can support reducing runoff from agricultural land.

Stodmarsh is an area of particular concern in relation to increased nutrients.

In 2020 Natural England, the government's nature conservation advisor, advised local planning authorities that new development must not increase the level of nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus in the River Stour as they are having a negative impact on Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve. The council is working with partners to develop a catchment wide strategy to deliver mitigation for the impacts of planned development affecting water quality at Stodmarsh. This includes a sequential approach to embedding mitigation within development sites, such as through new high quality wastewater treatment facilities, along with developing wetlands which can remove harmful nutrients from the watercourses which feed into Stodmarsh.

There is a need for greater awareness of the impact of water use on the natural environment.

Greater awareness of the connection between everyday use of water and the impact on water scarcity and pollution can help to improve water quality and quantity and support nature. Wasteful consumption can further stress aquifers, which can lead to low flows in chalk rivers. Thoughtless disposal of chemicals down the drain can lead to pollution. Disposal of invasive pond plants or other species can have a very detrimental impact on nature. Conversely, small changes in behaviour by very many people can help to improve the water environment. There are also opportunities for communities to take positive action to support their local streams, rivers and ponds through clean-ups and positive improvement projects.

Working in partnership is needed to deliver projects which improve the water environment.

The water environment is very inter-connected with many organisations responsible for water quality and supply and many land uses having an impact. Working at a landscape-scale and with partners can deliver particular benefits. Water environments operate at the scale of catchments and rivers and streams are quite obviously connected. Projects such as removing barriers to fish can help them to move along far greater lengths of the river. Projects to improve the River Stour corridor through the district have been underway for several years and are continuing through the Canterbury Riverside Strategy with a Regional Park being explored. A project to work at a landscape-scale around the River Wantsum is also included in this strategy.

Actions supporting rivers, freshwater and wetland habitats

- BA7: Work in partnership to deliver the Stour Valley Restore initiative, promote biodiversity opportunities along the Great River Stour at Wincheap Meadows, Bingley Island and Fordwich Meadows, and explore the Broad Oak Reservoir biodiversity gain and the establishment of a Great Stour Regional Park.
- BA8: Support partnership opportunities for landscape-scale works within the Wantsum Channel, connections to The Blean and Pegwell Bay E3 initiative, and Canterbury to Coast.
- BA11: In association with the Rights of Rivers initiative, develop initiatives promoting the improved condition of the district's waterways and ensuring nutrient neutrality, including working with Natural England to support their restoration of Stodmarsh.
- BA20: Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the Canterbury Riverside Strategy.
- BA25: 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.

Related actions in Canterbury City Council strategies

Green infrastructure strategy

- Improvements to the Oyster Coast Brooks watercourses in Whitstable and Herne Bay, including community engagement.
- Measures to reduce industrial and domestic water consumption and to improve water quality.
- Utilise Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS).
- Support measures to improve water resources in all catchments, encouraging communities to take an active role.
- Enhance biodiversity in the Wantsum Channel and River Stour corridor, including across local authority boundaries.
- Fish passage and water quality improvements along the Little Stour and Great Stour.

Canterbury tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy

- Conservation and expansion of wet woodland, a rare habitat.
- Environment Agency data used to show where trees could reduce flood risk and where riparian trees may be beneficial.
- Pollinator Action Plan
- Water habitats important in life stages of some pollinators.
- Action to improve wildlife along the River Stour.

Canterbury riverside strategy

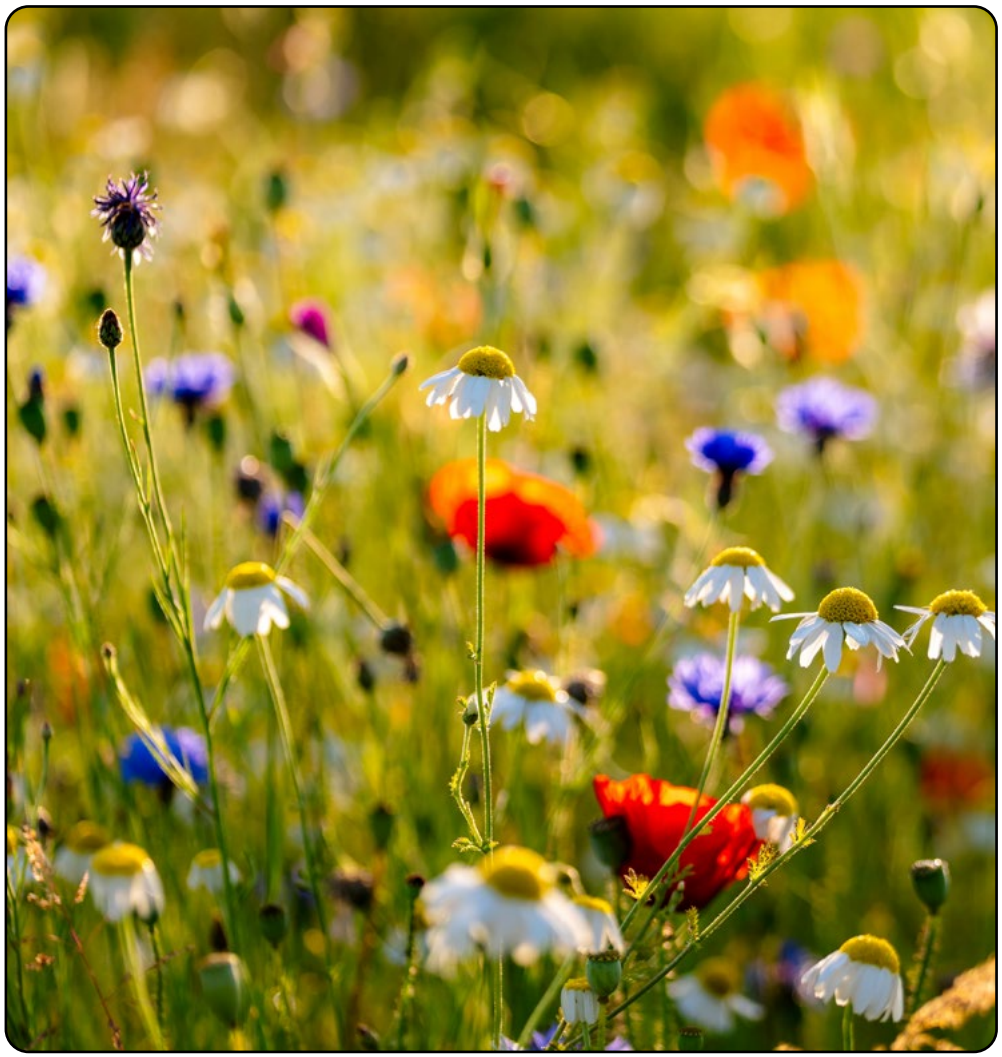
- Protection of scarce wet woodland along the river which can help to provide cooling to mitigate climate change effects.
- Protection and improvement of wildlife habitats – both within the river and along the banks.
- Removal of barriers to fish passage.

Urban nature

Although human urbanisation has a largely negative effect on nature it can, and does, coexist with us in urban areas.

The Office for National Statistics recorded that in 2022, 13% of the Canterbury district was in 'built up areas'. This includes the entirety of urban areas, including villages, that are 'irreversibly' urban in character. However, within this urban fabric there are many green areas. Kent County Council estimates that 6.8% of the district's undeveloped land is domestic gardens, rather than actual buildings. There also remain many other areas which support nature. These include parks, amenity greenspaces, allotments, churchyards and cemeteries, sports areas and school grounds. Nature is not always considered in their management and more can be done to improve wildlife in the district's urban areas.

Restoring nature in wilder urban areas also has the benefit of allowing those who live there – most of the population of the district – to access and enjoy nature for health and mental wellbeing. Nature also provides other benefits for residents, especially through trees, woodlands and hedgerows, which can help to clean the air, regulate temperature and minimise flooding.



Kingsmead Playing Field, City of Canterbury

It is a feature of Canterbury district's urban areas that there are high quality nature habitats immediately on their outskirts. This makes the interface between town and countryside particularly important.

In the case of Wilder Whitstable and Wilder Herne Bay, the internationally important coast and marine environment lies to the north and The Blean woodland to the south.

In Wilder Canterbury City, The Blean lies directly to the north. The River Stour corridor runs through the city and, although this has been modified by human activity, it still forms a very important area for wildlife. On the eastern side of the city, Chequer's Wood and Old Park Sites of Special Scientific Interest form the end of an important blue-green nature corridor which continues to the east to internationally important Stodmarsh.



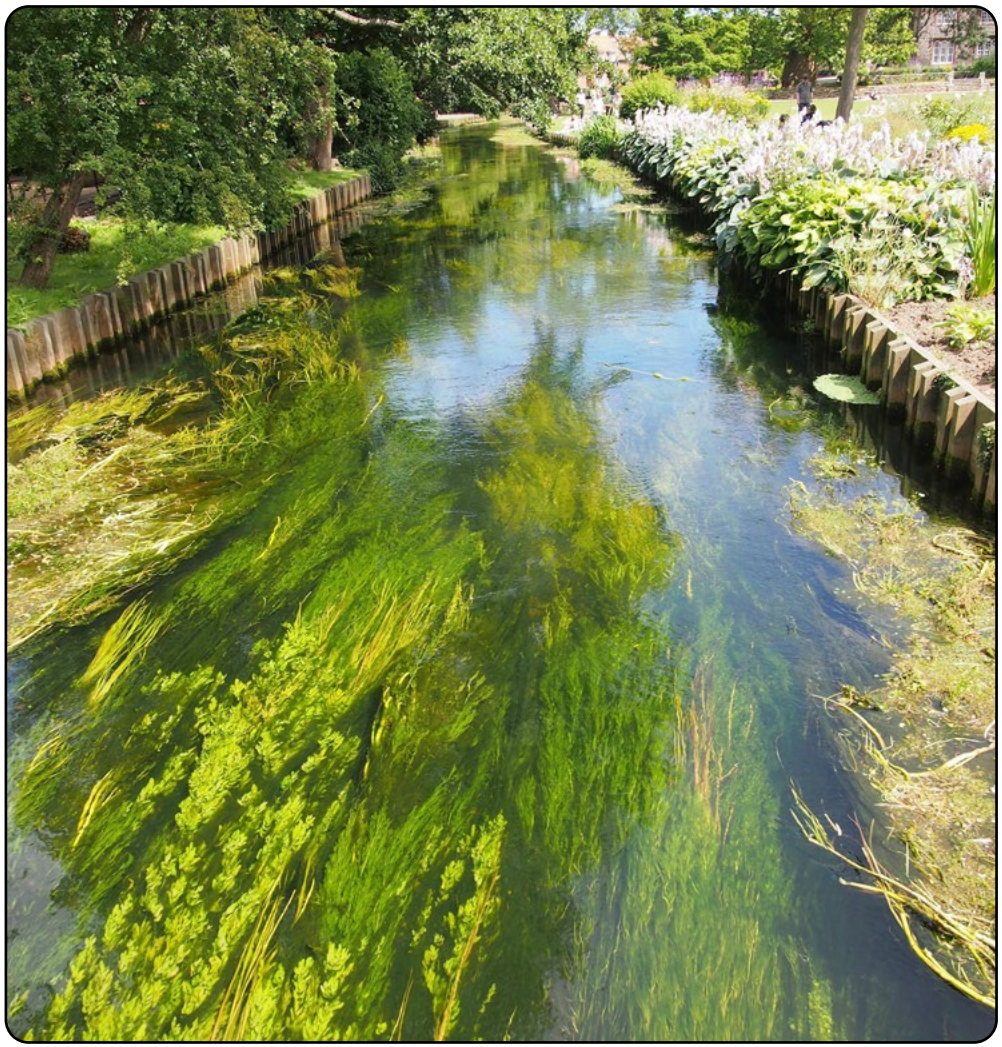
Canterbury High School. Gardens, allotments, pitches and transport corridors all provide potential for nature.

Green and blue infrastructure planning has an important role in ensuring that biodiversity is enhanced. Opportunities include green walls and roofs, better management for nature and increases in urban greenspace, naturalising road verges, more street trees and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Canterbury district's adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out corridors and actions in all the district's three main urban areas. Communities taking action and everyone playing their part, including in domestic gardens, is highlighted in the strategy.

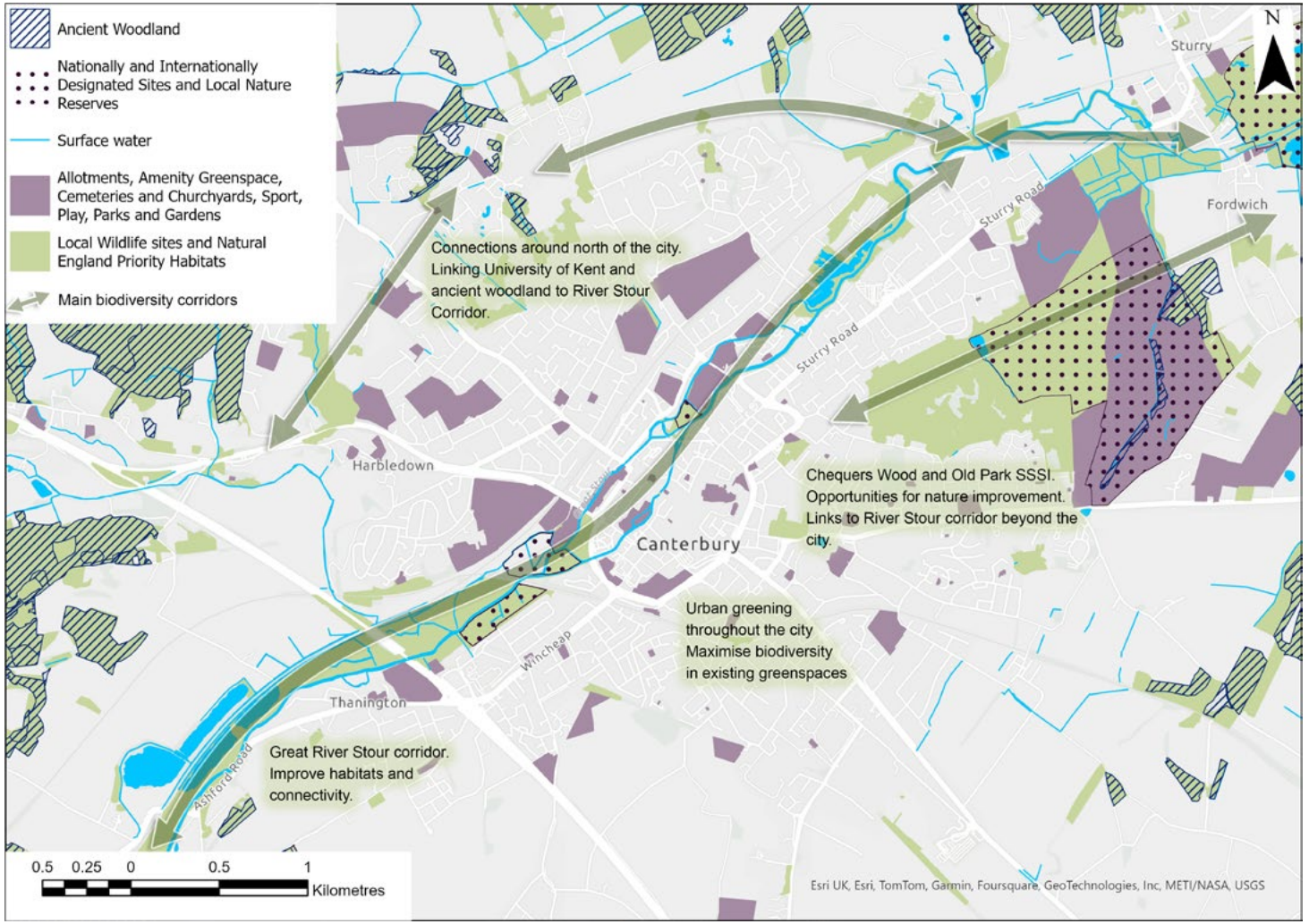
Brownfield land

Brownfield land is land that was previously developed but which is no longer in use. These sites are also a priority area for redevelopment under planning law to reduce the amount of other land which is lost to development. Brownfield land is a Kent Nature Partnership priority habitat as, in some cases, brownfield land supports rare and specialist species. This is particularly the case where the site has been undeveloped for a long period of time and nature has established, and not all brownfield sites support wildlife. Canterbury City Council keeps a register of brownfield sites.

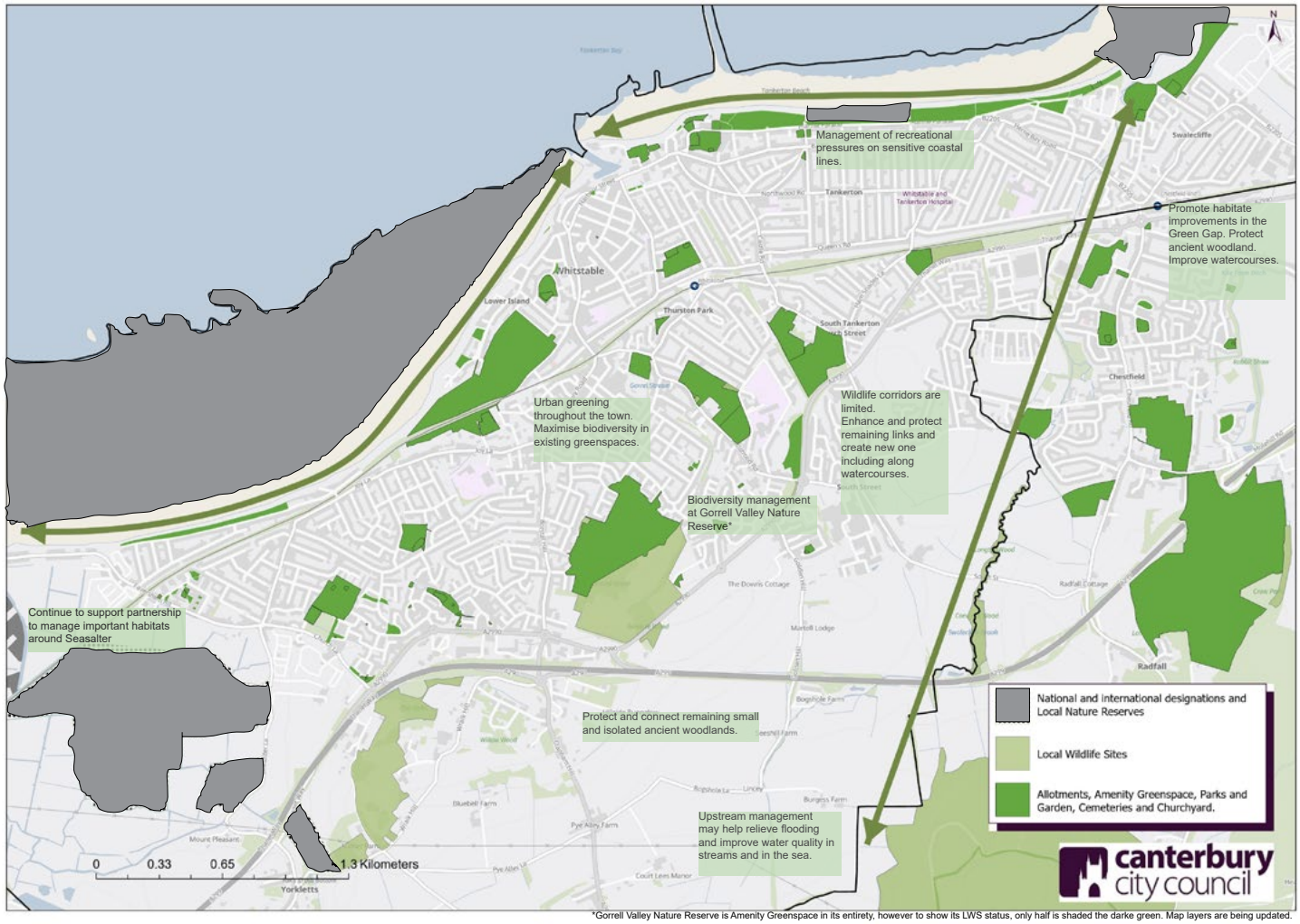


Westgate Gardens, City of Canterbury

Plan 14: Canterbury City biodiversity corridors – adapted from Canterbury district green infrastructure strategy



Plan 15: Whitstable biodiversity corridors – adapted from Canterbury district green infrastructure strategy



*Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve is Amenity Greenspace in its entirety, however to show its LWS status, only half is shaded the darke green. Map layers are being updated.

Map layers used for these plans are being updated. The Canterbury and Herne Bay plans will be updated in due course to look similar to Whitstable's.

Plan 16: Herne Bay biodiversity corridors – adapted from Canterbury district green infrastructure strategy



Our urban species



Swift

- **Urban buildings**
- Swifts spend their lives in flight, catching small insects. They nest in buildings and new houses can support swifts through swift boxes.



