



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

Annex A

Biodiversity Duty Report (BDR)

January 2026

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I Forward

By the Cabinet member for [Cabinet Member for Environment and Biodiversity](#):

'As Cabinet Member for Environment and Biodiversity I am proud to introduce the first Forest of Dean District Council's Biodiversity Duty Report.

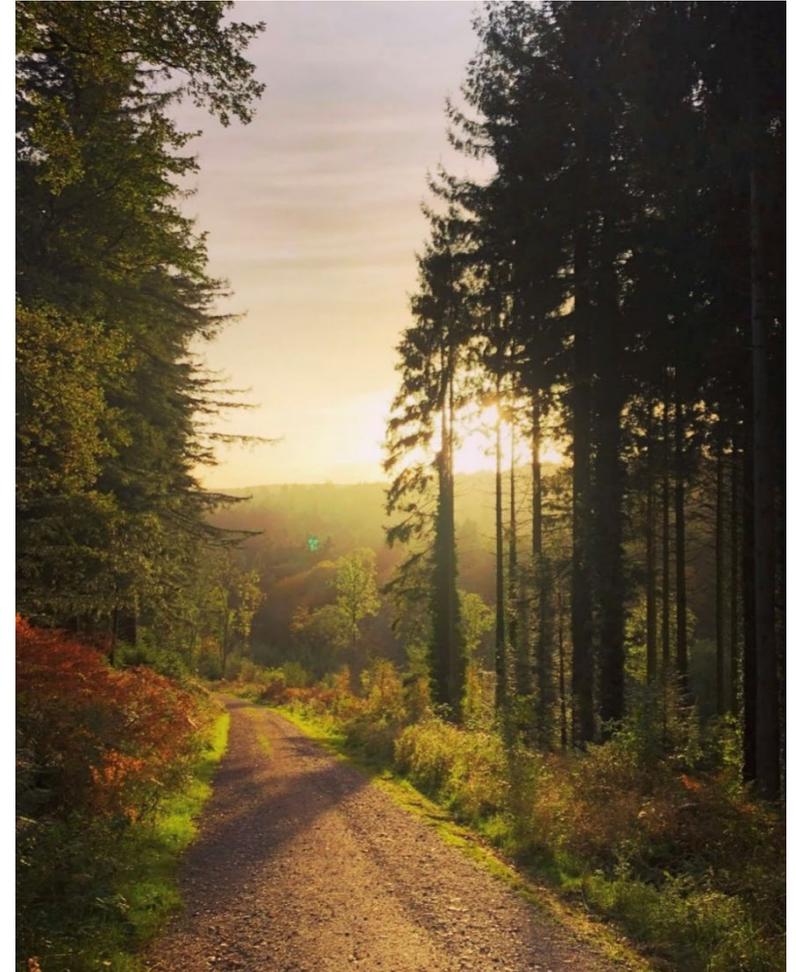
This document sets out our work and future commitment to conserving and enhancing the natural life that sustains our communities, landscapes and economy. Over the past year we have strengthened partnerships, embedded biodiversity considerations across planning and land management, and begun delivering Biodiversity Net Gain through approved gain plans.

The actions summarised in this report reflect practical steps — from habitat creation and improved greenspace management to community engagement and policy development — that will help reverse nature loss and support climate resilience to 2030.

Our approach balances local priorities with statutory obligations under the Environment Act, and recognises that every meadow, hedgerow and urban green space contributes to a healthier, more vibrant district.

I want to thank partner organisations, volunteers and council officers whose expertise really helps guide our work in this area. Looking ahead, we will continue to learn, adapt and invest in nature-based solutions that benefit wildlife and people alike. I encourage residents and stakeholders to join us in this work: together we can protect and enhance the Forest of Dean's unique natural heritage for future generations. With thanks and determination.'

Jackie Fraser Cabinet Member for Environment and Biodiversity



2 Introduction

All Public Authorities in England must report on their Biodiversity Actions that have been undertaken in accordance with the strengthened Biodiversity Duty up until the end of the reporting period on 1st January 2025. The Biodiversity Duty Report (BDR) must be published within 12 weeks of the reporting period end date (26th March 2026). The report must also include intended actions for the next five years (to 2030).

The Biodiversity Duty is a duty on all public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity under the strengthened Environment Act 2021¹ which amends section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006² (NERC Act). Under the new Section 4A of the NERC Act Public Authorities must produce a biodiversity report to evidence actions taken to enhance and conserve biodiversity. This report considers what actions the authority can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity and comply with the Biodiversity Duty as set out within the strengthened Section 40 of the NERC Act.

The Environment Act 2021 also requires reporting on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) within the Biodiversity Duty Report (BDR), currently set at a mandatory 10% for development proposals (where consented). The act and subsequent guidance sets out statutory metrics for both large and small sites (major and minor planning applications) to create a score of habitat units showing a percentage of net gain/ loss.

The Biodiversity Duty Report must:

- Set out actions the Council has or is taking to enhance and conserve biodiversity.
- Set out actions the Council proposes to undertake in the following five years (2030) to enhance and conserve biodiversity.
- Include a summary of the actions carried out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations
- Include details of biodiversity gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans that have been approved.
- A summary of how the Council plans to meet biodiversity net gain obligations in the following five years (2030).

¹ Environment Act (2021) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted> Accessed 5th April 2024

² Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> Accessed 5th April 2024



3 Relevant Local Policies, Objectives and Actions

Our Council Plan 2024 – 2028 - Responding to the Climate and Nature Emergency for a Fairer Greener Forest recognises decarbonisation and nature recovery as one of the key priorities³.

The following current Biodiversity Duty adopted relevant policies are within the **Council's Core Strategy⁴ and Allocations Plan⁵** are:

Policy CSP.I Design and environmental protection.

Policy CSP.I states:

The design and construction of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment and conserve, preserve or otherwise respect them in a manner that maintains or enhances their contribution to the environment, including their wider context. New development should demonstrate an efficient use of resources. It should respect wider natural corridors and other natural areas, providing green infrastructure where necessary.

In achieving the above, the following will be considered:

- *The effect of the proposal on the landscape including AONBs and any mitigation/ enhancement that is necessary or desirable*
- *The impact on any protected sites (natural and historic sites and heritage assets and potential for avoiding and/ or mitigating any impacts, or providing