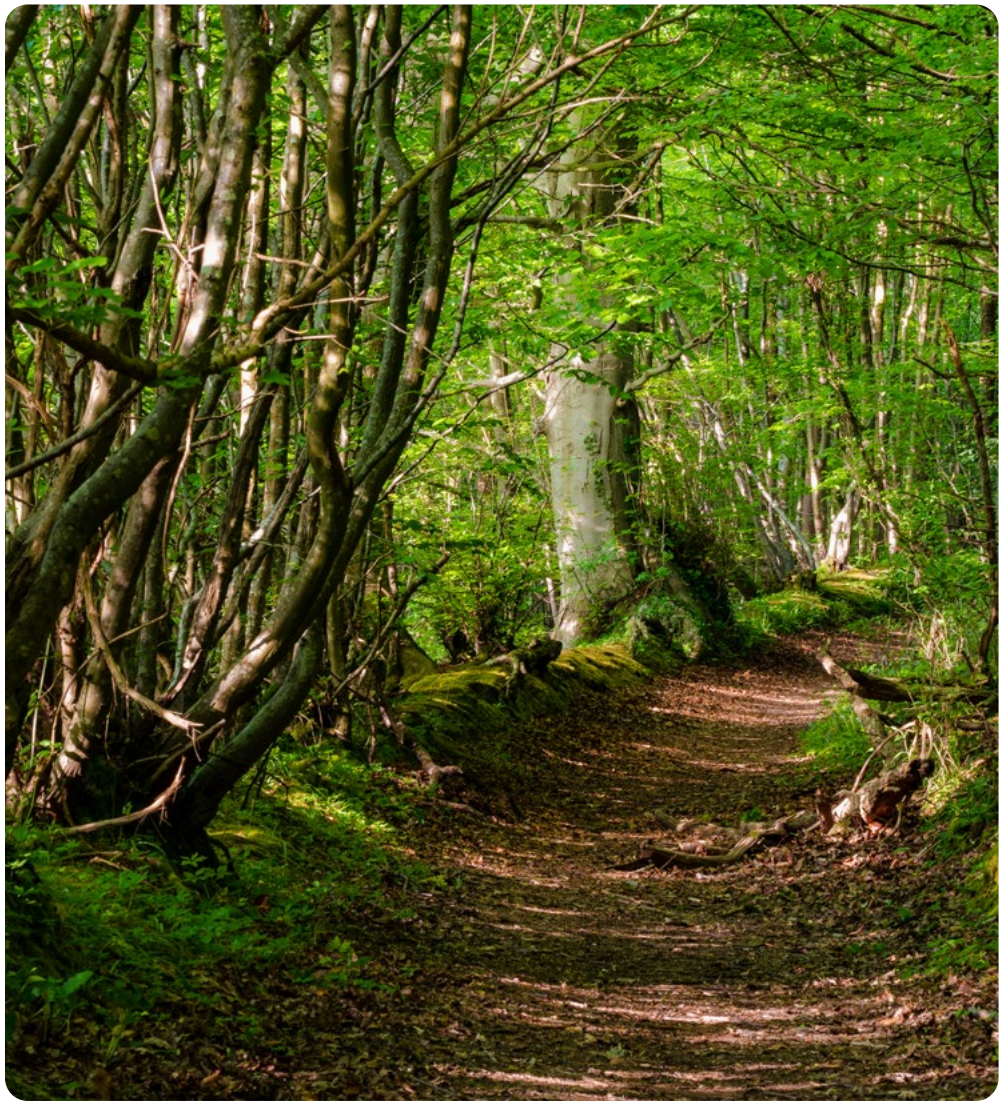
Shrill Carder Bee

- **Urban and coastal grassland**
- A very rare bumblebee only found in a few places in the UK



Reptiles and Amphibians

- **Allotments and Gardens**
- Grass snakes are often found in urban areas, especially where there is water nearby.



Threats and pressures on urban nature

Urban sites are more vulnerable: Urban sites are smaller and not always well-connected. This makes them more vulnerable to direct loss, damage, pests and diseases and climate change impacts. Many species cannot move across the hostile urban environment between sites.

Direct loss: In urban areas, the remaining small areas are under threat of being lost to development, or through changes to management, for example paving over front lawns for parking.

Making changes at scale is difficult: Most urban sites are small and to make meaningful improvement for nature requires co-ordination between many landowners.

Negative urban impacts: Invasive species can be an issue in urban habitats – sometimes these are deliberately planted from gardens or have simply escaped. Litter and antisocial behaviour such as fires can also have a negative impact. High levels of recreation can also disturb wildlife.

Green spaces not managed for nature: Many greenspaces are not managed with nature in mind. There is more that can be achieved on sports pitches, in schools and on road verges, as well as in gardens. There is also sometimes a perception that management for nature is neglect or looks untidy. This needs to be challenged and management for nature to become the new norm.

Climate change sensitivity of urban nature

Urban temperatures are approximately 1.24°c hotter than previous decades. The impact of this on residents living in urban towns and cities by 2050, is that hotter drier summers and warmer wetter winters will significantly increase and affect urban nature.

Increasing summer dry spells and erratic rainfall are already reducing water supply and causing low river flows and pond levels, reduced oxygen concentrations, and more stress on species and habitats. The dry spells are creating tougher conditions for planted trees and increases in failure rates.

Increased urban heat and population density will raise demand for shade and cooling, requiring resilient, drought-tolerant tree species capable of withstanding prolonged soil moisture deficits and higher temperatures.

Wetter winters will increase the frequency of waterlogging and flooding in urban areas, placing more stress on trees and green infrastructure, reducing soil health, and disrupting habitats.

What our review of evidence has shown

Effective water management will be increasingly critical.

As climate change leads to more frequent dry conditions alongside increased surface water flooding and winter waterlogging, there is a growing need to integrate nature-based solutions into urban design. Measures such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), permeable surfaces, rain gardens and enhanced green and blue infrastructure can help regulate water flows, reduce flood risk and improve water quality. Strengthening river corridors, increasing tree planting, and designing spaces to hold and slowly release water will be essential to improving the resilience of both urban habitats and communities.

Nature has multiple benefits for people.

Increasing tree canopy cover and access to high-quality green space can help to cool urban areas, improve air quality, and deliver significant physical and mental health benefits. However, this provision is currently uneven across the district. The Canterbury Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy identifies wards with lower-than-average tree cover, many of which also experience higher levels of social deprivation. Addressing these inequalities should be a priority through targeted investment in tree planting and green infrastructure, ensuring that the benefits of urban nature are accessible to all communities.

There is a unique opportunity in urban areas to educate, engage and connect communities with the natural environment.

Urban areas provide an accessible setting for people to experience and support nature. The evidence shows that meaningful improvements will depend on local participation, beginning with wildlife-friendly actions in domestic gardens and extending to shared spaces such as allotments, churchyards, school grounds and parks. Supporting communities to adopt wildlife-friendly management practices can deliver cumulative benefits at scale and help establish a stronger culture of stewardship for nature.

Working with communities is needed to keep pressure on developers.

Engaging communities can help keep pressure on developers to deliver green infrastructure and biodiversity in new development. There is a need for stronger and more consistent requirements on developers to incorporate biodiversity, tree planting and long-term management into schemes. The council is already assessing open space provision in planning applications and working to improve tree establishment and maintenance. Strengthening partnership working with developers, supported by clear standards and effective enforcement and monitoring, will be essential to securing positive outcomes for urban nature.

Actions supporting urban nature

- BA7: Work in partnership to deliver the Stour Valley Restore initiative, promote biodiversity opportunities along the Great River Stour at Wincheap Meadows, Bingley Island and Fordwich Meadows, and explore the Broad Oak Reservoir biodiversity gain and the establishment of a Great Stour Regional Park.
- BA10: Liaise with Highways England and other highway authorities 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.
- BA12: Promote the delivery of the 20 km long Canterbury Hedge and other tree planting initiatives across the district – seeking to plant and manage a minimum of 3 km of hedgerow in the next five years.
- BA14: Utilise the KMLNRS to identify and promote positive land management and the delivery of biodiversity outcomes at key landscapes and sites such as The Blean complex, Seasalter, the Wantsum Channel, Old Park, and Larkey Valley Woods.
- BA17: Support Contracts and CANENCO's delivery of biodiversity positive grounds maintenance through provision of training and increased awareness.
- BA19: Targeting schools, universities and parish council's, to promote applications to the CCC Biodiversity Grants management of / Biodiversity initiatives.
- BA20: Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the Canterbury Riverside Strategy.
- BA21: Continue to support and advise Friends of Groups across the district and establish new groups where there is demonstrable need and/ or demand.
- BA25: 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.
- BA26: 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.
- BA28: Review provision of Local Nature Reserves in relation to growing population. Complete audit and then prioritise action. Consider focusing on unprotected chalk grassland.
- BA29: Enable the enforcement of best practice tree planting and maintenance on all development sites
- BA30: Reference KMLNRS in the provision of SuDS and semi natural open space, and delivery of 20% canopy cover and 20% BNG, making maximum use of the opportunity to strengthen habitat connectivity in pre-application and planning decisions.
- BA31: Consider adaptive measures (species selection, land management / use etc.) to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and embark on initiatives to achieve Wilder Canterbury City, Wilder Whitstable and Wilder Herne Bay.

Related actions in Canterbury City Council strategies

Green infrastructure strategy

- Sets out wildlife corridors in urban areas.
- Develop urban greening projects in all three urban areas – including on green space sites not owned by the council, including playing fields, school grounds, industrial and commercial sites, road verges, street trees and pedestrian and cycling routes, working with communities to do so.
- Adapting Canterbury City Council's ground maintenance regime to support nature.
- Linking urban to countryside.
- Delivering new greenspaces.
- Improving biodiversity in and around Old Park.
- New development should retain and provide nature habitat, including trees.
- Improvements to the Oyster Coast Brooks watercourses in Whitstable and Herne Bay, including community engagement.
- Utilise Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS).
- Fish passage and water quality improvements along the River Great Stour.

Canterbury tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy

- Increasing street trees.
- Encouraging tree planting in urban locations such as school grounds, sports areas, business premises, parks and domestic gardens, where this is appropriate.
- Communities taking action to develop tree plans and increase trees in their local areas.

Pollinator action plan

- Adapting Canterbury City Council's ground maintenance regime to support pollinators.
- Supporting urban pollinators, for example through green roofs, planters and flower borders.
- Considering pollinators in planning applications.
- River Stour 'pollinator pathway'.

Canterbury riverside strategy

- Enhancing biodiversity habitats throughout urban section of the Great River Stour.
- Improving pollinator habitat, designating Local Nature Reserves and enhancing management of urban riverside spaces for nature.
- Removing fish passage barriers and connecting the river as a functioning ecological corridor through the City of Canterbury.
- Education on the nature of the river and river corridor.
- Leaving areas where nature can be undisturbed.

Conclusion - Taking the plan forward

This Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out a shared vision for a stronger, more connected network of nature-rich habitats across the district. Through delivery of the actions identified in this plan, Canterbury City Council will help lead nature recovery efforts and coordinate the partnerships, projects and opportunities needed to achieve the ambitious vision outlined at the start of this document.

Successful implementation of this strategy relies on the combined efforts of landowners, businesses, developers, schools, community organisations, environmental groups and residents. Everyone has a role to play in supporting nature recovery. This may be delivering projects, managing land for wildlife, volunteering, forming partnerships or championing biodiversity within their own organisations and communities.

Communication with Canterbury City Council will be an important part of this process, helping to identify opportunities, share ideas and ensure that local action is joined up.

Appendix 1

Shared Objectives

Shared objective	Biodiversity Plan	Green infrastructure strategy	Pollinator action plan	Tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy	Canterbury riverside strategy
Protecting habitats and species	The strategy sets out to protect biodiversity habitats and species. It aims to further embed biodiversity protection in CCC policy. It sets out to designate more sites as LNRs / Village Greens.	Actions to enhance nature in terrestrial, freshwater and coastal habitats. Actions to protect freshwaters.	Protecting and improving pollinator habitats. Raising awareness and protecting habitats of rare pollinators.	Protecting trees, woodlands and hedgerows, especially ancient woodland. Encourage woodland management to support nature. Conversion of coniferous plantation to broadleaved woodland.	Sets out need and actions to protect habitats and species in and adjacent to the River Stour.
Connecting and expanding habitats and species	The strategy sets out a strategic vision for a nature recovery network. This details the core sites and the connections needed to expand habitats and species.	Sets out strategic green and blue infrastructure linkages for the whole district as well as for Whitstable, Herne Bay and Canterbury City. Includes actions around urban greening and linking urban to rural areas. Includes cross-boundary linkages.	Action to identify pollinator corridors. Trialling a pollinator pathway along the River Stour.	Increase canopy cover, especially in areas where this is below the Kent average. To increase trees, woodlands and hedgerows where these will connect habitats. Encourage natural regeneration of trees.	Improves connections along this important blue-green corridor and chalk river, including through the urban area. Removal of barriers for fish passage.
Positive action on Canterbury City Council's estate	Through this strategy Canterbury City Council has committed to improving biodiversity management across its sites.	Includes actions to manage CCC owned sites for biodiversity; including nature areas and other greenspaces and parks.	Range of actions to increase the value of CCC-owned land for pollinators, including planting and changing management regimes.	Ensure all council-owned trees and woodlands are managed and as resilient as possible. Any trees which need to be removed will be replaced. Tree planting in greenspaces and parks.	Several riverside sites owned by CCC. Some designated as Local Nature Reserves and managed for nature.

Shared objective	Biodiversity Plan	Green infrastructure strategy	Pollinator action plan	Tree, woodland and hedgerow strategy	Canterbury riverside strategy
Climate change adaptation and mitigation	Climate change vulnerability is detailed for each of the habitats. Actions in this strategy will help habitats and species to adapt to a changing climate.	Includes actions for tree planting. Sets out strategic corridors - connected habitats will allow species to adapt to climate change.	Delivery of Plan will support pollinators in adapting to climate change. Action to embed needs of pollinators in climate change impact assessments.	Sequestering carbon by increasing trees. Highlighting need for species variation to adapt to climate change, and threats to trees and woodlands.	A river corridor which is well-connected and with thriving biodiversity will be more resilient to climate change. Sets out actions for adaptation to climate change impacts.
Good outcomes from development	The actions in this strategy set out to embed consideration of biodiversity with planning, with strengthened planning policy and reference to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	The Green Infrastructure Strategy is evidence for the Local Plan and guides outcomes required from development.	Objective to use the planning system to better protect pollinators and to increase and connect habitats. Embedding pollinators in Local Plan evidence documents and Biodiversity Net Gain.	Deliver more street trees in new development. New homes to provide 20% tree cover. Work with developers to fund tree planting projects. Include trees in Biodiversity Net Gain.	Strategic plan and design guide for development in proximity to the river. Using developer contributions to fund delivery.
Grassroots and community action	Community action for biodiversity is an important way that this strategy will be delivered. Actions are included to support communities.	Community action is an important mechanism to deliver the strategy. Strategy includes actions to increase access to nature for communities.	Encouraging others who own land to improve it for pollinators. Setting up shared equipment. Providing information for those wishing to support pollinators.	Involving parishes to develop action plans for tree expansion. Communities and volunteers developing tree projects. Setting up tree knowledge hub to support local action.	Working with several Friends groups and community organisations along the river.
Working in partnership	This strategy must be delivered in partnership. There are several strategic and ambitious partnerships which will be taken forward.	Includes actions to work in partnership, including in The Blean, at Seasalter and to deliver larger projects.	Work alongside Kent County Council, landowners, parish council and others to deliver actions for pollinators.	Working with landowners to develop increases in trees, woodlands and hedgerows.	Working in partnership with the Environment Agency and landowners.

Appendix 2

Project Directory

Biodiversity Grants

- All Saints Nursery – forest school
- Canterbury Cemetery – pollinator planting
- Canterbury Swifts – Swift boxes in Herne Bay
- Chislet Parish Council – bird and bat boxes
- Hackington Parish Council – pond creation
- Ickham Village Hall – community garden improvements
- Love Hambrook Marshes – livestock fencing
- Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership – tree planting
- Stream Walk Community Garden – pollinator planting
- Sturry Church – memorial garden improvements
- Sturry Parish Council – centenary woodland and cemetery improvements
- Tyler Hill Nature Reserve – pond creation
- Water Meadows Primary School – habitat creation
- Westbere Parish Council – bird and bat boxes
- West Cliff Bank – butterfly and pollinator meadow
- Wickhambreaux Village Hall – community garden improvements
- 'The Canterbury Hedge'
- Cherry Orchard tree planting avenues
- Curtis Wood management
- Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve – pond creation
- Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve – tree planting
- Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve – Village Green preparation and designation
- Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve – small mammal survey
- Larkey Valley Wood management
- Long Rock management
- Right to Grow – Saltmarsh Lane
- Reculver Country Park – skylark plots
- Reculver Country Park – hedge planting
- Swalecliffe Miyawaki Mini Forest
- Westgate Parks – physic garden and wildflower meadow creation

Appendix 3

Management Plans

Curtis Wood

Dane John Gardens (in development)

Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve

Larkey Valley Wood – Countryside Stewardship Management Plan

Long Rock

Old Park (in development)

Reculver Country Park

Tankerton Slopes

Westgate Parks

Wraik Hill

Appendix 4

KMLNRS Potential measures

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Connectivity (CON)	Connectivity (CON2)	CON2.1	Installation of green bridges, wildlife crossings, tunnels and other appropriate structures, alongside retrofitting existing structures, to address historic fragmentation caused by major infrastructure.
Land management and land use (LM)	Land management and land use (LM4)	LM4.1	Protection of habitats and species sensitive to disturbance by employing site management, and other measures, which support connection to, and experience of, wildlife but ensures our most sensitive sites remain undisturbed.
Grasslands (GL)	Chalk grassland (GL1)	GL1.1	Maintain and enhance core, high quality and good condition chalk grassland sites through the application of conservation management sensitive to the existing and potential flora and fauna of the site.
Grasslands (GL)	Chalk grassland (GL1)	GL1.2	Increase the extent of high quality, connected chalk grassland by bringing appropriate sites, adjacent to core/ good condition sites, into conservation management.
Grasslands (GL)	Chalk grassland (GL1)	GL1.3	Increase functional links between chalk grassland and other habitats to maximise nature based solutions offered by improved connectivity.
Grasslands (GL)	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (GL2)	GL2.1	Increase opportunities to store winter water on land adjacent to grazing marsh to increase opportunities for "wetting" during spring/summer.
Grasslands (GL)	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (GL2)	GL2.2	Deliver grazing marsh habitat restoration, extension and creation where it will offer the greatest gains to support the county's important grazing marsh flora and fauna, and is designed to minimise recreational disturbance and reduce risk from predation.
Grasslands (GL)	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (GL2)	Gl2.3	Reconnect rivers with their former natural floodplain and improve the water storage ability of floodplain, in order to protect against climate change impacts and drought.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Grasslands (GL)	Lowland meadow (GL3)	GL3.1	Maintain and enhance core, high quality and good condition lowland meadow sites through the application of grazing/cutting regimes sensitive to the existing and potential flora and fauna of the site.
Grasslands (GL)	Lowland meadow (GL3)	GL3.2	Increase the extent of high quality, connected lowland meadow by creating new lowland meadow sites, in close proximity to core/good condition sites.
Grasslands (GL)	Acid grassland and heathland (GL4)	GL4.1	Implement appropriately designed management that prevents succession into secondary woodland and scrub encroachment and ensures that acid grassland is maintained and retained but not at the expense of the mosaic's heathland resource. Grazing regime provides maximum diversity and a combination of larger open areas and smaller mosaic "glades" to provide habitat for breeding birds, reptiles and invertebrates. Climate resilience is built into management.
Grasslands (GL)	Acid grassland and heathland (GL4)	GL4.2	Create new acid grassland sites from improved grassland and former arable sites.
Grasslands (GL)	Arable wild plants (GL5)	GL5.3	Design and deliver location and soil appropriate projects, targeted in the richest arable plant areas and on a variety of soil types, to create new, large areas dedicated to the promotion of arable wild plant diversity and abundance.
Successional habitats (SL)	Open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield) (SH1)	SH1.1	Appropriate management plans in place for key sites, with measures that support the succession of habitats to occur naturally, increase edge habitat, create a graded profile of mixed habitat and provide features that support the species of interest most strongly tied to open mosaic habitats and, in particular, any species that the particular site in question is notable for.
Successional habitats (SL)	Scrub (SH2)	SH2.1	Selective conservation grazing of areas within the scrub to create open areas and allow for natural regeneration.
Successional habitats (SL)	Scrub (SH2)	SH2.2	Maintain and integrate areas of scrub within arable land, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and urban habitats to encourage successional habitats and provide wildlife corridors.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Successional habitats (SL)	Scrub (SH2)	SH2.3	Put in place active scrub management that provides a mix of young and mature scrub, bare ground and links with surrounding habitat.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (management) (WTH1)	WTH1.2	Restoration and extension of lowland and upland wood pasture and parkland.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (management) (WTH1)	WTH1.3	Safeguard and enhance small pockets of woodland to provide key stepping stones for species movement and connect with hedgerows and scrub.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (canopy cover) (WTH2)	WTH2.1	Extension of existing woodland through natural colonisation and planting.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (canopy cover) (WTH2)	WTH2.2	Conversion of unproductive land for arable into woodland.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (canopy cover) (WTH2)	WTH2.5	Plant more urban trees and create urban forests and orchards, ideally siting tree planting to where they will provide flood management, air quality and temperature regulation benefits.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (resilience) (WTH4)	WTH4.2	Where appropriate, promote the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) sites to a more species rich woodland.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (resilience) (WTH4)	WTH4.4	Establish green bridges to connect woodlands fragmented by road and rail.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees (WTH5)	WTH5.3	Solitary ancient and veteran trees buffered with open space, with further protections offered with establishment of neighbouring wood pasture and agroforestry of mixed habitats.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees (WTH5)	WTH5.4	Connectivity of ancient woodland improved by links to hedgerows, establishment of standard trees and increased standing deadwood.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Wet woodland (WTH6)	WTH6.1	Establish and implement long-term management plans for wet woodland and surrounding land, which ensures connectivity between waterways and woodland and incorporates nature-based water management solutions, such as leaky dams, felling, blocking drainage channels to allow for seasonal flooding.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Wet woodland (WTH6)	WTH6.2	Creation of ponds within woodlands, and naturally regenerated riparian zones.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Gill woodland (WTH7)	WTH7.1	Create buffer zones around the gill woodland to ensure they remain largely undisturbed.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Traditional orchards (WTH9)	WTH9.1	Restore and bring established traditional orchards back into positive management, including long sward length, wildflower meadow strips between trees, limited or no spraying, sensitive pruning and dead wood/ dying trees retained.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Traditional orchards (WTH9)	WTH9.2	Establish new community orchards, in appropriate areas and with a focus on urban locations.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (naturalising) (FW1)	FW1.2	Undo historical physical modifications which have disconnected rivers and floodplains and restore natural processes through a range of approaches including supply of woody material and allowing this to remain in the channel where not causing flood risk, restoring channel stage zero, restoration of historic meanders, bed raising, regrading banks to create shallow edges and establishing mosaics of water meadows, wet grasslands and wet woodlands, to allow inundation of floodplains above Q10 flows.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (naturalising) (FW1)	FW1.3	Restore more natural shape of channels by narrowing overwide channels, especially where siltation, uniform and low flows and lack of habitat diversity are a pressure.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (naturalising) (FW1)	FW1.4	Open up and daylight culverted rivers, streams and ditches including ephemeral/ seasonal streams where modification is redundant.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (clean) (FW2)	FW2.4	Prevent road runoff entering rivers through the installation of SuDS, downstream defenders, or similar interception features on highways, local roads, and existing and new.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (supply) (FW3)	FW3.2	Retain and enhance habitats that support infiltration such as grasslands, woodland, reedbeds and lowland peat. Avoid reduction of infiltration in key recharge areas and around chalk stream winterbournes.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (supply) (FW3)	FW3.3	Slow the flow and store water in the catchment in areas of low agricultural productivity or where there is space in urban areas, working with natural processes, to implement natural flood management e.g. through installation of large woody material, creation of wet woodlands, lowland meadows, reedbeds, flood attenuation ponds and similar, especially where they can reduce flood risk and provide clean recharge to the groundwater body.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (buffers) (FW4)	FW4.1	Establish and maintain wide areas of semi-natural, complex habitats along banks of rivers and streams (including seasonal and headwater reaches), allowing light grazing of wet grassland areas with a focus on native livestock breeds, and encouraging woodland particularly where there is need for more shading of rivers to provide cooler temperatures, increasing riparian tree cover to 30%. Allow natural regeneration of habitats and recolonisation
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (buffers) (FW4)	FW4.2	Use re-development of old infrastructure as an opportunity to re-naturalise river corridors (e.g. old industrial sites).
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (buffers) (FW4)	FW4.3	Combine buffers with the use of nature based solutions to hold water on floodplains and in areas upstream of communities at risk of flooding, and clean water. This could include for example large woody debris, sediment traps, floodplain wetlands.
Freshwater (FW)	Headwater streams (FW5)	FW5.2	Restore and establish wetlands in headwater areas and around natural springs, by reversing and preventing further drainage of springs and seepage areas.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Freshwater (FW)	Headwater streams (FW5)	FW5.3	Renaturalise urban and modified sections of headwaters including ephemeral streams such as winterbournes (e.g. where they have been straightened and deepened to drain woodlands and agricultural land) including through approaches such as stage 0 restoration.
Freshwater (FW)	Lowland mire sites (FW7)	FW7.1	Manage existing fen and bog sites to reduce encroachment, including through scrub management and appropriate grazing.
Freshwater (FW)	Lowland mire sites (FW7)	FW7.2	Create and maintain wide buffers around existing fen and bog sites to safeguard them from diffuse pollution.
Freshwater (FW)	Lowland mire sites (FW7)	FW7.3	Restore lowland peat habitats by reversing drainage and supporting re-wetting of areas.
Freshwater (FW)	Freshwater wetlands (FW9)	FW9.1	Enhance reservoirs and similar waterbodies to provide better wildlife habitat. Ensure any such water bodies include features that enable wildlife to get out of water.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (space for nature) (URB2)	URB2.1	Areas of urban greenspace managed to maximise provision for nature in urban areas, providing a greater complexity of habitats, with year round shelter, forage and food.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (space for nature) (URB2)	URB2.2	Naturalise urban river corridors, by removing river obstacles where appropriate and replacing hard river banks with native buffer verges and riverside trees.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (space for nature) (URB2)	URB2.3	Target tree establishment to areas of low canopy cover.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Coastal (CL)	Open coast and estuaries (CL1)	CL1.3	Hard defences removed where appropriate, to allow space for tidal ingress and enable the managed realignment of the coastline, to mitigate coastal squeeze and allows intertidal habitats to be more resilient to climate change.
Coastal (CL)	Open coast and estuaries (CL1)	CL1.4	Create areas for saltmarsh restoration, seagrass regeneration and high tide roosts and provide breeding areas for seabirds and/or waders, with appropriate measures to prevent or reduce disturbance and predation.
Coastal (CL)	Saltmarsh and mudflats (CL2)	CL2.2	Small-scale saltmarsh restoration. using traditional materials to slow down loss
Coastal (CL)	Saltmarsh and mudflats (CL2)	CL2.3	Create new high tide roosts, in areas less vulnerable to rising sea levels.
Coastal (CL)	Saltmarsh and mudflats (CL2)	CL2.4	Link areas with other wetland habitats to form a landscape mosaic of wetlands to reduce the tendency for waders and seabirds to be concentrated at key hotspots and reserves.
Coastal (CL)	Seagrass (CL3)	CL3.1	Address threats to seagrass beds by putting in place management which: - Reduces and addresses pollution sources impacting seagrass restoration and growth. - Removes invasive spartina where it is known to be invading, smothering or limiting seagrass extension and restoration. - Minimise damage from boat anchors, dredging, fishing and trampling.
Coastal (CL)	Seagrass (CL3)	CL3.2	Increase areas of existing seagrass beds.
Coastal (CL)	Native reef building shellfish (CL5)	CL5.1	Safeguard established areas of native oysters and blue mussels by developing protected areas with management measures, in collaboration with local stakeholders, including the local fishing community.
Coastal (CL)	Native reef building shellfish (CL5)	CL5.2	Where practical, remove invasive, non-native species from the beds of native oysters and blue mussels.

Habitat type	Habitat	Potential measure reference number	Potential measure
Coastal (CL)	Native reef building shellfish (CL5)	CL5.3	Create suitable substrate for native oysters to colonise, focussing on existing/historic areas, and address the lack of larvae in the landscape.
Coastal (CL)	Native reef building shellfish (CL5)	CL5.4	Create suitable substrate for blue mussels to colonise, focussing on existing/historic areas.
Coastal (CL)	Saline lagoons (CL6)	CL6.1	Safeguard existing saline lagoons from loss and damaging activities that harm and/or pollute the lagoons.
Coastal (CL)	Saline lagoons (CL6)	CL6.2	Establish buffer zones and/or adjust site features and topography, to ensure ecological function of saline lagoon is not undermined by disturbance; enhance marginal habitat.
Coastal (CL)	Saline lagoons (CL6)	CL6.3	Create new saline lagoons to connect wetland sites in transitional areas that are likely to flood, taking into account proximity to sources of recreational disturbance.
Coastal (CL)	Vegetated shingle (CL7)	CL7.1	Safeguard existing habitat through access and management and interventions (e.g. allocated routes and boardwalks) that minimise the impact of footfall and recreational disturbance on this delicate habitat.
Coastal (CL)	Vegetated shingle (CL7)	CL7.2	Safeguard and extend supporting habitats, such as species-rich grasslands, next to coastal shingle that can act as seepage areas and support a mosaic of habitats for important coastal shingle species.
Coastal (CL)	Sand dunes (CL8)	CL8.1	Management of dunes to reduce scrub encroachment, remove invasive species and reduce disturbance pressures of recreational activities. Management to include year round low intensity grazing in the absence of endectocides, and with high quality fodder in winter to maintain high dung quality.
Coastal (CL)	Sand dunes (CL8)	CL8.2	Enable more naturalised and mobile sand dune systems, through a full range of successional stages of sand stabilisation across the dune system, from mobile sparsely vegetated foredunes, young dunes with dense Marram Grass clumps, to more established dunes with varied vegetation, stable sandy grassland or heath, open sandy areas and dune slacks. Address overstabilisation of the dunes to increase dune mobility and sand movement.

KMLNRS Wider measures

Habitat type	Habitat	Wider measure reference number	Wider measure
Connectivity (CON)	Connectivity (CON1)	CON1.1	Improve functional connectivity corridors between the designated and protected sites of the Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity and safeguard these areas.
Connectivity (CON)	Connectivity (CON3)	CON3.1	Set aside and/or put in place active management to prevent loss of, or damage to, areas of importance for functional connectivity.
Connectivity (CON)	Connectivity (CON3)	CON3.2	Enhance habitats alongside the county's highway, railway, cycleway, pathway and PROW networks and National Trails to become functional networks for wildlife movements and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.
Connectivity (CON)	Connectivity (CON3)	CON3.3	Maximise opportunities to restore wildflower habitat on road verges to contribute to a county network of wildlife-friendly habitat corridors.
Connectivity (CON)	Connectivity (CON3)	CON3.4	Implement broad buffer zones and connecting strips between habitat areas designated or managed for their biodiversity value.
Land management and land use (LM)	Land management and land use	LM1.1	New or extended farmers clusters in Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity not already covered.
Land management and land use (LM)	Land management and land use	LM2.1	Use of nature-based solutions to improve climate resilience of farmland.
Land management and land use (LM)	Land management and land use	LM3.1	Increased water capture, rainwater harvesting, reservoirs, ponds, holding areas, leaky wood dams.
Grasslands (GL)	Lowland meadow (GL3)	GL3.3	Increase connectivity of, and provision for wildlife in, lowland meadows by leaving field margins uncut, varied sward heights, hedgerows well-connected and integrate some bare patches or banks within the grassland site.

Habitat type	Habitat	Wider measure reference number	Wider measure
Grasslands (GL)	Lowland meadow (GL3)	GL3.4	Establish neutral grasslands on floodplains, to create resilience to flooding and drought and protect water quality.
Grasslands (GL)	Arable plants (GL5)	GL5.1	Management of field margins to provide graduated field edges, with wider and cultivated margins.
Grasslands (GL)	Arable plants (GL5)	GL5.2	Management of fields, with mixed times of cultivation to encourage a diversity of arable wild plants.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (management) (WTH1)	WTH1.1	Holistic management of woodlands and transitional open spaces to sensitively consider the understory, ground flora and soil; allow a variety of successional states and variety of species, developing to mature, providing different canopy layers; management of internal edge, including creation of glades and rides; preserve natural decay stages of woodland including old growth, dead and dead standing wood; where appropriate reinstate and increase coppicing as a management measure; deliver targeted management in order to provide habitats for vulnerable woodland species.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (canopy cover) (WTH2)	WTH2.3	Plant more trees in hedgerows.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (canopy cover) (WTH2)	WTH2.4	Use tree and hedgerow establishment and scrub to increase connectivity, provide wildlife corridors and address fragmented areas of woodland.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (resilience) (WTH4)	WTH4.1	Management that facilitates and enables the natural regeneration of woodlands, by reducing grazing pressures.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Woodland (resilience) (WTH4)	WTH4.3	Increase connectivity of woodland habitats by creating semi-natural habitat buffers strips, that reduce the gaps between patches and extend woodland edge habitats, and providing links through trees outside the woodland.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees (WTH5)	WTH5.1	Appropriate and targeted management of ancient woodland, in order to retain and enhance specific features of ancient woodland and enhance biodiversity.

Habitat type	Habitat	Wider measure reference number	Wider measure
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees (WTH5)	WTH5.2	Establishment of wide buffer zones around ancient woodland that are linked to hedgerows, to extend habitat connectivity.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Hedgerows (WTH8)	WTH8.1	Actively manage the county's hedgerows, fill gaps and remove invasive species; rejuvenate and restore hedgerows that have declined in structural condition. Increase the extent of hedgelaying, coppicing and gapping up within this management.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Hedgerows (WTH8)	WTH8.2	Buffer hedgerows with grass margins, scrub and headlands.
Woodland, trees and hedgerows (WTH)	Hedgerows (WTH8)	WTH8.3	Strategic siting of new and extended hedgerows to aid habitat connectivity and support species forage, shelter and movement; restore links to copse and woodland.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (naturalising) (FW1)	FW1.1	Monitor, manage, control expansion and remove invasive species from ponds, lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams and lowland drains.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (naturalising) (FW1)	FW1.5	Increase longitudinal connectivity in rivers by removing redundant barriers and making remaining barriers passable for fish, riverine mammals and natural sediment.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (naturalising) (FW1)	FW1.6	Support the delivery of protected freshwater sites restoration plans, through addressing drought and water quality impacts across the wider catchment.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (clean) (FW2)	FW2.1	Discharge agricultural land drains into interception features in buffers, rather than the stream network.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (clean) (FW2)	FW2.2	Establish and manage functional buffer strips and other interception features for all flow pathways to hold runoff and remove pollutants including chemicals, nutrients and sediment, before it enters rivers and streams.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (clean) (FW2)	FW2.3	Reduce input of diffuse phosphate and nitrate pollution to surface and groundwater bodies through the use of integrated constructed wetlands and reedbeds in addition to hard engineered treatments.

Habitat type	Habitat	Wider measure reference number	Wider measure
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (clean) (FW2)	FW2.5	Reduce the risk of combined sewer overflows by reducing surface water entering the drainage system for example through the use of SuDS, natural flood management measures or similar.
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (supply) (FW3)	FW3.1	Safeguard rivers and freshwater habitats in county most sensitive to low water levels through measures to reduce abstraction and water use in catchment
Freshwater (FW)	Rivers (supply) (FW3)	FW3.4	Hold and slow water in headwater streams through nature-based solutions (leaky woody dams and large woody debris, reedbeds, etc), and approaches such as stage zero to restore more natural channel shape and processes especially where this can provide flood risk benefits and improve stable flows.
Freshwater (FW)	Headwater streams (FW5)	FW5.1	Safeguard headwater streams from agricultural pollution, erosion, and road runoff through the use of semi-natural buffer strips and interception features.
Freshwater (FW)	Ponds (FW6)	FW6.1	Restore ghost ponds, including restoration of dew ponds and dip slope ponds, hammer and furnace ponds.
Freshwater (FW)	Ponds (FW6)	FW6.2	Enhance online lakes to include a mosaic of habitats and watercourses.
Freshwater (FW)	Reedbeds (FW8)	FW8.1	Manage reedbeds to prevent encroachment of woodland, and by managing associated ditches and dykes, conservation grazing, minimal chemical interventions, consider management of saline flooding.
Freshwater (FW)	Freshwater wetlands (FW9)	FW9.2	Manage, restore and expand river valley wetlands, for example floodplain meadows, floodplain grazing marshes, reedbeds and mudflats.
Freshwater (FW)	Freshwater wetlands (FW9)	FW9.3	Provide opportunities for spring flooding (e.g. for waders) by creating water storage areas for winter rainfall.
Freshwater (FW)	Freshwater wetlands (FW9)	FW9.4	Connect existing wetlands through a mosaic of habitats.

Habitat type	Habitat	Wider measure reference number	Wider measure
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (connectivity) (URB1)	URB1.1	Employ conservation cuts, minimise mowing and leave wild strips, buffers and corners on verges and grass areas in areas known to be of importance for pollinators connectivity.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (connectivity) (URB1)	URB1.2	Enhance and safeguard existing greenspace and trees that provide key stepping stones between larger natural spaces that are either within or at the edge of urban areas.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (connectivity) (URB1)	URB1.3	Establish wildlife corridors and provide habitat stepping stones across urban and developed landscapes by enhancing, extending and creating new green spaces, ponds, tree cover, green roofs and walls and wild verges/ swathes.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (nature-based solutions) (URB3)	URB3.1	Trees and hedgerows specifically planted to deliver air quality, temperature regulation/cooling and surface water management benefits and targeted to areas where it is most needed and will deliver the greatest impact.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (nature-based solutions) (URB3)	URB3.2	Prioritise the use of natural flood management/nature based solutions over engineered, hard solutions, to manage areas at high risk from surface water flooding.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (nature-based solutions) (URB3)	URB3.3	New and retrofitted green walls and roofs to enhance biodiversity, whilst also providing temperature regulation in settings most at risk from urban heat island effects.
Urban environments (URB)	Urban environment (nature-based solutions) (URB3)	URB3.4	Increased green and blue infrastructure, and more natural space, is targeted to communities where it is most needed to deliver health and wellbeing benefits and greater connection with nature.
Coastal (CL)	Open coast and estuaries (CL1)	CL1.1	Where hard defences must remain, apply the "greening the grey" approach, softening edges to encourage wildlife.

Habitat type	Habitat	Wider measure reference number	Wider measure
Coastal (CL)	Open coast and estuaries (CL1)	CL1.2	Refuges for wildlife created with access managed to reduce disturbance.
Coastal (CL)	Open coast and estuaries (CL1)	CL1.5	Hard defences removed where appropriate to enable reconnection of fragmented habitats through managed realignment.
Coastal (CL)	Saltmarsh and mudflats (CL2)	CL2.1	Maintain high tide roosts and nesting sites, with key sites fenced off, to limit disturbance and safeguard inland feeding, breeding and overwintering areas.
Coastal (CL)	Saltmarsh and mudflats (CL2)	CL2.4	Link areas with other wetland habitats to form a landscape mosaic of wetlands to reduce the tendency for waders and seabirds to be concentrated at key hotspots and reserves.
Coastal (CL)	Chalk reefs and cliffs (CL4)	CL4.1	Management of problematic non-native species.
Coastal (CL)	Chalk reefs and cliffs (CL4)	CL4.2	Control leisure boat and other recreational activity in chalk reef areas
Coastal (CL)	Coastal disturbance (CL9)	CL9.1	Develop zoned recreational areas that limit, restrict or prevent leisure activities which can disturb wildlife and damage sensitive habitats; safeguard offshore islands.
Coastal (CL)	Coastal disturbance (CL9)	CL9.2	Building up of existing and creation of new seal haul out sites, which are adequately managed to provide safe areas for them.

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Endnotes

1 As a key document evidencing the draft Regulation 19 Local Plan, it works towards the same timeframe as the Local Plan.

2 Estimated costs and funding sources do not include cost of CCC officer time.

3 Habitats as described in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 s.41 and the biodiversity duty s.40 amended by the Environment Act 2021.

4 The settlements are using Built up Areas mapping 2022 from the Office of National Statistics.

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Biodiversity strategy

Consultation responses

1. Introduction

Consultation on the draft Biodiversity Strategy took place between Wednesday 11 February and Wednesday 6 May 2026.

The consultation asked for views on biodiversity priorities across the district and tested whether the strategy's vision and proposed actions reflect local needs and ambitions for nature recovery.

The strategy sets out a vision for nature in the district by 2042/43 and 32 biodiversity actions grouped under six areas, covering the work needed to deliver a wilder district and support local nature recovery.

This included views on the overall vision, the level of ambition in the strategy, whether the action plan would begin to deliver change and whether any areas were missing or needed more detail.

A total of 81 responses were received.

2. Executive summary

Respondent engagement

- Most respondents were actively engaged in biodiversity work.
- 32.8% described themselves as very active, 29.5% said they were somewhat involved and 16.4% were occasionally involved.

Overall vision and ambition

- The overall biodiversity vision received broad support.
- 82% of respondents either strongly supported or supported the vision for nature in the Canterbury district by 2042/43.
- 11.5% were neutral and 9.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Where respondents disagreed, the most common written comments related to the need for a more actionable plan (three comments).

Action plan and delivery

- The 32 biodiversity actions received broad support.
- 75.4% of respondents either strongly supported or supported the action plan's potential to delivery nature recovery.
- Written comments on the action plan mostly focused on development demand and housing (18 comments), with 10 of these relating to the building of homes in green spaces.
- Delivery, accountability and implementation was the second most common theme (16 comments), with 12 of these asking for a more actionable plan with clearer accountability.

How well the strategy addresses each area

- Woodland and tree planting, and habitat restoration and connectivity each received the highest proportion of well or very well responses, both at 60.7%, followed by corridor building at 52.5%.
- Monitoring and enforcement received the lowest proportion of well or very well responses at 24.6%, with 55.7% rating it as moderate or slight and 11.5% saying it was not addressed at all.
- Marine and coastal biodiversity received the highest proportion f don't know responses at 18%.

Gaps and improvements

- The most common theme in response to what was missing or needed more detail was community and volunteer engagement (22 comments), with 10 of these saying communities need to be more actively involved.
- Education and partnership working followed with 21 comments, seven of which asked for money to support education and engagement.
- Development demand and planning drew 16 comments and 14 related to

delivery, monitoring and accountability, five of which highlighted the need for specific targets and timescales.

Additional comments

- In further comments, awareness, understanding, engagement and communication were mentioned 14 comments, with five seeking training or education provisional.
- General support for the strategy was expressed in 13 responses.
- Development demand and planning was raised in 13 comments, with nine relating to concerns about house building.
- Delivery and implementation concerns were raised in eight comments.

Written representations

- 20 representations were received from statutory consultees, community and voluntary groups, parish councils and one resident.
- The overall vision was broadly welcomed across the representations.
- Recurring themes included the accuracy of maps and factual content, the relationship between the strategy and the Local Plan, the absence of measurable targets and a monitoring framework, and enforcement of existing and future biodiversity obligations.
- All written representations identified areas where the strategy could be strengthened or better aligned with national frameworks and guidance. A fuller understanding of stakeholder views is therefore gained by considering the complete written representations.

3. Consultation methodology

Consultation took place between Wednesday 11 February and Wednesday 6 May 2026.

The following methods were used to seek views:

- an online questionnaire, which received 61 responses
- a paper version of the questionnaire
- 20 written representations were received

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- an article on the council's newsroom site
- posts on the council's social media channels
- a wide range of stakeholders were emailed directly to encourage them to respond to the consultation
- three information public meetings were held, providing opportunities for participants to raise questions and engage directly with service leads

4. Findings

The survey was designed to gather views on the proposed vision, objectives and actions set out in the council's draft Biodiversity strategy.

It asked for views on the strategy's overall ambition for nature recovery in the Canterbury district by 2042/43, including the vision map and the 32 biodiversity actions grouped under six areas.

The survey also asked respondents to rate how well the strategy addressed specific areas of biodiversity action and whether any areas were missing or needed more detail.

The survey included questions for all respondents on their level of involvement in biodiversity-related work in the district.

The key areas of focus were:

- support for the overall biodiversity vision for the district
- the ambition reflected in the vision map
- the 32 biodiversity actions and their potential to deliver nature recovery
- how well the strategy addresses specific areas of biodiversity action
- gaps or areas requiring more detail, such as funding, delivery and the community role

A total of 61 people responded to the survey.

Respondent profile - overall

Respondents had the opportunity to select all applicable options.

Most respondents were residents of the district.

There was also input form members of community or volunteer groups and representatives of partner organisations.

Respondent type	**Percentage**
Resident of the district	77.0% (47)
Landowner or land manager	1.6% (1)
Local business owner	-
Member of a community or volunteer group	34.4% (21)
Representative of a partner organisation (e.g. NGO, school, developer)	14.8% (9)
Other (please specify):	-

There was representation across all age groups, with the highest proportion of respondents aged 55 to 64.

What age are you?	Percentage
Under 18	-
18 to 25	4.9% (3)
26 to 34	4.9% (3)
35 to 44	8.2% (5)
45 to 54	9.8% (6)
55 to 64	26.2% (16)
65 to 74	23% (14)
75 to 84	9.8% (6)
85 and above	1.6% (1)
Prefer not to say	9.8% (6)
No reply	1.6% (1)

Respondents were evenly split between male and female, each accounting for 42.6% of responses, with a small number identifying in another way or choosing not to say.

What gender are you?	Percentage
Male	42.6% (26)
Female	42.6% (26)
Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)	1.6% (1)
Prefer not to say	11.5% (7)
No reply	1.6% (1)

One respondent said they considered themselves to be disabled, 52 said they did not and eight respondents did not answer the question or preferred not to say.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	Percentage
Yes	1.6% (1)
No	85.2% (52)
Prefer not to say	9.8% (6)
No reply	3.3% (2)

Respondent context and engagement

Respondents were asked: How actively involved do you feel in biodiversity-related work in the district?

Most respondents were actively engaged in biodiversity work.

Around a third (32.8%) described themselves as very active and a further 29.5% said they were somewhat involved.

A small number were occasionally involved (16.4%) or not currently active (11.5%).

Around one in ten said they were not involved but interested.

Very active	20	32.8%
Somewhat involved	18	29.5%
Occasionally involved	10	16.4%
Not currently involved, but interested	6	9.8%
Not active	7	11.5%

Overall vision and ambition

Respondents were asked: Our vision is outlined on page five and six. To what extent do you support the overall biodiversity vision for nature in Canterbury district by 2042/43?

The overall biodiversity vision received strong support.

More than four in five respondents (82%) said they either strongly supported or support the vision for nature in the Canterbury district by 2042/43.

A small number were neutral (11.5%) and 6.6% opposed or strongly opposed it.

Strongly support	37	60.7%
Support	13	21.3%
Neutral	7	11.5%
Oppose	2	3.3%
Strongly oppose	2	3.3%
Don’t know	-	-

Respondents were asked: Looking at our vision map on page six, how much do you think the strategy reflects the right ambition for biodiversity in the district?

Views on the ambition reflected in the vision map were also broadly positive.

Just over three quarters (77.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that the strategy reflects the right ambition for the biodiversity in the district.

Around one in ten (11.5%) were neutral and 9.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

One respondent said they did not know.

Strongly agree	20	32.8%
Agree	27	44.3%
Neutral	7	11.5%
Disagree	4	6.6%
Strongly disagree	2	3.3%
Don’t know	1	1.6%

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments where they did not agree with the proposals.

For readability, we have shortened each comment to capture the main sentiment rather than reproducing every comment in full.

In some cases, longer responses have been broken down into separate points.

Theme	**Number of written comments**
Need for actionable plan	3
Conflicts with economic objectives	1
Local Plan inconsistency with biodiversity strategy	1
Plans don't accurately account for damage to ecosystems	1

Action plan and delivery

Respondents were asked: We have outlined 32 biodiversity actions on page 10 to 15, grouped under six areas. To what extent do you think this action plan will begin to deliver a wilder district and local nature recovery?

The 32 biodiversity actions received broad support.

Three quarters of respondents (75.4%) said they either strongly supported or support the action plan's potential to deliver a wilder district and local nature recovery.

Around one in eight (13.1%) were neutral and 8.2% opposed or strongly opposed it.

Strongly support	17	27.9%
Support	29	47.5%
Neutral	8	13.1%
Oppose	2	3.3%
Strongly oppose	3	4.9%
Don't know	2	3.3%

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on any of these actions.

For readability, we have shortened each comment to capture the main sentiment rather than reproducing every comment in full.

In some cases, longer responses have been broken down into separate points.

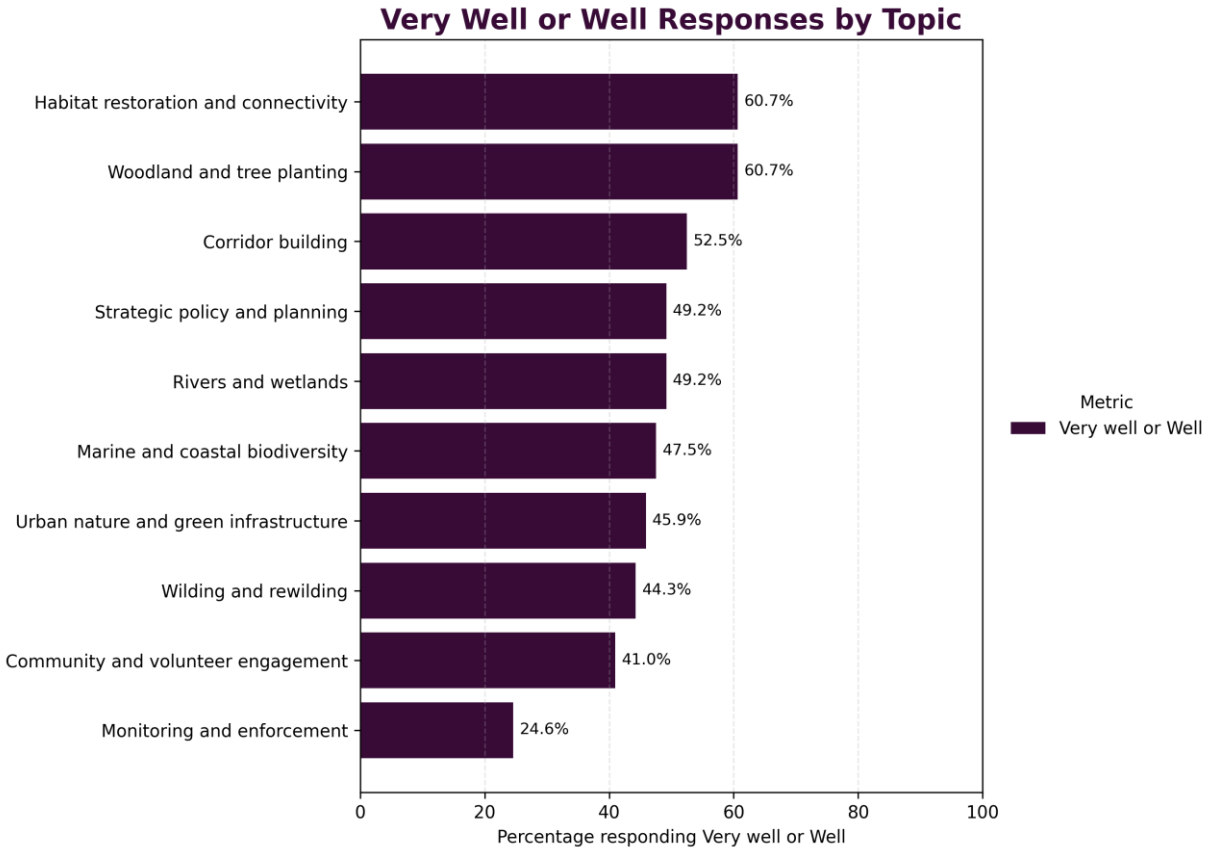
Where appropriate, closely related sub-themes have been grouped under a broader theme.

Theme and count	Sub-theme	No.
Development demand and housing (18)	Too many homes being built in green spaces	10
	Poor infrastructure struggling to sustain housing	5
	Greenwashing	2
	Explanation needed for more housing	1
Delivery, accountability and implementation (16)	Need for actionable plan/accountability	12
	How will the strategy be adopted by the unitary authority?	2
	Strategy is ineffective	1
	Map missing details	1
Community engagement and education (12)	Community education and communication	9
	Tree planting, beach cleaning, litter picking should be encouraged	2
	Biodiversity is essential to combat climate change	1
	Stricter demands/enforcement on developers	7

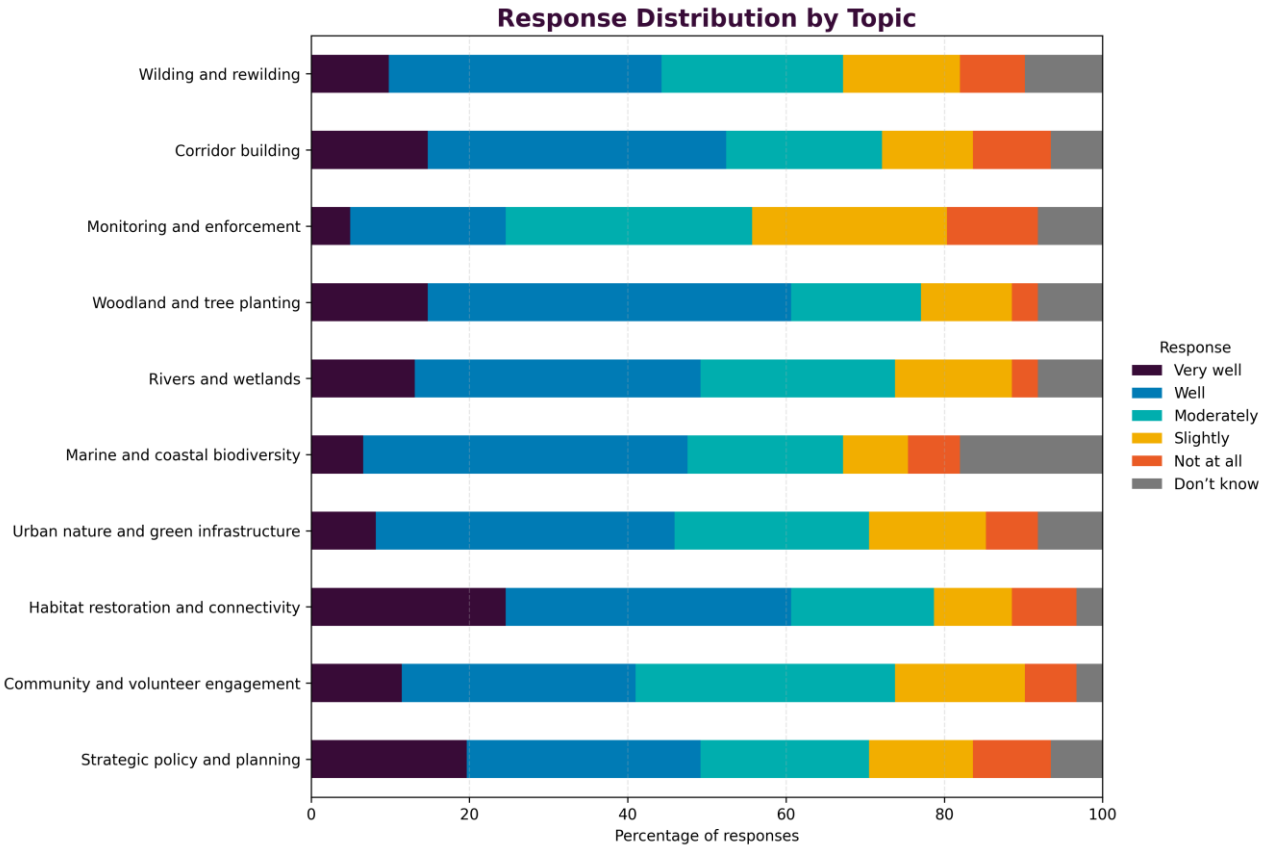
Enforcement and standards (9)	Stricter demands of homeowners	1
	Herbicide policy conflicts with strategy	1
Habitat and connectivity (8)	Urban areas are not addressed sufficiently	5
	Connectivity, green belts and bridges need more emphasis	2
	Allotments interfere with local wildlife	1
Environment and pollution (8)	Sewage, pollution, strain on water supply, litter not addressed sufficiently	3
	Primacy of native species over non-native species	2
	Too much traffic	1
	River rights should be included	1
	Farms and farming practices do not support strategy	1
Funding, data and evidence (7)	Funding concerns/conflicts with economic objectives	5
	More data gathering/Biodiversity surveys needed	1
	Scepticism about climate change	1

Respondents were asked: How well do you feel the strategy addresses the following areas of biodiversity action?

The graph below shows the proportion of respondents who felt the strategy addresses each area well or very well, by topic.



The graph below provides a full breakdown of responses across all categories, illustrating the distribution of views for each area.



A complete table of responses is provided below for full detail.

	Very well	Well	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all	Don't know
Strategic policy and planning	12	18	13	8	6	4
	19.7%	29.5%	21.3%	13.1%	9.8%	6.6%
Community and volunteer engagement	7	18	20	10	4	2
	11.5%	29.5%	32.8%	16.4%	6.6%	3.3%
Habitat restoration and connectivity	15	22	11	6	5	2
	24.6%	36.1%	18.0%	9.8%	8.2%	3.3%
Urban nature and green infrastructure	5	23	15	9	4	5
	8.2%	37.7%	24.6%	14.8%	6.6%	8.2%
Marine and coastal biodiversity	4	25	12	5	4	11
	6.6%	41.0%	19.7%	8.2%	6.6%	18.0%
Rivers and wetlands	8	22	15	9	2	5
	13.1%	36.1%	24.6%	14.8%	3.3%	8.2%
Woodland and tree planting	9	28	10	7	2	5
	14.8%	45.9%	16.4%	11.5%	3.3%	8.2%
	3	12	19	15	7	5

Monitoring and enforcement	4.9%	19.7%	31.1%	24.6%	11.5%	8.2%
Corridor building	9	23	12	7	6	4
	14.8%	37.7%	19.7%	11.5%	9.8%	6.6%
Wilding and rewilding	6	21	14	9	5	6
	9.8%	34.4%	23.0%	14.8%	8.2%	9.8%

Gaps and improvements

Respondents were asked: Do you feel that there are any areas around biodiversity which are missing or need more detail (eg. funding, delivery, community role)?

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on areas they felt were missing or required further detail.

As before, for readability, we have shortened each comment to capture the main sentiment rather than reproducing every comment in full.

In some cases, longer responses have been broken down into separate points.

Where appropriate, closely related sub-themes have been grouped under a broader theme.

Theme and count	Sub-theme	No.
Community and volunteer engagement (22)	Local communities need to be actively involved	10
	Strategy needs to be inclusive of all	6
	Knowledge of wilding needed and how it can be incorporated into plan	3
	We need people who care and value biodiversity	2
	Influence and promote safer practices to individuals and landowners	2
	Volunteers feel developments undermine their work	1
Education and partnership working (21)	Funding to support education & engagement is required	7
	Support for schools/universities involvement is necessary	6
	Increase communication & collaborative working between teams	4
	Multi-agency partnerships are required	2
	Council should have substantive, ongoing commitment to work with universities on biodiverse projects	1
	Links needed with a Council Food System Strategy and other similar links	1
	Address overdevelopment of Canterbury and district	4

Development demand and planning (16)	Strategy has problems in context of LP for housing	2
	Open farmland contributes to biodiversity and is not recognised in the strategy	2
	Keep developments in redeveloped areas which are already urban in nature	1
	How does Brooklands Farm fit the strategy?	1
	Stop University of Kent building homes	1
	Save Blean	1
	Map on page 81 does not include planning proposals in LP	1
	Open spaces are required to improve species numbers and isolated spaces are not suitable	1
	Planning should shift towards fewer unadopted areas	1
	Ban on high density rural developments	1
Delivery, monitoring and accountability (14)	Specific targets and timescales required for monitoring	5
	Strategy needs to be delivered at pace	2
	Action required rather than discussions	2
	Support in place for sustainability is required	2
	Need defined performance standards and monitoring	1
	No reference to national/global objective to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030	1
	Refer to UN Stainable Development Goals at strategic level	1
Habitat, connectivity and species (13)	Site-specific actions required for vulnerable habitats & suitable areas for expansion such as wetlands, corridors	7
	More information, protection and plan to expand orchards is required	1
	Hedges need adding to woodland & trees in the strategy	1
	Strategy fails to recognise land beside railway tracks could be used to enhance biodiversity	1
	Debate required on the spread of 'alexanders' (plant spreading along road verges)	1
	More use of buildings to support biodiversity	1
	Artificial Lighting at Night (ALAN) needs acknowledging and including	1
Enforcement (12)	Improved enforcement for developers on site, afterwards & for individuals	6
	Effective signage & enforcement required for littering/fly tipping/closed season for fishing	2
	Concerns about developer standards	1
	Discussions with developers regarding green space and biodiversity promises are required	1
	High risk that sites transfered to residents control will not vote to fund so LEMP's biodiverse vision will not be implemented	1

	Ecological reports downplay some findings	1
	Ecological reports should be done by independent ecologists	1
Pollution and environment (3)	Investigate & monitor effects of sewage/water pollution on marine wildlife	2
	Address air pollution	1
Funding and resources (1)	Support for greater resourcing for environmental initiatives	1

Additional feedback

Respondents were asked: Do you have any other comments about the Biodiversity Strategy?

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any further comments on teh strategy.

As before, for readability, we have shortened each comment to capture the main sentiment rather than reproducing every comment in full.

In some cases, longer responses have been broken down into separate points.

Where appropriate, closely related sub-themes have been grouped under a broader theme.

Theme and count	Sub-theme	No.
Awareness, understanding, engagement and communication (14)	CCC to provide training/encourage education	5
	What are the opportunities for public involvement?	3
	Schools/universities should be involved	2
	Need for wider communication of existing work	1
	Need for clearer explanation of biodiversity	1
	Reference to wider frameworks, such as omission of SDGs	1
	Monitoring through key species, such as birds	1
Development demand and planning (13)	Concerns about extensive house building	9
	Clearer link between Biodiversity and Planning	3
	Overemphasis on designated sites	1
General support (13)	Supportive of the strategy	13
Habitat management and ecological approaches (10)	Habitat maintenance, such as tree planting, litter picking, hedgerow cutting	3
	Need to mention building-related conservation	2
	More emphasis on privately owned land and non-ancient woodland	2
	Biodiversity opportunities along transport corridors, such as railways and trackside land	1
	Management of Alexander weeds	1

	Preference for native species	1
Delivery and implementation (8)	Concerns about delivery	3
	Need for greater clarity and detail	2
	Prioritisation of protection over restoration	1
	Cost concerns	1
	Need for timely action	1
Evidence, data and alignment with best practice (4)	Consideration of priority species, such as water voles	1
	Align with national strategies (Species Recovery Strategy)	1
	Use of evidence and species data (Red Data lists)	1
	Accuracy of mapping and data	1
Governance, oversight and collaboration (4)	Need for construction to be assessed by ecologists/community groups	2
	Need for cross- sector collaboration between CCC, developers, community groups and universities	1
	Regulation of outdoor activities	1
Environmental pressures and priority areas (3)	Need for greater focus on water pollution	1
	Focus on coastal and freshwater environments	1
	Reduce traffic and emissions	1

5. Written representations

A written representation was received from Secretary to the Friends of Duncan Down.

The maps bear little reality to the situation on the ground. As an example Plan 15 (Whitstable). All of the Gorrell Valley Nature Reserve which incorporates Duncan Down is a Local Wildlife site. This is not reflected on the map which has amenity areas including allotments on the wrong side of the Gorrell Stream. This lack of attention to detail undermines the credibility of the document.

I know because I have led the group that leads on looking after the 90 acre site for over 20 years. I am sure there are many other example. Inaccurate maps are of no value. I have mentioned this during the drafting process by this has clearly been ignored.

Whilst walking this morning and yet coming across more vandalism at the Gorrell Valley Reserve it did occur to me that I could see nothing about measures to be taken to promote the protection of our diversity.

Over the years we have had new trees ripped out, ponds polluted with motorcycles and other junk, trees ring barked, signs and information posts ripped out, grassland ripped up by rogue motorcycles, massive fly tips, fencing destroyed, glass smashed, visitors intimidated, a fox slaughtered with a cross bow, other wildlife shot with air rifles, fires lit destroying developing wild flower meadows and log pile habitats scattered and set alight. with no support from the police even where we have identified and photographed offenders. A similar picture applies across the district with wildfowl attacked with catapults in Canterbury, vandalism and little if any proactive policing activity.

The council have enacted PSPO's to give the enforcers the tools to do the job but they seem reluctant to apply them or mount any proactive preventative patrols. Shen raised with the police they were unaware of the provisions.

What is the point of a biodiversity strategy if nothing is done to protect the work undertaken to create that diversity in the first place. As such the document has a gaping hole in the middle of it that must be redressed if any credibility is to be preserved. Noble words demand action.

The team received a written representation from Natural England.

Dear Consultations Team,

Draft Biodiversity Strategy Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 11 February 2026 which was received by Natural England on the same date.
Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the

benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England has reviewed the draft Biodiversity Strategy and provide the following advice.

Natural England's Advice
Natural England supports the production of the draft Biodiversity Strategy. We support the Strategy's vision and overarching principles to conserve and enhance nature and the network of biodiversity across the district. However, we suggest the following amendments could be made to strengthen the Strategy:

• We advise that the overview of designated sites on page 30-31 could be amended to clarify that Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are nationally designated sites.
• We recommend that further information could be provided on the funding mechanisms that will be used to deliver the actions outlined in the Strategy. This would help to ensure the Strategy will be successfully delivered.
• We advise that further information could be provided to show how the Strategy aligns with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

We support that links are made to policies for nature recovery in the Canterbury District Local Plan. We remain committed to continuing to work closely with your Authority to help ensure that a sound plan is secured that enables growth in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter, please contact me at eleanor.curran@naturalengland.org.uk.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondence to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

The team received a written representation from Environment Agency.

Thank you for consulting us on your Draft Biodiversity Strategy.

We have reviewed the document and have the following comments to make.

1. Missing species
Canterbury is one of the few cities in England to have its own beaver population. Beavers feature in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and so should feature in the Strategy. It is suggested that they should feature on page 71 and in the preceding pages relating to "Our Rivers, Freshwaters and Wetland Species".

2. Missing actions
There are initiatives at national level that directly affect biodiversity in the District which should be considered and contributions to them should be made. For example the Waterlife Recovery Trust is eradicating mink across the country, has established the Waterlife Recovery South East project but needs wider acceptance and delivery. Other initiatives promoting the recovery of other species, present in the District, should be added via a catch all Action.

3. Strategies
Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy
Reference is made to replacement of trees that have to be removed. The Environment Agency requires replanting of 5 trees for every tree that is removed. This Strategy could be significantly enhanced if the new to old tree ratio was increased. As has been done, it is worth emphasising that tree planting helps keep rivers cool (See Keeping Rivers Cool at https://bit.ly/4c1m4o8) and so tree planting should be carried out in strategic manner to reflect the multiple benefits it can deliver. Canterbury Riverside Strategy The Environment Agency is mentioned with landowners in this strategy. However, many others are also involved in this work and should be included. In particular, the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, citizen scientists and River Wardens all warrant being mentioned.

4. Other information
Natural England is working on a new Protected Site Strategy for Stodmarsh. This will affect the Stour Catchment. Reference should be made to it now so that it can be integrated into biodiversity work when it is published.

For further information, contact Natural England.

We hope you find our comments useful.

The team received a written representation from British Horse Society.

Dear Consultations Team

I am responding to this consultation on behalf of British Horse Society, the UK's largest equestrian charity with over 125,000 members and representing the country's 3.2 million horse riders.

There are just under 42,000 horses passported to people living in Kent, contributing almost £290 million per annum to the economy, much of which is spent locally.

Like walkers and cyclists, most horse riders love to enjoy the countryside and, on horseback, we are fortunate to see much wildlife which would not readily be seen on foot or on our bikes as wildlife appears to accept the presence of the horse without noticing the rider. As such, a horse has been likened to a mobile hide, something which has been acknowledged by wildlife photographers over the years and which indicates their impact on the surrounding wildlife is minimal.

To that end, we believe that equestrians should always be considered alongside walkers and cyclists in aspects of the strategy where the latter are considered. Bridleways, in particular, where the surface is as natural as possible can often provide strategic green corridors along which to improve biodiversity whilst enabling people to benefit from being amongst nature too (Action BA11) Walking and cycling provision within new development should therefore be inclusive of equestrians.

"Naturalising road verges" needs to be done very carefully as highway verges are usually part of the highway set aside for walkers and horse riders. If they are

overgrown, their use is limited or curtailed as it is not possible to see what might be beneath the long vegetation (rubbish, holes, etc). Similarly tree planting on highway verges also impacts on safety, in particular for horse riders. (See legislation below1)

BHS would, of course, be very happy to work with the Council to maximise the inclusion of equestrians within its strategy and future projects.

Finally, if an automated response is not sent to this email, would you please confirm its safe receipt?

With thanks in anticipation and kind regards

A written representation was received from South East Water.

Dear Canterbury City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Draft Biodiversity Strategy. While South East Water supports Canterbury City Council's (CCC) ambitious Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) target, we seek clarification on the following points:

1. Balancing Ecological Quality and Numerical Metric: How will CCC ensure an appropriate balance between achieving high-quality ecological gain and meeting the strict numerical BNG metric?

2. Alignment with Consultations and Future Guidance: How will consistency be ensured between comments submitted for both the biodiversity strategy and the Reg19 Local Plan consultation, and how will this align with forthcoming National Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) BNG guidance?

3. Flexibility for Non-Standard Developments (Beyond Mandatory BNG): For non-standard developments, such as the water infrastructure we propose, we request that flexibility be allowed on a case-by-case basis for any BNG requirement that goes beyond the statutory mandatory needs. This is essential to ensure the affordability and timely delivery of future resilient essential drinking water supplies and to acknowledge the direct impact on customer costs.

4. Clarification for Essential, Larger Developments: Clarification is also requested regarding non-standard, larger developments, such as the Broad Oak Water project. These schemes are essential for providing crucial water supplies and are subject to other significant regulatory drivers, including the Water Framework Directive and abstraction management required to support the health of the globally rare chalk stream.

King regards

The team received a further written representation from South East Water, submitted by a different member of their team.

This representation included the original 88-page strategy with comments embedded directly within the document.
Due to the document's formatting, including branding and tables, it was not practical to extract and incorporate the comments into the main report.

The document was therefore shared with relevant service leads for their consideration.

A written representation was received from the Whitstable Society.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this strategy.
1. CCC's draft Biodiversity Strategy states on page 2 that it is a support document for CCC's draft Local Plan.

The draft Local Plan sets out proposals that would have disproportionately detrimental consequences for Whitstable. The adverse effects on the Whitstable area's environment and biodiversity would be more severe and comprehensive than for the City of Canterbury.

Proposals in the draft Local plan include:
a. extending the urban area of Whitstable almost to the Blean Woods (Ancient Woodland, SSSI etc) in order to build 1400 flats and houses plus offices in the Area of High Landscape Value (Policy W4);

b. extend the urban area to substantially remove the Green Gap that has been so-far preserved between Whitstable and Herne Bay (Policies W7 and HB5).

c. build over 300 houses on the open downland south of the A2990 Old Thanet Way, vital for keeping Duncan Down connected to existing wildlife corridors (Policies W5 and W6).
d. Build a new road junction on the A299 Thanet Way, to open up the surrounding area for growth, i.e. further development in the last remaining open countryside bordering Whitstable.

The effect of policies a – c above would eliminate 123 hectares (over 300 acres) of productive farmland with their associated open-landscape wildlife, and would substantially compromise three open-landscape wildlife corridors.

Whitstable's local countryside and wildlife corridors would be decimated. More of the same would be likely to follow when the new A299 junction is built.

2. CCC's Vision for a Nature Network (page 6) limits its Whitstable ambitions to urban projects, although these are fancifully titled "Wilder Whitstable". This is too limited.
It should be borne in mind that Whitstable's Council wards extend approximately half-way to Canterbury, and currently include extensive agricultural land, most of Thornden Wood SSSI, and other areas of Ancient Woodland, such as Clowes Wood (with Heath Fritillary butterflies), Longtye Wood and Convicts Wood.

One of the largest wildlife challenges for Whitstable wildlife is the planned loss of open landscape habitat – home to skylark (red-list species) and brown hare (priority species for conservation in Kent). The Biodiversity Strategy should try to solve this

problem. Hazel Dormice live in the proposed development sites at both Bodkin Farm and Brooklands Farm. Like the Brown Hare, they are a priority species for nature conservation in the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. CCC need to have particular regard to the conservation of these species, as required by the Natural Environmental & Rural Communities Act 2006.

3. Plan 15 on page 81 refers to Whitstable as a city. Hopefully this is an error rather than another CCC vision for the future.

4. The Strategy mentions the need to improve "connectivity" of habitats, and on page 6 shows an east-west habitat corridor immediately north of the Blean Woods. This corridor is currently wide enough to include the whole of Brooklands Farm, and brown hare can be seen here. However, CCC's draft Local Plan aims to build a large housing estate of 1400 flats and houses on Brooklands Farm, separated from the Blean Woods by just one field. This field is already under threat due to proposals from the Parish Council and Whitstable Labour Councillors for a new A299 / Radfall road junction with four slip roads.

5. On page 12, Action BA10 of the Strategy's plan of Actions states "Partner with Foreshore Services on marine biodiversity and environment related initiatives". This is too vague – what initiatives? One action at the marine RAMSAR site at Swalecliffe should be to measure PFAS chemical pollution from sewage in seawater and marine wildlife (seaweed, for example). The extent of the impact on foreshore wildlife should also be assessed.

6. There appears to be an error on page 17 – words are missing in the 6th line from the bottom of this page.

7. Page 23 mentions a need to address the following issue: "Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment. This includes buffering wildlife sites, which means making sure that the areas around wildlife sites are managed to help to protect them and to increase biodiversity." However, the draft Local Plan (as supported by the Biodiversity Strategy) proposes to REDUCE the buffer around the northern edge of the Blean Woods, so that it would be separated from urban development by the width of just one field, compared with the four fields that have buffered it until now. Similarly, there would also be a radical reduction in the buffers that currently protect the Ancient Woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites at Convicts Wood and Longtye Wood.

8. Page 32. The map contradicts the adjacent text. The text states that LWS are Tier 2, the map shows them as Tier 1.

9. Page 35 mentions the need to "Develop ecologically ….. varied landscapes through conserving and enhancing local variation within sites and habitats". However, the draft Local Plan (as supported by the Biodiversity Strategy) is planning the opposite course of action for Whitstable, by reducing natural open landscape, increasing urban landscapes, and reducing the lengths of hedgerows (in the case of Brooklands Farm policy W4). Page 35 also mentions that the area between Whitstable and the Blean is fragmented and therefore ecologically highly vulnerable. However, the draft Local Plan (as supported by the Biodiversity Strategy) is planning

to increase fragmentation by building large urban developments in open-landscape wildlife corridors (policies W4, W5, W6, W7 and HB5).

10. Page 43 sets out to describe "Threats and Pressures on Grassland". By far the biggest threat to grassland in the Whitstable area is urban development, and this needs far more prominence in this Strategy. It is the "elephant in the room".

11. Page 45 states that "Lower quality grassland habitats are also beneficial…." and mentions the need to "ensure loss of lower quality grassland through development is compensated for and improvements made. Biodiversity Net Gain and policies in the Kent and Medway LNRS will help to ensure grassland suitable for wildlife will be created, with developers being encouraged to include wildlife-rich new grasslands in developments". These statements are naïve and inadequate when compared to real-life biodiversity issues. In the case of Local Plan policy W4, meadowland assessed by the developers as poor-quality low-distinctiveness grassland in fact contains a rare plant called Mousetail. There are only two other places in Kent where it has been reported in the last five years, and it is the only place where it can be seen in any significant numbers year-after year. This plant appears to require a very particular type of environment to thrive, and it is unlikely to survive elsewhere if it is transplanted.



Photo of Mousetail at Brooklands Farm

The Biodiversity Strategy should be made more effective in protecting rare species like Mousetail, for example requiring that planning applications are amended to retain in situ the particular species and the supporting environment. The futility of allowing developers to attempt to relocate rare and fragile species was highlighted by the case of the rare snail (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) relocated to allow construction of the Newbury by-pass. It has been reported that the snail was not able to survive in its new environment and became locally extinct.

12. On page 46, under the title "Actions supporting grassland …and species", the Strategy proposes "BA7: Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery". It is worrying that the Strategy may be excessively influenced by two large organisations with their own very specific agendas – KWT and RSPB – both of whom are advocates of "re-wilding" of agricultural land. Sadly, KWT have NOT objected to recent major planning applications in the Whitstable area, even where they endanger priority species for wildlife protection such as Hazel Dormice (24/00224 Bodkin Farm, 25/00779 Brooklands Farm).

On KWT's website, their number one campaign is to oppose plans for 2000 new homes in Blean. They must surely realise that CCC would probably nominate alternative sites to build these houses around Whitstable, including 1400 homes at Brooklands Farm on the northern edge of the Blean Woods. KWT's main interest in this area appears to be developing their Bison Zoo in Thornden Wood and planting trees on farmland to join up separate blocks of woodland. They cannot be assumed to provide independent advice about wildlife in the Whitstable area. CCC need to work with local people with local wildlife knowledge in order to develop a Biodiversity Strategy that is more responsive to local needs.
13. Page 58 refers to the former brickworks site in Swalecliffe (now known as "Long Rock") and the Hog's fennel that grows there. CCC should keep in mind that this site is gradually shrinking in area due to coastal erosion (lack of sea defences) and is threatened by rising sea levels. CCC should seriously consider whether it should construct groynes (or other defences) here to reduce erosion.

14. Page 63 refers to the Long Rock hog's fennel site as a spit. Most of it is not a spit, but a former brickworks, and before that much of it was agricultural land.

15. On page 66, under the title Actions Supporting the Coast and Sea, the Strategy mentions "Improvements to the Oyster Coast Brooks, which will reduce pollution entering the sea". However, it fails to mention the bigger problem of extensive pollution of the sea from Swalecliffe sewage works. The Strategy should advocate testing seawater and foreshore wildlife for chemical pollutants (e.g. PFAS) typically found in sewage effluents.

In summary, CCC's vision for Whitstable is large-scale expansion of the urban area into the already very-limited countryside. Nothing in this strategy adequately compensates for the environmental damage, and the lost Biodiversity, that will result.

The team received a written representation from CT5 People's Forum Eco Group.

Hello,

This is the response to the CCC Biodiversity Strategy from the CT5 People's Forum Eco Group.
"As a group we have found the consultation challenging because we want our response to be focused on the CT5 area rather than the district as a whole. This is because of the problematic relationship between this Strategy and broader plans eg the proposed Local Plan, in as far as they potentially affect the biodiversity in the CT5 area.

We recognise and appreciate the huge amount of work and collaboration that has taken place in preparing the Strategy. However, we don't feel the biodiversity in CT5 is protected enough particularly when the aspirations of this plan come up against the policies related to CT5 in the Local Plan.

Here are our specific comments:
1. The Strategy provides no significant solution to Whitstable's Biodiversity Emergency. The primary cause of the emergency is the planned extensive increase in urban area, which will cause irreplaceable loss of wildlife, including protected, priority and other rare species.

2. The Natural Environmental & Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) requires public authorities to determine policies for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and it states that they should have particular regard to any local nature recovery strategy. The Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy lists priority species requiring habit measures.
These include Brown Hare and Dormice. As these species are set to eliminated in the draft Local Plan's proposals for Brooklands Farm, Bodkin Farm and "Land South of Thanet Way", how does CCC propose to conserve these species and their environments in the Whitstable area?

3. Action BA10 (pages 12 and 66) of the Strategy says "Partner with Foreshore Services on marine and environment related initiatives." This is too vague. What initiatives? We suggest that CCC commissions testing for chemical pollutants from sewage effluent in seawater. For example, PFAS chemicals which can affect marine life.

4. We note CCC's Vision for a "Wilder Whitstable" includes Urban Green Spaces. CCC should take action to ensure that none of these are at risk of loss following local government reorganisation."

We will be very happy to discuss the contents of this response if that would be helpful.

Kind regards

The team received a written representation from Swifts Local Network: Swifts & Planning Group.

Dear Canterbury Consultations Team,

I would like to comment on the draft Biodiversity Strategy, on behalf of the Swifts Local Network: Swifts & Planning Group - we are a community wildlife conservation organisation.

If you can confirm receipt of these comments, that would be much appreciated.
I wish to be notified of future progress of the Biodiversity Strategy if possible.

The references to swift boxes are welcome but in summary they would be made greatly more effective by adding text from national planning guidance that clarifies the following which does not seem to be mentioned in the Canterbury strategy:

- *Swifts are endangered, largely because they are losing nest sites as buildings are renovated;*
- *Swift bricks are preferred to external boxes for new build because they are permanent with no maintenance requirements;*
- *Swifts bricks are a universal nest brick for small bird species;*
- *National planning guidance recommends at least one swift brick per dwelling on average for new developments.*

Also, please add, as house martins (which seem to be currently omitted from the strategy) are red-listed but a significant species in the district of Canterbury with good availability of vegetated and waterside areas for foraging, and also referenced in the Kent LNRS: "Artificial nest cups for house martins may be specified as an alternative to swift bricks, where recommended by a suitably qualified ecologist."

In more detail:
Please add in key text from National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) Natural Environment 2025 paragraph 017, which specifically requires at least one swift brick per dwelling on average.
Link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment

Key text that should be copied in from the NPPG as follows:

"The use of swift bricks is particularly important in this context because swifts rely on urban cavities for nesting, and the national loss of suitable nesting sites through building renovation has been part of the reason for the species' decline.

Developments should include integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) where possible, with the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box per unit. Nest boxes can provide important habitat for other species as well as swifts, such as starlings and sparrows.

Extensive guidance is available on wildlife friendly features, including the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code which illustrate how well-designed places can support rich and varied biodiversity by facilitating habitats and routes for wildlife. More specific support for the selection and installation of swift bricks can be found in the British Industry Standard BS 42021:2022, the Future Homes Hub Homes for Nature Guidance, and the RSPB's Guide to Nestboxes."

For background information:
The Kent LNRS Part 3 also specifies measures as follows:
Page 179: "Features to support wildlife (all installed in accordance with best practice guidance) could include:
• Swift bricks
• House Martin artificial nest cups".

Page 180: "Safeguard existing nest sites for building-dependent species, such as Swifts and House Martins. Provide mitigation where these cannot be safeguarded." The government is strengthening national guidance on swift bricks, in addition to the NPPG referenced above.

The proposed updated National Model Design Code Part 2 Guidance Notes, now named "Design & Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance" (pending government response to the 2026 consultation) specifically in policy N4 (page 31) now refers to "swift bricks" (https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/design-and-placemaking-planning-practice-guidance/design-and-placemaking-planning-practice-guidance).

The proposed updated NPPF (pending government response to the 2026 consultation) states:
"N2 (f): Development proposals should incorporate... swift bricks into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective" (page 88)
(https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system).

Any questions at all please let me know.
Many thanks.

A written representation was received from the National Highways.

Dear Consultations Team
Thank you for your email of 11 February 2026 consulting National Highways on the Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy A Nature Recovery Plan January 2026 – DRAFT, seeking a response no later than 6 May 2026.

National Highways is the government owned company which operates, maintains and improves the Strategic Road Network (SRN) as the strategic highway company appointed under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and in accordance with the Licence issued by the Secretary of State for Transport.

National Highways is a statutory consultee to the planning process. It has a specific obligation to deliver economic growth through the provision of a safe and reliable Strategic Road Network in line with the provisions set out in DfT Circular 01/2022: The strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development.

Full details of our role in the planning system, our processes and how we will work with others can be found at https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/planning-and-the-strategic-road-network-in-england/.

We have reviewed the draft Biodiversity Strategy from the SRN perspective. We note that

1. National Highways does not appear to be mentioned in the document
2. You can find details about the National Highways' own environmental related strategy's and work at https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/environment/

3. The 6 principles underpinning your strategy would appear to chime with National Highways environmental work
4. Your intention to work in partnership would lend itself to the Council and National highways working together as appropriate.
5. You may wish to consider adding a category of partners ie those statutory undertakers and utilities that have their own environmental and similar obligations, since their contribution, funding, ways of working may be different to other potential partners. And their land holdings may comprise narrow, linear corridors rather than necessarily single plots.

I hope our comments assist and look forward to hearing more about the production, adoption and implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy.

A written representation was received from Kent County Council Flood and Water Management.

We have reviewed the contents of the Biodiversity Strategy and are generally pleased to note its contents, particularly with regards to the cross referencing of Canterbury's Local Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan requiring for the utilisation of SuDS in the district.
Our only other comments would relate to the Rivers, Freshwaters and Wetland Habitats section with regards to the 'vision' for water use to be considered particularly and specifically in relation to the evidence section and the paragraph "There is a need for greater awareness of the impact of water use on the natural environment" whilst, as mentioned above, the SuDS requirement under the GIP is referenced you may wish to include direct reference within the section to DEFRA's SuDS technical standards which now requires for non-potable water re-use to be considered which would appear to align with the aspirations of this section.

A written representation was received from the Canterbury Society.

To what extent do you support the overall biodiversity vision for nature in Canterbury district by 2042/43?

It is encouraging to see the development of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy following the declaration of a biodiversity crisis by Canterbury City Council in 2023. The Vision of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy is ambitious. It is excellent to see that the focus is on both nature recovery and resilience, as well as on better connectivity and the expansion of wilder landscapes. The inclusion of the role of residents, businesses, partners, communities and developers is vital to improving and protecting biodiversity in the district. It is promising to see that the Draft Biodiversity Strategy ambitiously secures the delivery of 20% biodiversity net gain in line with the Draft Local Plan, which is above the national statutory 10% BNG. The Canterbury Society very strongly supports the overall biodiversity vision for nature in the Canterbury District. While the Canterbury Society supports the vision, this support is subject to the inclusion of measurable outcomes, clear delivery priorities, and a defined monitoring framework to ensure the strategy translates into tangible biodiversity improvements. In particular, the strategy would benefit from setting out a baseline, target and timeframe for key biodiversity indicators across the district, such as:

● extent and condition of priority habitats (hectares restored or created)
● ecological status of the River Stour and other watercourses
● %age tree canopy cover across urban and rural areas
● connectivity of the ecological network (such as habitat corridors and fragmentation
● condition of designated sites (such as % of SSSIs in favourable condition, this was KPI 8.2 in a previous corporate plan)

Do you feel that there are any areas around biodiversity which are missing or need more detail (eg. funding, delivery, community role)?

The inclusion of a clearly communicated and visually appealing map of the habitat structure of Canterbury District on page 6 is excellent. The map highlights how the Stour River Valley forms a very significant, and rare habitat, running through the centre of Canterbury District. Therefore, something could be included on the initiative for a charter for the Stour River, which is being worked on by the Friends of the Kentish Stour, and the important role of the rights for rivers movement in protecting our precious chalk stream river. The key rights of rivers should be included: the right to flow, the right to perform essential functions, the right to be free from pollution and the right to native biodiversity. This could perhaps be included under Action point BA 8 or a separate action point under Partnership Working.

The strategy could strengthen its approach by setting out clear ecological objectives for the River Stour, including improvements in water quality, habitat condition, and connectivity, aligned with Environment Agency data and catchment-based Partnerships.

The important role of local river guardians should also be included, especially as Canterbury District already has a significant number of river wardens/guardians volunteering with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership who work alongside the Council. These river guardians are involved with, in the river litterpicks, and many have been trained in riverfly monitoring which they carry out on their stretch of the river. The contribution of citizen science could be formalised through a district-wide monitoring framework, linking volunteer data (such as riverfly monitoring, Bioblitz records) into an annual reporting process to track biodiversity trends.

Something should also be added about the value of citizen science projects of which there are several examples in the district, just one example is the annual Bioblitz held by University of Kent.

It is most encouraging to see (in Action BA17) that the council will maximise opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain delivery on Canterbury City Council sites with associated 30 years conservation covenants / funding. It is also encouraging to see the inclusion of training and increased awareness of biodiversity to be given to Contracts and CANENCO (in Action Point BA18) so that they can deliver biodiversity positive grounds maintenance, as this has often been a serious weakness in achieving good results for biodiversity. Good training of the Canenco ground maintenance team to effectively continue the positive biodiversity improvements made in Canterbury' parks and open spaces during the LUF project, is going to be essential going forward. Perhaps ways could also be sought to create greater

communication and positive working between Contracts/Canenco and Friends Groups, to enhance these outcomes for biodiversity across our parks and open spaces. This should be supported by defined performance standards and monitoring, including measurable outcomes for habitat condition, mowing regimes, and species recovery across council-managed land.

Do you have any other comments about the Biodiversity Strategy?

How can we better support your work in nature recovery?

The strategy would benefit from a clearer statement of governance and accountability, including how progress will be reported publicly and how delivery will be overseen through the Council's committee structure.

Very little has been included in the actions regarding the Council's role in enforcement to ensure biodiversity in Canterbury District is protected and improved. Enforcement will be required to ensure new developments achieve 20% biodiversity net gain. At the basic level this will require checking up that new trees planted are watered and that any which die are replaced. Effective, clear signage and enforcement regarding littering/flytipping (particularly along the Stour River greenbelt) is essential. It would be encouraging to see a commitment that the Council will work in partnership with the Environment Agency and Police to enforce an end to the targeting of wildlife by those using catapults, as well as clear signage regarding the closed seasons for fishing. In addition, the Council should set out how it will monitor and enforce Biodiversity Net Gain over the full 30-year period, including resourcing for compliance checks and long-term habitat management.

As mentioned under The Principles Underpinning this Strategy, the Council's leadership role is key to the success of the Biodiversity Strategy. At present CCC plays a very important role in assisting communities to set up Friends of Groups. It also guides and supports these groups with improving biodiversity and developing management plans for the green spaces they support - CCC does this extremely well. Continued support for Friends Groups could be strengthened through a formal partnership model, including shared objectives, small grant funding, and structured communication with council services.

Although, Canterbury Society agrees with the focus in the draft strategy on larger landscape-based nature recovery and resilience, we feel that the council has an important leadership role to encourage and support action from residents, businesses and other community groups who own gardens to also help support biodiversity. It would be a missed opportunity not to include this in a further action point. The gardens in Canterbury District make up an important, although not huge percentage of green space in the district. (Developed land according to the Draft Local Plan makes up 9.5 %, some of which will be gardens. Not nearly as big as the 90.2 % undeveloped land in the district, but still important, especially when wildlife in farmed areas is under threat.) It would be good to see the inclusion of CCCs leadership role specifically in providing clearly communicated guidelines for ways in which owners of private gardens/open spaces can work together to create improvements for biodiversity. The Council could promote what residents and businesses can do or are already doing. There should be an ambition to promote biodiversity net gain in

existing gardens, just as new developments are expected to provide 20% net gain for biodiversity. These actions should include communities working together to: create hedgehog highways between properties across whole streets, installing swift boxes, house martin nests, bat boxes, insect hotels (and/or messy wilder spaces in gardens for invertebrates), growing areas of native wildflowers, seeking alternatives to use of pesticides and herbicides, planting of native hedges instead of, or in addition, to fencing, and inclusion of/protection of native trees in their gardens. Encouragement to reverse the concreting over of gardens in Canterbury could also be included. This could perhaps form a further action point under Community Working. The Council could support this through the development of a simple, accessible biodiversity toolkit for residents and businesses, setting out practical actions and linking these to wider district biodiversity objectives.

More broadly, examples from other local authorities demonstrate that biodiversity strategies can include quantified targets, annual monitoring frameworks, and clearly defined delivery mechanisms. For example, Bath and North East Somerset Council publishes annual progress reports with scored actions and ecological baselines; Bristol City Council has set city-wide targets such as managing 30% of land for wildlife by 2030 with supporting KPI tracking; and West Oxfordshire District Council has established a KPI-led monitoring framework with annual reporting. Incorporating similar elements would strengthen Canterbury's strategy and improve its ability to deliver measurable outcomes over time.

A written representation was received from a resident of the district.

I began with Charles Darwin and his work on the theory of evolution and the origin of species. Darwin's voyages were among the high-points of scientific discovery. They were undertaken at a time when men and women felt growing confidence that we could not only understand the natural world but we could master it, too. Today, wehave learned rather more humility and respect for the balance of nature. But another of the beliefs of Darwin's era should help to see us through—the belief in reason and the scientific method. (Margaret Thatcher at the United Nations General Assembly, 1989)

I have first to apologise for starting this commentary with a personal statement. For me this is necessary, as my background in the academic study of biodiversity and its conservation is extensive – and somewhat at odds with what has become the 'norm' in many applications made over the past two decades.

As a career insect taxonomist and macro-ecologist even before graduation in 1967, and inspired by direct contact with the late Paul Ehrlich and many other leaders in the field, I was immediately aware of the challenge posed by the 1988 book BioDiversity edited by Ed Wilson and Frances Peter – of which, it has been said since, is "Where it all began ... The 'milestone' volume that drew attention to the importance of biodiversity" (Gaston & Spicer, 1998). At the very same time, Norman Myers was proposing his important 'hotspots' concept and 'triage' approaches as urgent measures to avert anthropogenic mass extinction (Myers, 1988). And so it was that Margaret Thatcher's speech on the Global Environment, encouraged by Crispin Tickell and made to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, in November

1989, was a call to arms for British scientists, including myself at the Natural History Museum, in London.

By September 1990 I had submitted a formal paper, in collaboration with two colleagues, entitled "What to Protect? Systematics and the Agony of Choice" – acknowledged in Nature at the time by Robert May (later to become Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government) as a valuable step toward "what might be called the calculus of biodiversity" (May, 1990). Published in 1991, 'What to Protect' did prove influential (over 2200 citations to date according to GoogleScholar), and led to a one year secondment 1993–1994 as coordinator of an international team gathered at the Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin, to "Assess priorities for the conservation of biological diversity." Numerous publications and, in some cases applications, in e.g. the Pacific and southern Africa, stemmed from the work of this group – arguably the single most important outcome being a paper by two Australian members, Chris Margules and Bob Pressey, "Systematic Conservation Planning", published in Nature in 2000 – which, according to Google, has now been cited over 8300 times.

Over the period 1991–2009, and to a lesser extent since, I published a number of papers and co-edited a book on the issues concerning biodiversity – what it is, how it can be measured, its values, and the need for its conservation and maintenance in ways that are socially acceptable and politically realistic. From all this I can distil a number of principles, four of which, in particular, inform my comments on the 2026 CCC draft strategy:

1. Before setting targets and goals, it is very desirable to acknowledge at the outset the several different values that can be ascribed to biodiversity, and try to reach consensus among the stakeholders as to what is to be achieved. The most well-known of these values are direct use for humans (utilitarian), indirect use for human environments (ecosystem services), and the intrinsic value that can be ascribed to all forms of life (often contended by professional ecologists and managers, driven by monetary constraints as they are, but widely accepted by many members of 'the public' as the most fundamental – the spiritual and existence values of biodiversity – 'deep ecology' etc.).

2. Natural biodiversity is highly structured – many of the measurable features that make up biodiversity (ecosystems, species, genetic variants, etc.) are very local in their occurrence, resulting in universal heterogeneity. This heterogeneity can in fact only be fully 'captured' by a calculus that encompasses various measures of evolutionary difference and spatial distribution between and among the myriad features that make up ecosystems. This poses not only practical challenges, but also a key political difficulty for effective conservation because it means that, ideally, every functional place or area where action is to be taken has different needs (different, unequal resources and inputs) – in other words, structural solutions are required. This is difficult for politicians and managers to address, because of the widely perceived need for fairness and equality in social matters (no post-code lotteries!) – politicians are used to one-size-fits-all, so-called levels solutions, not differential, structural solutions determined by history and geography.

3. As evaluated by any particular metric, some places will be 'richer' and some places

'poorer' in biodiversity – but this does not mean that 'poorer' places will necessarily be improved by 'enhancement'. Biodiversity is a very complex matter and has numerous 'dimensions' – reducing everything to one metric and trying to maximise that one value is as likely, if not more likely to be damaging as beneficial. I refer to the tendency to see biodiversity as measurable on some sort of linear scale as 'commoditisation' – very tempting for managers wishing to show that their actions have 'improved' matters, led to better-value-for-money, or that a reduction in a measure of biodiversity at one place can be offset by 'increasing' it this way at another. In my opinion this idea that 'more is better', without structural qualification, has become widely ingrained, even among academics – and is in my view, insidious.

4. Because all areas have some (natural) biodiversity value or values, setting priorities is not simply about doing some things and not others – it is a process more to do with urgency – assessing what is most urgent now in terms of cascading bad consequences for the whole (in this case, Canterbury district) if not addressed first, while remembering that, assuming some initial success, there is still a need to address other concerns later. As I once put it (Vane-Wright, 1996), "priorities are relative, not absolute. Doing more of one thing, or doing it with greater urgency, should not mean doing nothing about everything else – only less, or later". This has the further connotation that what is not needed is a static plan – but a dynamic planning process in which progress and/or failure is continuously monitored, so that on-course corrections can be made, and revised priorities can be set – or even the original negotiated goals reconsidered and re-drawn to fit emergent reality. One can only travel hopefully – 'Nature' is the most 'complex system' we can ever encounter (other than the human socio-economic system). Approaches encompassing triage (Myers) together with spatial measures such as complementarity (Vane-Wright et al.) and irreplaceability x vulnerability matrices (Margules & Pressey) offer practical approaches to analysing data necessary for setting meaningful priorities. I have annotated a copy of the 88 page strategy, with numbered, sequential pop-up notes. The numbered commentaries below expand and relate to the particular points.

1. "protect and enhance" (page 2) – protect is OK, very desirable if a local system is 'healthy', but enhance to me has strong connotations of commoditisation (#3 above). If something akin to 'restore' is intended, then OK (assuming we have an idea what biodiversity features are natural to a given area in question – an increasingly difficult issue as matters are being affected by rapid climate and other environmental changes) – but not if it simply connotes adding 'more' according to some particular metric (e.g. species richness without regard to which species we are considering as beneficial – see e.g. point 10 below).

2. "grow and reshape" (page 2) – a good aspiration consistent with the idea of a planning process (#4 above) – but it is necessary to start with specific actions (ideally well-thought-out, most urgent priorities).

3. "more wildlife" (page 5). Again, such an aim runs the risk that we are talking about 'more' or 'maximising' some metric rather than restoration – where necessary – of biodiversity appropriate to different areas. Of course, as above, once anthropogenic alteration has taken place, it is rarely possible to fully restore to the state that obtained at some previous time. And virtually the whole of East Kent is an anthropogenic landscape. But the species complement and type of ecosystem

fostered by the strategy should always strive to be as appropriate to local conditions as possible.

4. "Our Vision". The map, with its seven proposed network areas, is interesting. Geology is a major abiotic factor affecting the distribution of species and ecosystems. Canterbury District has four major types of geological formations. Of these, Gault Clay underpins most of the land covered by the Wilder Whitstable, Wilder Herne Bay and Tree Supercorridor 'systems'; elsewhere in the county, most other Gault Clay occurs on northern Sheppey and in the mid-section of the Grain peninsula. The Wilder Coast and Marshlands designation sits mostly on the alluvial soils of the Wantsum channel and Graveney-Seasalter area (the largest other such area in Kent is Romney Marsh). The Stour Valley corridor naturally reflects the course of our major river, a world-significant chalk stream. The Wilder Canterbury area is quite extensively underpinned by Eocene Sands, which also occur in a narrow zone far to the west, and a little more extensively to the east. The Biodiverse Downlands in the south represents part of Kent's extensive North Downs chalk formation. Two major geological formations found extensively elsewhere in Kent, but not in our district, are the Wealden Clays and Tunbridge Wells Sands.

This all presents, albeit extremely broad-brush, a degree of logical geographical structure. However, within this there will be enormous local heterogeneity. Thus the relatively rare and important acid grasslands found in Old Park, and their associated special flora, rest on an elevated sand and gravel plateau (https://canterburyoldpark.org.uk/geology-landcover/). So far as I am aware, and if so very disappointingly, nobody has analysed the very extensive historical to contemporary biological records arduously gathered by generations of Kent naturalists – much of it now mapped at tetrad (2 x 2 km) resolution using a standard grid – to reveal finer patterns that would inform a truly structural approach (#2, above) to conserving (and restoring) our biodiversity – not only within our District, but in relation to the rest of Kent as a whole. For this purpose, Philp's (2010) remarkable Atlas of the Kent Flora should be a prime target – based on more than 250,000 records for over 2000 plants (and updated by the continuing efforts of the Kent Field Club). Data for mammals, birds and other vertebrates abound – and even some invertebrates, such as moths (the wonderful Kent Moth Group website maps well over 2000 species at tetrad level for the whole of Kent: https://kentmoths.org/). CCC cannot be expected to do this – but what are the partner organisations doing in this regard? If it has been done, where are the results and conclusions? Analytical GIS applications are essential for this work.

5. "There is an urgent need to act" (page 8). Could not agree more. The question is, though, what actions are needed now, and how have these been decided – in support of which values and criteria? Are decisions to be imposed, or will they result from effective stakeholder meetings to establish consensus, resolve potential conflicts, and thereby gain strong community support? Thus the recent recommendation to the European Commission that it "must guarantee transparency, public participation and stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes, while strictly regulating conflicts of interests and lobby-group influence" (BirdLife 2024, p. 42). Much is made in the strategy of partnership working – are the results of presumed stakeholder values and conflict-resolution workshops, that presumably must have taken place, available?

6. Page 8. Indeed, climate instability and biodiversity loss are but two sides of the same coin (James Lovelock, speaking to the Royal Society, 18 October 2007).

7. Page 8. Effective partnership is a huge challenge – not least to build consensus and maintain momentum. I worry that the small team at CCC, however well-intentioned and informed (as they clearly appear to be), have sufficient resources for the task. In 1996 I developed and published a model of how such partnerships might work that is, I regret, not widely cited. The limitation of it almost certainly lies in the human resources needed – what we have is pitiful in relation to the relentless degradation of natural systems that has already occurred in support of 'the economy', and still continues only a little abated as a result of the growing awareness of, let's face it, still a minority of people that have their hands on the levers of power. Persistent failures to achieve international climate change and biodiversity conservation targets since the 1990s is reminder enough of the scale and difficulty of the task.

8. Page 8. Good. This is in effect a commitment to making this a planning process, in which frequent review, adjustment, even re-setting will be vital. But again, I fear the scale of the resources required.

9. Page 9. "What will nature recovery look like?" This ambitious set of statements, laudable in themselves, are marred by repetition of the notion that 'enhancement' is the same as, or additional to restoration. This is repeated throughout the document, with local buy-in to doubling a Government target to "20% net gain". I find such statements and commitments baffling. If you want an example of the difference between levels solutions (e.g. "20%") and structural solutions resting on the analysis of spatially located (or even modelled) real data, this is a good one! Enhancement, as above, only makes sense if it is part of restoring something lost specifically/locally, or facilitates formation of a functional, new or altered ecosystem appropriate to changed conditions replacing those that can no longer be recreated. Needless to say, I am therefore extremely suspicious of 'biodiversity net-gain', for all its promotion by UK Government. For an informed local take on this, see the DICE thesis of zu Ermgassen (2022), whose conclusions include the statement "The inconsistent outcomes of offsets indicate that improved mitigation practices [emphasis added] must be coupled with demand-reduction initiatives which reduce the need for additional infrastructure proliferation and its associated ecological impacts." (page 176). Mitigation, like biodiversity itself, must be structural – tailored, appropriate, fitting. Levels solutions at best smack of box-ticking; at worst, they play into the hands of those largely responsible for creating the problems in the first place.
10. Page 10. BA1. Very pleased to see 'intrinsic value' stressed. As above, arguably the most important value from which all else follows. Stress on 'services' is good too, as in the context of East Kent, ecosystem services delivered by appropriately biodiverse ecosystems will be very important for human wellbeing (as well as the rest of 'nature'). In comparison to other UK counties of similar size, Kent is (or was) naturally very diverse (e.g. species rich). I fear that a significant number of insect species I used to find in Kent 60 years ago have become very rare, or even extinct within the county. Conversely, other species have arrived, some probably due to climate change – such as is likely the case with Anthrax anthrax – a bee-fly now well-established in Canterbury over the past decade and, as yet, found in very few other

places across the UK. There are potentially many such examples – but their ecological significance in most cases is, as yet, far from understood – the clear negative impact of a species such as the harlequin ladybird (Brown & Roy, 2018) represents one of few such species investigated. Of course, if you are just bean-counting, added presence of a harlequin might be seen as an 'enhancement'?

11. "The need for this strategy". Page 17. Here I have highlighted in yellow several statements relating to enhancement and net gain. Also one (regarding invasive species) that acknowledges that not all additions are necessarily good (as with the harlequin ladybird example – even though it does eat unloved aphids – nothing is simple!). Where I have put note number 11, this highlights a statement which pinpoints the reality that development (more housing, roads, water extraction, solar 'farms', industrialised agriculture etc.) has been a major driver of local biodiversity loss. The 2022 thesis of zu Ermgassen, already noted, is very pertinent in this regard. The recent and very extensive Routledge Handbook of Urban Biodiversity (Nilon & Aronson, 2024) could be a very useful source, if not already known to the authors of the Strategy, for diverse ideas regarding mitigation. But then I am left with a question about what one might call internal conflict management. Given the major role ascribed to 'development' in the decline and extent of Kent's biological diversity, how can and how does this Biodiversity Strategy sit with the overarching Local Plan – which, if I am not mistaken, commits the District to housing development even beyond targets called for by central Government? Land (and resource – e.g. water) managers are being asked to do the impossible. CCC seems to want to have its cake and eat it!

Also at this point I begin to see better why I am so negative about 'enhancement', offsets, 'net gain' and so forth. What we need is maintenance and restoration of nature across as much of the District as possible, starting with some priorities, to mitigate the damage already done and, as far as possible, increase option value for the very uncertain future (option value offers "a means of assigning a value to risk aversion in the face of uncertainty" [Mc Neely, 1988], and can be related to the task of "maximising the human capacity to adapt to changing ecological conditions" [Reid, 1994). Thus, for me, locally appropriate (structural) restoration is the key need. To call this 'biodiversity enhancement' is a bad misnomer – being part and parcel of the commoditisation approach that will indeed allow developers to have their cake and eat it in the here and now – without making any of the real, very hard decisions that nobody is prepared to face. How are we to stop the ever increasing demands of big-tech, individual and corporate greed and, most importantly of all, our collective failure to control human population growth? We are being sent on a fool's errand. Such a bad thought extinguishes hope – something none of us can afford. But without brutal honesty, to find some effective way forward is nigh on impossible. Perhaps the single greatest requirement is to understand the hydrography of the district, and work out how chemical pollution of our waterways and ground water systems can be stopped and then reversed, while at the same time managing water use in a region that, even with climate change, is notably rainfall deficient. Thus according to AI(!!) "East Kent is one of the driest parts of the UK, with historical rainfall (approx. 600–750 mm) far below the European average. It often receives less than half the annual rainfall of many European cities." At this point I can and probably should say no more.

12. "What is needed". Page 23. Here I have highlighted the word 'new' – what are 'new habitats' in this context? This surely relates to restoring degraded habitats, not literally 'new' ones? The page overall is interesting. The Lawton principles are really an application of MacArthur & Wilson's celebrated equilibrium theory of island biogeography. The number of species found on an island is mainly an equilibrating function of its extent (area/elevation), and distance from one or more 'sources' for both immigration and emigration. Thus, at the limit, if all 'good' habitats within a region (say Canterbury District) are increased in size to the point where they are all contiguous, then area, elevation and connectivity will all be at the maximum possible – and thus the number of species will reach some (higher) equilibrium level mainly limited by the distance of the region from all other surrounding regions and the habitats (and species) they sustain. So, if relatively degraded habitats (e.g. housing estates, intensive farms, motorways, etc. etc.) are returned to Nature (re-wilded in a locally appropriate way), this will be what is required. But this is the basic conflict again – more and more land is still being taken for development (houses, warehouses, factories, roads) and extractive use (solar farms, intensified agriculture, quarries). There is no free lunch. There is no more land. Nothing is new – it is all a matter of management of the existing land that we have. If economic growth measured by utterly insensitive measures such as 'GDP' is the overarching driver, we will continue to foul our collective nest.
13. Data. This is good – but I would really love to see large numbers of known species distributions, as already mapped at tetrad level, added to the various data sets and have them analysed along the lines prescribed by Margules & Pressey – together with vulnerabilities – in effect, a refined application of Myers's triage. Partnerships to bring these data together could relatively easily be formed.

14. Part 4. Congratulations here on drawing together a great array of highly relevant 'background' data and other information.

15. Pages 42, 52, 64, 71, 83. Many of the species selected have become well-known locally – our local 'pandas' of a sort! But there are numerous other species that are locally rare and endangered. Few have the same notoriety or 'box office appeal' as these – but ideally they need to be factored into the mix. Many of these rare and/or local species do have national conservation status as established by Natural England, JNCC (e.g. their BAP list), BugLife etc. Another reason why available species-level data should mobilised.

Some conclusions and suggestions
There is an old joke that runs along the lines, Q: 'How do I get to Biodiversity Strategy? A: If I were you Madam, I wouldn't start from here.' But the reality is, the Draft is here – and we have to have something urgently. My carping above about certain points does not mean that what has been achieved is without merit – far from it, this is a remarkable compilation that will be very useful and can help guide whoever is responsible for land management in the Canterbury District over the coming decades, in constructive ways. It offers a framework that can be added to, altered, and adapted to changing circumstances. Below I just add a few reflections and suggestions that might be helpful in moving forward.

The perils of metrics. In any revision, to the extent that it is possible given the almost legal status of the 'net gain' mantra, I urge the authors to emphasise instead,

wherever possible, restoration, rehabilitation, recovery, resilience, locally appropriate and, above all, protection, maintenance and restoration of 'healthy' ecosystems (more or less in the sense of Costanza & Mageau, 1999—this despite the strictures of Reid, 1994) – and yes, as connected and extensive as possible. Biodiversity is not an "it" (despite the words I used in paragraph 4 of my personal statement), nor is it a thing or a substance, nor can it properly be reduced to simple scalar dimensions running from less to more (despite the various efforts, my own included, to realise May's 'calculus of biodiversity'). According to Zev Naveh (2000), biodiversity is irreducible. Or as sociologist W.B. Cameron might have put it, even in this context, "not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted". Here, more prosaically, 'more' measured by some metric is not necessarily good, nor is 'less' necessarily bad. This is because biodiversity represents the extraordinary way in which life, in all its innumerable components and interactions, varies everywhere throughout the biosphere. For example, homogenisation is one of the major threats to biodiversity brought about by human activity – and the 'gain' metric, used without awareness of the whole-system reality, is a sure way to perpetuate that.

Risks. In my view, more on threats and vulnerability is needed. As Danish ornithologist Jon Fjeldå has often pointed out (e.g. Fjeldså, 2007), in many parts of the world old human settlements and centres of civilisation occur in local regions with naturally high biodiversity. In other words, for whatever reasons, we tend to flourish in the same areas as the rest of Nature does. Marginal lands and deserts, for example, are less favoured by us – and such areas tend to have lower levels of biodiversity – often comprising unique ecosystems and specialised species, yes, but lower diversity on any common metric (e.g. species richness). Quite likely Canterbury City is based on a former local biodiversity hotspot – now extensively degraded by human activity that includes air, soil, water and light pollution. If this is in anyway true, local areas for new development are likely to prefer remaining sites that are relatively biodiversity rich. Add to this a triage approach, we may then be able to identify those parts of the District that are most at risk from, or vulnerable to development – and try to take note and even make precautionary steps in mitigation.

For example, one of the most striking agricultural changes now rapidly taking place in East Kent is the growth of viticulture. Certain geologies and aspects (e.g. southfacing slopes) are favoured. Is anyone systematically assessing how this development is affecting local biodiversity and pollution? And at the risk of being a party-pooper who regularly enjoys a glass of wine, one has to question if wine production is as much a boost to food security as it is to GNP. I suspect not! In the general context of local risks, the recently published E3 East Kent Nature Recovery Report from DICE (Rampling & Kor, 2025), not listed among the Resources on pp. 87 and 87 of the Strategy, may be of use.

New dimensions of chemical pollution. In answer to the question "in what way has the quantity and diversity of synthetic 'forever chemicals' entering the environment changed over the past 50 years", Google AI generates this response: "Over the past 50 years (roughly 1970s–2020s), the quantity and diversity of synthetic "forever chemicals"—specifically per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)—entering the environment have transitioned from localized contamination by a few major

compounds to a global, ubiquitous crisis involving thousands of distinct, highly mobile substances."

It is my strong suspicion that the recent and striking reduction in insect (and other organism) abundance reported across many parts of the world, including the UK (e.g. Goulson, 2021), is likely driven by this endless diversification and deposit of novel synthetic 'forever chemicals' in our soils and hydrological systems. There seems to be growing evidence and concern regarding this, including a realisation that 'traditional' approaches to evaluating and mitigating the effects of pollutants may now be unsuited to what is actually happening (e.g. Liu et al., 2025). Thus this particular risk – and the difficulties in addressing it – are potentially huge factors largely outside our control. Even so, as we locally have the current good fortune of engagement (through e.g. CDBN) with Iain Goodall (University of Greenwich – but a Canterbury resident), I suggest that the emerging partnership consider engaging with the issues raised by ubiquitous as well as local and specific chemical and microbiological contamination – perhaps through the organisation of a fact-finding workshop set up at U Kent or CCCU. Without facing this potentially fearful challenge, all else may be rendered as nothing.

More on threats – us, the Elephant in the Room. I published the table below some years ago (Vane-Wright, 2009).

Table 1 Ten major threats to biodiversity. This list is not exhaustive, nor are the categories mutually exclusive. While climate change may now be seen as the most potent short-term threat, faith-based responses to biodiversity loss should address all categories, and in particular 2, 3 and 9. Will they also tackle 10, when many politicians seem unwilling to do so?

Threat	*Comment*
1. Climate change	Increasingly anthropogenic since the onset of the industrial revolution, current changes are now driven by massive and still rapidly increasing release of fossil carbon by burning mineral oil, natural gas and coal, coupled with massive deforestation in many parts of the Earth.
2. Poverty	Impoverished people living off the land have little or no control over their resources, and can severely damage local ecosystems, especially when faced with starvation. Much poverty appears to be linked to globalisation, due to macroeconomic forces dependent on cheap fossil energy that have made consumer overexploitation possible.
3. Overexploitation	Wholesale 'resource' and landscape conversion (e.g., clear felling of tropical forests, opencast mining), global economics, transnational corporations, industrialised farming, 'commoditisation' of nature for profit, and the adoption of excessive consumer lifestyles, have very negative impacts on local and global biodiversity.
4. Fragmentation	Fragmentation of natural habitats as a result of over-exploitation, highway construction, urban and agricultural expansion etc., has numerous negative effects on biodiversity, notably a great increase in local extinction due to normal stochastic population fluctuations. Coupled with climate change, the loss of continuous habitat also means that many sedentary species cannot respond by moving to new areas, but become trapped and go extinct as climate change advances beyond their limits of tolerance.]
5. Human use of net primary productivity	Humans now capture or divert 25 percent (and rising) of all photosynthetic activity in support of our single species. This is totally out of proportion with any other large animal that has ever lived, and is reason alone to question the sustainability of the current human "enterprise."
6. Human appropriation of available fresh water	Wholesale diversion of water for human use, including irrigation, has already brought about extinction of entire freshwater biotas (such as the freshwater insect fauna of the main Canary Islands). Water is life for other species as well as humans!
7. Invasive and trans-located species; GMOs	Species introduced by accident or intention from their native ecosystem into another ecosystem often cause unexpected damage and loss to local biodiversity, sometimes with near-disastrous results. The outcomes of such translocations are typically impossible to predict. Each translocation of a gene from one species to another by 'genetic engineering' is an uncontrolled and irreversible experiment with largely unknown ecological consequences. GMOs represent the commoditisation of genetic diversity in which the rest of biodiversity is treated as a disconnected "externality," as in all economic systems which regard the environment in this (ultimately) irresponsible way. Genetic "engineering," based on the 'atomistic' concept of genes, reflects an outmoded concept of how genomes are constructed and operate.
8. Pollution	Chemical pollutants, including pesticides, stress and poison wildlife, even in remote areas; run-off from artificial fertilizers causes eutrophication of waterways and wetlands, often with disastrous consequences for biodiversity; plastic bags and plastic particles are ingested by macrofauna (e.g., fish) and microfauna (e.g., filter-feeders) with various deleterious effects, etc.
9. Alienation and indifference to nature	With more than half the world's human population now living in cities, alienation from and indifference to nature are likely to rise, even leading to increased biophobia, making the task of helping people to under-stand their dependence on the rest of nature ever more difficult.
10. Population growth of humans and farm animals	The human population trebled in the 20th century, from 2 billion to 6 billion, and looks set to rise to 9 billion by 2050; at the same time the number of large farm animals such as cows (currently estimated at 1.5 billion) has also increased by a comparable magnitude (cf. 5). Such numbers are almost certainly unsustainable; meanwhile our "enterprise" causes ever-accelerating changes to the biosphere and concomitant losses of biodiversity.

My comment in the legend about politicians and the problem caused by human population growth proved prophetic. At about this time I was invited by the 'green wing' of a national political party to address one of their meetings, held in camera, about threats to biodiversity. I explored the ten points in sequence. Up to point 9, the 60 or so delegates nodded sagely from time to time, and seemed 'happy' with what I was telling them. But as soon as they realised what I was about to discuss regarding human population growth as my last point, I was called on by the Chair to cease speaking. Apparently they were scared there might be a 'mole' amongst them – it became clear they were unwilling to discuss the issue for fear of news getting out, and the likelihood of adverse 'press' as a result. A political no-go area. I was summarily thanked, and asked to leave the meeting immediately. A salutary experience!

This all lies at the heart of the misfit, as I see it, between the growth demand of the local plan as a whole, and the burden placed on those trying to prepare a realistic biodiversity restoration strategy. Two into one won't go. Q: "Is the human population density

of Kent UK above or below the average for western Europe?" AI Answer: "The human population density of Kent, UK, is significantly above the average for Western Europe. Here are the key comparisons based on 2024–2026 data. Kent Population Density: Approximately 462–517 people per square km (depending on whether the definition includes the Medway unitary authority). Western Europe Average: Approximately 180–184 people per square km."
Q: "Is the human population density of Kent UK rising or falling in relation to the rise or fall of the human population of the UK as a whole?" AI Answer: "The human population density of Kent is rising in relation to the UK as a whole, growing at a faster rate than both the regional average for the South East and the national average for England." Guilty as charged. All I can reply is 'No comment'. [Oh, I should have said, please pass the water.]

I've got the Wildflower Meadow Blues. In an attempt to support CCC's then emergent pollinator action plan, four years ago I and others enthusiastically proposed extending the wildflower meadow on Tannery Field, Canterbury, originally established in April 2014 by means of HLF/CCC resources (Ware et al., in prep.). This was done, and seeded with a commercially available wildflower seed mix (as I think the original 'HLF' meadow was). At a recent CDBN meeting featuring the work of the Marden Widlife Initiative, I was very impressed at the lengths to which this group has evidently gone to ensure that their wildflower meadow restoration projects use seed derived from the closest possible sources, mostly within the area of Marden itself. Surely the very best way to do it! But by the same token, I felt ashamed to think of the cavalier approach we had taken for establishing Tannery Field Flower Meadow #2. Tannery Field wildflower meadows are quite small – but they already harbour several species (including Cowslip) not recorded by Philp (2010) for the tetrad that includes Westgate Parks. Too late now, sorry to say. But, again, the Strategy should do all it can to ensure the use of locally sourced, locally appropriate species for this type of 'enhancement'. Tannery Field wildflower diversity will be used, we hope, for research and citizen science projects – although this arguably provides some post hoc justification for what has been done, we should have done better.

The seven projects. On reflection, I really like the seven regional projects the Strategy proposes for subdivision of the Canterbury District. They have some real basis in geology and ecology – but more importantly in the context, they are of a suitable size to garner local support – for example, people can identify with a scheme like 'Wilder Whitstable' (indeed, the community group 'Wild About Whitstable already exists). The exception might have been Stour Valley Nature Corridor (a sexier title might be good!), as the Stour rises outside Canterbury District, runs right through it, and then reaches the sea well beyond – but lo and behold, we have the nascent Charter for the Kentish Stour project unfolding right now. Getting buy-in to such projects is very much affected by the degree to which local people can identify with a local area, ecosystem, and/or rare and very local species that they can 'adopt' as special to their cause (thus the genuinely very rare moths found in the Wilder Coast and Marshlands area can be and are already being co-opted for this benefit). This element of fostering local engagement in support of nature is well documented by the work of the Californian Center for Ecoliteracy (https://www.ecoliteracy.org/home) – see for example, Stone & Barlow (2005), Ecological Literacy. Educating our children for a sustainable world – a book that can successfully introduce us to another element of any Strategy – an education

programme that engages with people of all ages – from primary school age to parents and grandparents.

I hope these thoughts and suggestions will be of some help to those responsible for finalising the Strategy – which is a great cause, and very much needed. I could go on, but time has run out – which may well be a relief!

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A written representation was received from Friends of Sarre and Nethergong Penn Valley.

Response to Canterbury City Council Draft Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2042)

Introduction

Friends of Sarre and Nethergong Penn Valley welcome the publication of Canterbury City Council's Draft Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2042) and strongly support its vision of restoring and connecting nature across the district. The Strategy's emphasis on partnership working, landscape-scale recovery, and long-term adaptability reflects both the urgency and complexity of the biodiversity and climate crises.
As a community group representing the Sarre Penn and Nethergong catchment, we recognise this document as highly significant for north-east Canterbury. It clearly

identifies our area as a key opportunity zone for nature recovery, particularly in relation to wetland restoration, water quality improvement, and ecological connectivity between the Wantsum Channel, farmland landscapes, and the Blean woodlands.

The Draft Strategy aligns closely with the evidence base set out in the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment (2020), particularly within the following character areas:

B1: Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove
This landscape is defined by low-lying marsh, drainage ditches, and open skies—characteristics that make it ideally suited to wetland restoration, grazing marsh enhancement, and bird habitat expansion. The Strategy's emphasis on the Wantsum Channel as a landscape-scale project is strongly supported by this character areas ecological potential.

B2: Nethergong – Sarre Penn Inlet
This area forms a critical transition zone between reclaimed marsh and inland farmland. Its network of ditches, low gradients, and hydrological connectivity make it a good candidate for wet grassland restoration, nutrient interception wetlands and habitat corridors linking inland and coastal systems.

E2: Sarre Penn Valley
The Sarre Penn corridor is a defining linear landscape feature with significant potential as a nature recovery spine. The Landscape Character Assessment highlights its importance as a river valley with opportunities for riparian woodland creation, floodplain reconnection with enhanced public access and green corridors strengthening biodiversity connectivity between the Blean and Wantsum.

H2: Hoath Farmlands
This intensively farmed landscape retains important structural elements such as hedgerows, ditches, and remnant habitats. It presents good opportunities for farm scale biodiversity delivery with buffer strips and soil management improvements, hedge restoration and expansion and the creation of "stepping stone" habitats linking larger ecological networks

Together, these areas form a coherent landscape unit that is particularly well suited to the Strategy's ambition of "bigger, better and more joined-up" habitats.

Recognition of the Sarre Penn / Nethergong Corridor
We strongly support the recognition within the Strategy that the Sarre Penn and Nethergong area functions as a priority nature recovery corridor. This corridor is uniquely positioned to link the Wantsum wetlands with inland farmland and the Blean woodlands, deliver multiple ecosystem services including flood storage, water purification, and carbon sequestration and support a wide range of species.

There is a good case for this corridor to be identified within implementation frameworks as a priority delivery zone.

Key Strategic Themes - Local Relevance

1 Wantsum Wetlands and Landscape-Scale Restoration
The Strategy's identification of the Wantsum Channel as a major landscape-scale opportunity is strongly supported. The historic geomorphology and current land use patterns create ideal conditions for wet grassland and reedbed creation, ditch and dyke naturalisation with seasonal wetland cells and floodwater storage landscapes. For communities associated with this area, this represents an opportunity to shift from heavily drained agricultural systems toward multifunctional landscapes that deliver biodiversity, flood resilience, and sustainable land use.

2 Water Quality and Catchment Management
The Strategy clearly identifies poor water quality across the district as a critical issue. This is especially evident in the Sarre Penn and associated drainage systems. We strongly support proposed actions to improve water quality and support a catchment scale approach.

3 Working with Farmers
We welcome Action BA4 and the recognition that farmer participation is essential. The Sarre Penn / Nethergong / Hoath area is well suited to environmental land management schemes.

There is clear potential for farmers to diversify income through biodiversity net gain, nutrient mitigation, and environmental stewardship.

4 Local Nature Reserve Expansion (BA29)
We strongly support the review and expansion of Local Nature Reserves. The Hoath–Chislet–Nethergong–Sarre Penn corridor represents a highly suitable candidate area due to existing habitat networks and restoration potential, the landscape connectivity, opportunities for public access and community engagement potential.

Additional Opportunity: Strategic Infrastructure Investment
We note the absence of reference within the Strategy to the proposed Broad Oak reservoir and its associated abstraction and pipeline infrastructure. Our current understanding is that abstraction from the Plucks Gutter / West Stourmouth area will require a pipeline routed through the Sarre Penn–Nethergong Penn valley to the proposed reservoir site. This route would almost certainly involve extensive groundworks along the length of the valley with extensive soil stripping, and importation of materials for pipeline bedding. Also the likely construction of pumping stations and associated infrastructure with temporary and potentially permanent disturbance to soils, hydrology, and existing habitats. This level of intervention presents substantial risks to biodiversity, particularly within a landscape already identified as a priority nature recovery corridor.

The potential scale of disturbance means that this project represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to obtain funding for the aspirations for biodiversity gain within the plan in this area of the district.

We urge Canterbury City Council to recognise that infrastructure of this magnitude should not be treated solely as a mitigation exercise, but as a strategic mechanism for delivering landscape scale environmental gain.

We suggest that the Council have a Landscape-Scale Biodiversity Net Gain Approach. The pipeline corridor should deliver not only site-specific mitigation but a coherent, connected biodiversity enhancement scheme across the Sarre Penn / Nethergong catchment. This should align with the Strategy's ambitions for wetland creation, habitat connectivity, and water management.

A coordinated, independently informed masterplan should be prepared for the Sarre Penn valley. This plan should be funded by South East Water and aligned with the Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Local Nature Recovery priorities.
Delivery should involve partnership working with local stakeholders, landowners, conservation bodies, and community groups to ensure outcomes are meaningful, locally appropriate, and sustained over
time.

In summary, while the proposed pipeline presents concerns regarding biodiversity damage, it also represents a rare opportunity. If approached proactively, it could unlock funding and delivery mechanisms capable of transforming the Sarre Penn / Nethergong landscape into a flagship nature recovery corridor.

Conclusion
Friends of Sarre and Nethergong Penn Valley strongly support the Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy. It provides a robust and forward-looking framework for nature recovery.

Our local landscape is particularly well placed to contribute to—and benefit from—this vision. With coordinated action, strong partnerships, and strategic investment, the Sarre Penn and Nethergong corridor can become one of the district's most important and successful nature recovery areas over the coming decades.

We look forward to working with Canterbury City Council and partners to help realise this ambition.

The team received a written representation from Save the Blean.

Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy
Consultation Submission from Save The Blean
April 2026

This is a response to the consultation on Canterbury City Council's draft Biodiversity Strategy from Save The Blean, a community group working to protect the natural environment and resist inappropriate development in the Blean, Canterbury. We welcome the Biodiversity Strategy, which complements CCC's many other excellent strategies for open spaces and biodiversity, and we hope that it will be adopted. We strongly support the overall biodiversity vision for nature in Canterbury district on pages 5–6, and we welcome all actions needed to realise this vision.
Strengths

(i) A particular strength of the document is the coverage of the range of sites, habitats and species in Parts 3 and 4. This provides a valuable information base for actions,

and an overall context for CCC's more specific strategies for trees and woodland, rivers, open spaces, etc.

(ii) We welcome the commitment to partnership working. We note that the Open Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group, which was instrumental in producing the strategy, included not only councillors and council officers but also representatives of Kent Wildlife Trust, RSPB, and local community groups (p.24), and we hope that these links will be built on in implementing the strategy. The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy rightly provides a wider context, and coordination of the two strategies will be an important task for whatever unitary council emerges from Local Government Reorganisation. We welcome also the list of stakeholders highlighted on p.9 – communities, residents, landowners, environmental organisations, educational institutions, developers and businesses. The need for the local authority to lead the way in bringing these partners together is rightly recognised, and we suggest that more should be said about how that coordinating role will be performed (see below).

(iii) The importance of interconnectedness is rightly emphasised on p.8, and again on p.23:

'It is no longer enough to preserve nature in small, isolated sites and call them 'nature reserves'. Wildlife populations need to increase, and species need to be able to move across the landscape.'

We strongly endorse this, and welcome the recognition on p.17 that development is in this respect a major source of pressure, not only using land but tending to fragment habitats. Our own experience of campaigning to protect land threatened by development in a highly sensitive location surrounded by important habitats has made us very aware that connectivity needs to be more than a token gesture.

(iv) We welcome the commitment to "securing the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain at 20%" (BA3, p.11). We note with some concern that the wording of this commitment has been weakened in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. The discrepancy between these two commitments needs to be addressed and we strongly urge that the Local Plan submitted to the Secretary of State should confirm the full commitment.

Weaknesses

The principal improvement which we recommend is the incorporating and strengthening of detailed practical commitments. We recognise that the strategy is intended to sit at a general level, providing an overarching framework for more specific strategy documents and for policies in the Local Plan. Nevertheless, it rightly includes a list of 32 Actions on pp.10–15, and we suggest that these could be sharpened up to make them more effective.
(i) There is a need for measurable targets to accompany the 32 Actions. Not every one of the 32 will lend itself to specifying such targets, but without some targets there will be no way of monitoring and assessing progress and hence no serious accountability.

(ii) Such targets need to include more specific timescales. The terminology of 'short', 'medium' and 'long term' is vague, and in some cases unavoidably so, but without some precision, monitoring and accountability will be impossible.

(iii) With this should go some explicit identifying of where the responsibility lies for initiating actions. We have welcomed the commitment to partnership working, but none of this will happen without specifying who will take the initiative and what form this will take. In particular, a mechanism is needed for working with landowners and prompting them to take action. Much of the land where there is scope for increasing biodiversity is agricultural land, but its potentiality will not be realised without proactive initiatives. Action BA4 is: "Undertake a strategic review of landowners' and farmers' willingness to deliver biodiversity actions and present results in the form of a 'Willingness Map'." We suggest that more is needed than "willingness". Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) are in place at a national level, but initiatives are needed to prompt take-up locally and actively encourage nature-friendly farming.

(iv) Assigning responsibility is made more difficult by the on-going process of local government reorganisation, but this difficulty needs to be explicitly addressed. On p.9 it is boldly asserted that "Canterbury City Council will be leading the way…" but we know that that cannot be the case for more than a year or two, and such language looks unrealistic without further elaboration. We suggest an explicit commitment to cooperation with relevant council officers in the other districts which will make up the new unitary authority, once the composition of this is known, and to working with councillors elected to the shadow authority in May 2027.

Prioritising Protection
Finally, we suggest that the Strategy needs to be strengthened in an important respect. Throughout the document, the language used is that of 'promoting', 'restoring' and 'enhancing' biodiversity. As a group campaigning to protect the natural environment from inappropriate development, we are very conscious of how such language is used by developers, who frequently claim that loss of green spaces should be accepted because it will be compensated for by 'enhancement of biodiversity' within the site and elsewhere, such as the provision of 'green corridors'. This is what is colloquially described as 'greenwashing' – the concealing of environmentally damaging policies and actions with minor green initiatives.

We ask that the Biodiversity Strategy should be strengthened by recognising that the first priority should be to prevent further loss of green spaces including woodland and farmland and their existing and potential biodiversity. The language of 'protecting' and 'preserving' should be added to that of 'enhancing' throughout the document. We also ask for a strengthening of the commitment to resist loss of biodiversity as a result of inappropriate development. We list here a number of places in the document which we wish to see strengthened in this way. Our proposed additions are shown in bold.
Proposed Amendments
Page 8 – Principles Underpinning this Strategy
Urgency:
…human activities are leading to the extinction of animal and plant species at an alarming rate, with scientists predicting a mass extinction due to human activity. AS A

PRECONDITION FOR FUTURE ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, THE COUNCIL WILL BE COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND EXISTING GREEN SPACES IN ORDER TO PREVENT FURTHER DECLINE.

Page 9 – What will nature recovery look like?
Canterbury City Council: …The Council will have embedded biodiversity PROTECTION, restoration and enhancement into all its operations and into its decision-making.

Residents will understand and appreciate the nature of the district and what needs to be done to PROTECT AND restore it.

Landowners will understand the part their land could play within the Biodiversity Strategy and what actions they can take to PROTECT AND improve biodiversity. Universities, colleges and schools will actively engage in PRESERVING, PROTECTING AND promoting biodiversity on their own land…

Developers will ensure that their development PROTECTS AND enhances nature… ensuring that nature recovery is considered in all greenspaces in the development, through the provision of a range of wildlife habitats AND THE AVOIDANCE OF ANY FRAGMENTATION OR DECREASE OF EXISTING HABITATS.

Pages 10-15 – Our Actions
BA7: Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership to PREVENT HABITAT LOSS AND FRAGMENTATION AND PROMOTE nature recovery.

BA31: PRIORITISE PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND EXISTING HABITATS AND make maximum use of the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity in planning decisions.

Page 17 – The Need for this Strategy
The State of Nature report identified development as a source of pressure… Collaborative action is needed to RESIST AND combat these pressures, TO PREVENT FURTHER DECLINE and make positive changes for nature…

Page 28 – Overview of Wooded Landscapes
The Blean woodland complex is the most extensive of the wooded landscapes in southern England… The woodlands here are extensive and, in part, well-connected and full of wildlife, BUT ARE VULNERABLE TO LOSS OF CONNECTIVITY THROUGH INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT.

The team received a written representation from Canterbury Committee of the CPRE.

After discussion the Canterbury Committee of the CPRE would like to submit an additional comment.to question 8 of our response.
Urban and suburban biodiversity should be given greater prominence: gardens, street trees, parks, verges, brownfield sites, waterways and buildings can all support nature recovery, and where conflicts arise with urban wildlife, they should be

managed lawfully and proportionately through waste control, good design and non-lethal deterrence.
Many thanks

The team received a written representation from Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership.

Woodland Trees and Scrub – Kent Habitat Survey should give you length of hedgerow in the District at the time the survey was undertaken.

Coastal mudflats, especially around beach replenishment areas (towns) have changed enormously in the last 20 years. They are no longer that muddy but are a lot more stoney. Change of bird species? Plants have changed as well.

The Great Stour does not flow through Hacklinge Marshes.
P73 not all of the Oyster Coast Brooks are completely underground.
P75 is incorrect. 'Most waterbodies in the catchment (or Canterbury) are in poor condition'. Only the Wingham and Little Stour are in Poor Condition in the Canterbury District. In Canterbury District:
Good 3 (all lakes at Stodmarsh), moderate 8 (inc one lake at Stodmarsh), Poor 2, Bad 1 (one of the lakes at Stodmarsh). See EA Catchment data Explorer.
Also, the Stour is no different to almost any other lowland river in England. They all have problems. However, the Stour is the longest Chalk Stream in Kent.

A written representation was received from Chislet Parish Council.

1. Which of the following best describes you?
Chislet Parish Council

2. How actively involved do you feel in biodiversity-related work in the district?
Occasionally involved

3. Our vision is outlined on page five and six. To what extent do you support the overall biodiversity vision for nature in Canterbury district by 2042/43?
Support

4. Looking at our vision map, how much do you think the strategy reflects the right ambition for biodiversity in the district?
Agree

Additional comments for question 4
We welcome the suggestion of a Wilder Coast and Marshlands corridor to the east of our parish and the Stour Valley Nature Corridor along our southern boundary.

We note the two green "connectivity arrows" running across Chislet parish and understand from the consultation event that the northern most arrow will be the Canterbury Hedge. We welcome this project but ask that the parish council be kept informed about the route of this new hedgerow through the parish.

It is not clear what form the southern most, shorter "connectivity arrow" will take.

We suggest that the The Nethergong Sarre Penn Valley should be recognised as a priority nature recovery corridor linking the Wantsum wetlands, farm land and East Blean woodland habitats. This is an ideal location with really good opportunities for wetland creation, cleaner water, flood management, hedgerow restoration, tree planting and wildlife recovery.

The Nethergong Sarre Penn Valley is ideally positioned to link the Wantsum all the way to the East Blean woods.

5. We have outlined 34 biodiversity actions on page 10 to 15, grouped under six areas. To what extent do you think this action plan will begin to deliver a wilder district and local nature recovery?
Support

Additional comments for question 5
Ordinary residents and small landowners should be given more opportunity to get involved. Better enforcement is also needed to prevent damage to existing biodiversity. There is no point trying to build a connectivity corridor if people who conduct unauthorised works to remove existing trees and hedges are not made to replace them.

6. How well do you feel the strategy addresses the following areas of biodiversity action?
i) Strategic policy and planning: well
ii) Community and volunteer engagement: moderately (should be more in the community, not necessarily involving council owned land)
iii) Habitat restoration and connectivity: very well
iv) Urban nature and green infrastructure: well
v) Marine and coastal biodiversity: well (are the groupings correct? Should Nethergong Valley be classed as a coastal habitat? We think it is a river valley)
vi) Rivers and wetlands: well (note comment above. Nethergong Valley is a river valley and an ideal site for wetlands. However it has been classed as coastal in your document)
vii) Woodland and tree planting: Moderate (the actions of page 56 are almost all for specific locations. The main general action is for new planting on new developments. Would be good to have more action that would apply across the district, outside the named sites)
viii) Monitoring and enforcement: moderately (document only talks about tree planting on new developments. Existing trees and hedges need better protection)
ix) Corridor building: Very well
x) Wilding and rewilding: well (can't find any mention of wilding or rewilding in the document, but we are happy with that. This is an agricultural area and BMV land should be used to produce food, not rewilded)

7. Do you feel that there are any areas around biodiversity which are missing or need more detail?
Members of the community interested in improving biodiversity on their own property need more support.

Better enforcement to protect existing biodiversity. More enforcement action and reinstatement is needed when environmental damage is caused. Our parish has seen many cases where trees have been felled, hedgerows removed and building waste dumped in the countryside.

A better enforcement strategy is needed to tackle this problem. It would be a waste of time and money to invest in connecting habitats up only to have them disconnected elsewhere in the chain by unauthorised and illegal works.

It would be good to have more information about what southern connectivity arrow will involve.

8. Do you have any other comments about the Biodiversity Strategy?
We welcome the comments on page 25 about involving parish councils. Chislet Parish Council is currently in the process of developing a neighbourhood plan. We are interested in the suggestion to include biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Plan and would like to learn more.

We welcome the idea of bringing local communities together to improve biodiversity but suggest that this is something that should be led or guided by CCC and the role of parish councils should be one of dissemination and community engagement.

Page 27: the landscapes maps designated the Wantsum Channel and the Nethergong Sarre Penn valley as "coastal and coastal hinterland landscapes". We are not sure this is correct.

Page 32: we think there is an error here. The text says that tier one is designated sites while tier two is Local Wildlife Sites and priority habitats. But the map says that tier one is designated sites plus Local Wildlife Sites and Reserves while tier two is priority habitats.

Page 38: Chislet Parish is home to a large area of floodplain grazing marsh alongside the Nethergong Penn. This is not marked on the map on page 38

Page 47: Chislet Parish does not contain ancient woodland but is home to patches of other woodland of various sizes. Page 53 takes about the importance of woodland management but there is no action point for guiding the management of woodland such as occurs in our parish. We hope that the owners of small patches of woodland are encouraged to take part under action BA4 rather than just concentrating on The Blean, as the largest woodland in the district.

Page 67: The map showing the course of the Sarre Penn highlights what an important nature corridor the Sarre Penn valley could be through the district.

Our parish is home to many of the flagship habitats and species listed on page 7 of your document. These include: floodplain grazing marsh, reedbeds, scrub, hedgerows, a chalk river, ponds, turtle doves, nightingales, great crested newts and skylarks.

Rather than rely on the few very largest landowners, our suggestion would be to reach out to the relevant bodies to find out which residents and small landowners are already taking part in specific initiatives to help these species. For example, the RSPB Operation Turtle Dove will know where turtle dove feeding stations are in the district. They could reach out to landowners taking part in Operation Turtle Dove to ask if they want to come forward for your willingness map. Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership restores and creates ponds for Great Crested Newts. KSCP could reach out to landowners who have had a pond created or restored on their land to ask if they would join the willingness map

A written representation was received from Hoath Parish Council.

Hoath Parish Council response to the draft Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy consultation January 2026

Hoath Parish Council (HPC) would like to thank the Council's Environment and Climate Change team for producing this comprehensive biodiversity strategy which clearly defines the systemic threat we are all facing.

The State of Nature 2025 reports that "the UK remains one of the most nature-depleted countries globally", while The Need for this Strategy (p.17) states that "the district has historically suffered from a decline in biodiversity, and it is critical that this is reversed quickly." With that in mind, "embedding biodiversity into CCC strategy and policy" (Strategic Policy Working, p10) can only be supported.

In short, HPC considers this strategy a welcome call to action for everyone living and working in the district, local government and businesses. The 32 Actions are sufficiently multi-facetted and detailed to engage across sectors and communities.

Hoath Parish – climate change impact

Fields and woodland (including East Blean and other ancient woodland) are still integral to our small settlements surrounded, though we are, by burgeoning housing developments in Hersden, Herne, Herne Bay and Beltinge.

However, the green fields and fresh spring leaves on trees and hedgerows mislead about the state of Nature locally. We are experiencing the impact of changing weather patterns; strong winds are now extreme, rain comes as untimely tropical downpours, summers are hot, fields are parched, and hosepipe bans regular. As a result, trees are stressed and topsoil clouds blur the world during harvests. Currently, the east wind is blowing yet winter is long gone, rainfall is once again well below the seasonal average, the ground is dry, farmers are already watering crops, and they predict a hose pipe ban and heightened wildfire risk in the near future.

Hoath Parish landscapes
As the following illustrates, Hoath Parish is a nexus between ancient woodland (East Blean), farmlands, and the Stour river basin encompassing the Wantsum Channel and the Sarre Penn river valley.

Given this broad sweep, HPC supports Lawton's principles of "Bigger, Better and More Joined Up" expressed in the concept of the local nature recovery network as "a series of connected spaces where nature can thrive (p.23)" presented as a Woodland and Tree Super Corridor, Wilder urban areas, and the Stour Valley Nature Corridor.

HPC would like to include restoring the waterways and habitats in the Wantsum Channel in this list of ambitions, as well as including the Nethergong-Sarre Penn Valley in The Great Stour National Park concept. All three areas are, after all, part of the Stour River Catchment as shown in the Internal Drainage Board map (see below).

• Parish landscape profiles described in Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (October 2020) are: H2 Hoath Farmlands, C4 Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands, D4 East Blean. More broadly, our parish connects with the following landscapes: B2 Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet, B1 Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove, E2 Sarre Penn Valley, F3 Hersden Ridge.

• As mentioned above, Canterbury District Local Landscape Designations Review and Recommendations (Final report January 2021), links Hoath to two areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV), The Blean and The Wantsum, identified as having "strategic importance" in East Kent's landscape.

• Hoath Parish is also included in the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategies (SAMMs) for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA or Ramsar, known as East Kent SAMMs (East Kent Bird Wise).

HPC's comments and suggestions regarding the Draft Biodiversity Strategy are integrated into its response to the Draft Public Consultation Survey.

• Answers to questions 7 & 8 follow (pages 3 – 9)
• For answers to questions 1 to 6, turn to page 10.

Draft Public Consultation Survey: Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy
Question 7. Do you feel that there are any areas around biodiversity which are missing or need more detail (e.g. funding, delivery, community role)?

More detail around:
• Community funding for biodiversity work
• Definition of Friends groups and how to be registered/acknowledged by the Council
• Enforcement of Local Plan environmental/biodiversity-based policies and actions to take when development is in breach
• Effective BNG – ensure new developments respect 20%; CIL funds/strategic infrastructure investment – should funds or development BNG strengthen Nature restoration locally or district-wide, or perhaps on a case-by-case basis?

Question 8: Do you have any other comments about the Biodiversity Strategy?

HPC has 12 comments/suggestions.

1) Threats & Pressures
Stronger emphasis on Threats and Pressures as these highlight just how threatened district biodiversity is. For now, they are "hidden" in the Part 4 sections. The T & Ps significance make tangible the critical situation in the district outlined in The Need for this Strategy (p.17)

2) Plan 1: Overview of Landscapes of Canterbury District omits the Sarre Penn whereas it is included in later maps.

3) Rivers, Freshwaters and Wetland Habitats
P67, para 2: HPC would appreciate the Nethergong-Sarre Penn wetland (B2 Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet) and Chislet Marshes (B1 Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove) be noted here in the interest of balance and illustrating the scope of wetland pockets, given the Little Stour, Thanington and Chartham are named.

4) The State of Water
HPC suggests adding a section dedicated to The State of Water in Kent which collates the issues touched on throughout the document (e.g., The Need for this Strategy (p.17); water abstraction and impact on water levels pp. 40, 72). The evident impact of climate change on Hoath Parish, and, more broadly, the county (e.g., changing rainfall patterns, drought, hosepipe bans) more than justifies this.

• Multiple sources (e.g., the Met Office, South East Water -- however ironic) acknowledge that Kent is one of the driest areas in the UK and that changing climate patterns threaten county and district water resources.

• If development continues at the current rate, with changing weather patterns resulting in less rain to fill aquifers, will there be sufficient water to sustain the local population as well as the district's nature/biodiversity by 2042/43?

• Isn't it time that long term water capacity should be assessed before areas are identified for development? Government, business and community outrage at water shortages cannot force rainfall.

• Is it time for companies to become consultees on ALL DEVELOPMENTS, from granny annexes upwards? Currently water companies are apparently only consulted concerning developments with more than 15 homes which means calculations around water capacity are inaccurate.

• In light of the above, HPC asks whether the proposed Broad Oak Reservoir (draft Local Plan Policy R24 - Broad Oak Reservoir and Country Park) be viable especially as the water levels in the Sarre Penn are low, rainfall insufficient and the aquifers unreliable?

5) The State of Soil
Given the critical nature of soil health, how our food security, for example, depends on its health, is there value in including a chapter The State of Soil? Clarifying why soil biodiversity matters, how it can be cared for and improved, would be a helpful addition to the draft Local Plan. Its presence would emphasise the urgency of needing to respond to biodiversity decline to developers, planners, applicants and

parish councils; for example, it would clarify why BMV land should be protected as well as the significance of well-thought through BNG projects. The latter could prioritise native plants, build wildlife corridors, introduce orchards to city spaces and so on.

6) Biodiversity and Planning Applications in Rural Areas
Desktop assessment appears to be how most rural planning applications are evaluated. This is problematic. For those unfamiliar with Hoath Parish, it is difficult to appreciate the intricacy of our area's topography with its dips and hollows, distances, vistas, valleys, woodland and expansive fields even if there are contour lines on the screen.

Given HPC's experience with planning applications, unpicking how they could, can and do impact our parish environment, we support the Strategy's emphasis on partnership, the need for collaboration between "residents, businesses, partners (e.g., RSPB, NFU), parish councils, landowners, communities and developers."

Additionally, the threats to Nature outlined in the Strategy and nationally, call for this joined up approach if we are collectively to make progress in reversing our national biodiversity decline.

HPC would also appreciate the support of a State of Soil statement with BNG proposals, and welcomes BA31 Make maximum use of the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity in planning decisions.

7) The Wantsum Initiative & the Sarre Penn
In light of its location and topography outlined above, HPC supports the ambitions of The Wantsum Initiative and the collaborations and funding needed to achieve them.

However, HPC suggests the Sarre Penn and its entry into the Wantsum be clearly indicated on plans/maps as too often we are presented with planning applications which fail to note that this river valley is part of the Stour Valley Catchment area and the East Blean landscape.

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.

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.

8) The Great Stour National Park
Given the Strategy's ambitions for connected landscapes, joined up wildlife corridors and habitats, and Hoath's geography, HPC suggests incorporating the Sarre Penn Valley into the Great Stour National Park vision.

• The River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board's (IDB) definitive map of the Stour Valley drainage area includes the Wantsum Channel, the Sarre Penn river valley, the Stour and Stodmarsh https://rsidb.org.uk/map-of-our-drainage-district/

• The Nethergong-Sarre Penn river valley is functionally connected with Stodmarsh through wildlife, Public Rights of Way and the Wantsum Channel; it would be a natural part of a potential Great River Stour Regional Park.

• Please note: The 2020 Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal, Figure 3.7, identifies the Nethergong Valley/Lower Stour Wetlands as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

• HPC also notes, anecdotally, the Nethergong- Sarre Penn valley and Stodmarsh are connected through the Westbere station, part of the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan River Stour Catchment (Southern Water) which serves Westbere, Upstreet, Chislet, Hoath, Maypole, Ford, Highstead, and Boyden Gate.

Given the preceding, HPC supports these Strategy actions:
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). However HPC would support expanding this concept to include the Nethergong-Sarre Penn river valley and wetlands.

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.

9) The Blean Woodland Complex
HPC supports the following proposed Actions; suggestions follow.

BA3 Champion the Local Plan Reg 18-19 policies, DS27 and DS24 (The Blean Woodlands complex) and securing the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain at 20%.

BA7: Work with the Wilder Blean Partnership to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery.

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.

HPC encourages the Strategy to define The Blean Woodland Complex so that its extent is understood and the names of the woods included in the description are spelled out or at least counted. “Complex” is too vague. We will make the same request in our response to the draft Local Plan 2042/43 consultation.

The Canterbury District Local Landscape Designations Review and Recommendations (Final report January 2021), includes landscape designations associated with The Blean in its dedicated chapter.

• The general understanding of The Blean is that it is a stretch of woodland close to Canterbury with bison. East Blean NNR, is relatively unknown; a significant proportion of East Blean is in our parish. As matters stand, neither West nor East Blean are identified in the Biodiversity Strategy. Only West Blean is named in the

draft Local Plan Policy R24 - Broad Oak Reservoir and Country Park, in the context of West Blean & Thornden Woods SSSI (point 3).

• Planning applications - Lack of clarity about The Blean Complex also means that planning applications do not appreciate the greater landscape connections: The Blean –Hoath Farmlands – the Sarre Penn Valley - the Wantsum Channel. As a result, when assessing applications, it's a battle to clarify impact on the landscape or apply the concepts of "setting" and/or "amenity" or explain biodiversity significance. Put another way, as a rural parish we find ourselves at odds with a more clearly defined "urban"planning frame-of-reference.

• Kent Wildlife Trust's description of East Blean NNR as one of the richest of all Kent's woodland habitats illustrates the diversity of The Blean Complex (The Blean is more than bison and wolves) and why, from a biodiversity perspective, the Complex needs clarifying. This would certainly help parishes connected to The Blean when responding to planning applications. https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk › nature-reserves

• While HPC supports the Wilder Blean project in West Blean/Thornden Woods, BA7, we would like clarification about how and where BA7 proposes "to address habitat fragmentation and nature recovery" in The Blean Complex. Does the proposal include working to link West and East Blean?

• As a statement of position given Hoath's topography, HPC strongly supports BA31 Make maximum use of the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity in planning decisions. We hope this intention becomes a non-negotiable Action in the Local Plan 2042/43 and that it is enforceable!
• For consideration: the Sarre Penn Valley is a green corridor connecting The Blean with The Wantsum. HPC proposes fostering this connection.

10) Partnerships, Farmers and Landowners
HPC is keen to support the Strategy's ambitions with Friends groups, local farmers and landowners, to share knowledge and work together. Given the scale of what needs to be achieved collaboration lies at its heart.

In other words, HPC agrees with the spirit of the Review of Evidence related to Grassland, Meadow and Heathland Habitats and Species (p.45) and the benefits of building long term relationships with national and local institutions and people to create and implement biodiverse restoration projects.

HPC also welcomes collaborations with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership encouraging and supporting landowners, and Natural England's decades-long work with East Kent farmers on restoring grasslands.

The following Actions are key and HPC would support:
BA4 Undertake a strategic review of landowners' and farmers' willingness to deliver biodiversity actions and present results in the form of a "Willingness Map."
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.

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.

BA26: Consider potential for partnership led external funding strategies for key initiatives / sites including: (a) Old Park and Chequers Wood, and (b) The Wantsum initiative.

11) Friends Groups
Locally, HPC connects with the Friends of the Nethergong-Sarre Penn Valley who work to conserve and restore this local landscape. The Hoath Meadow Group cultivates and fosters the biodiversity on Hoath Village Green through its biodiversity management plan.

HPC encourages local groups to find and monitor ponds (pp. 67,70) in the area as well asassess the value of Local Nature Reserves for local communities e.g., Wantsum Channel, East Blean, private landowners, Nethergong-Sarre Penn valley.

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. This could be expanded to include the Nethergong-Sarre Penn valley.

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. This is an excellent way of engaging communities and learning skills.

BA16 Grant aid the delivery of new biodiversity projects to further nature recovery across the district. The Friends of the Nethergong-Sarre Penn Valley has already benefitted from such funding. HPC considers this a collaborative way of making the most of local skills and interests to monitor/improve, for example, biodiversity, bat surveys, local ponds, potential for Local Nature Reserves, support installing nests for House Martins and Swifts.

BA29 Review provision of Local Nature Reserves in relation to growing population. Complete audit and then prioritise action.

BA21: Work with the Canterbury Riverside Group to deliver the Canterbury Riverside Strategy – knowledge sharing and network building!

12) Urban Nature
HPC supports the biodiversity management plan on Hoath Village Green and supports expanding this approach to our parish green spaces: the primary school, parish land, our local cemetery, private gardens, private ponds, hedgerows and allotments.

As part of Hoath's Neighbourhood Plan, HPC is developing policies encouraging planting of local varieties of trees, and wildflowers, but also working to future proof

vegetation by choosing plants which can adapt to our changing climate -- rain bursts, high temperatures, powerful winds, drought -- and its impact on our local clay soil. With that in mind, we welcome having access to guidance from CCC's tree officer and these.

Actions:
BA13 Support Tree Officer in promoting and delivering the Canterbury hedge and tree planting initiatives across the district.

BA20 Establishment and management of new Community Gardening/ Biodiversity initiatives.

BA30 Resource the enforcement of best practice tree planting and maintenance on all development sites.

BA31 Make maximum use of the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity in planning decisions! YES!

Draft Public Consultation Survey: Canterbury District Biodiversity Strategy
Questions 1 to 6

1. Which of the following best describes you?
• Resident of the district
• Member of a community and volunteer group
• Parish councillor

2. How actively involved do you feel in biodiversity-related work in the district?
• Very active

3. To what extent do you support the overall biodiversity vision for nature in Canterbury district by 2042/43?
• Strongly support

4. Looking at our vision map, how much do you think the strategy reflects the right ambition for biodiversity in the district?
• Strongly agree

5. We have outlined 32 biodiversity actions on pages 10 to 15, grouped under six areas. To what extent do you think this action plan will begin to deliver a wilder district and local nature recovery?
• Strongly agree

6. How well do you feel the strategy addresses the following areas of biodiversity action?
• Strategic policy and planning: very well
• Community and volunteer engagement: very well
• Habitat restoration and connectivity: well
• Urban nature and green infrastructure: well
• Marine and coastal biodiversity: well
• Rivers and wetlands: very well

- *Woodland and tree planting: very well*
- *Monitoring – very well BUT enforcement BEYOND TREES: not at all – TRAGIC LACK OF CAPACITY!*
- *Corridor building: moderately*
- *Wilding and rewilding: moderately*

6. Conclusions

The consultation on the draft Biodiversity Strategy generated broad support for the council's vision and proposed actions for nature recovery across the district.

82% of respondents supported or strongly supported the overall vision and general support for the strategy was expressed across multiple points in the consultation.

Delivery, accountability and implementation was a theme that ran consistently through the action plan comments, the gaps section and additional feedback.

Respondents asked for clearer targets and timescales, defined performance standards and greater confidence that the strategy will be delivered in practice.

Development demand was highlighted as well, with concerns about homes being built in green spaces.

This was also raised in the gaps section and the written representations.

Community and volunteer engagement received one of the weaker ratings across the strategy areas, with only 41% of respondents rating it well or very well.

It was also the largest theme in the gaps section, with 22 comments asking for more active involvement of local communities, residents and small landowners.

Monitoring and enforcement received the lowest well or very well rating of any strategy at 24.6% and this was echoed in the written representations.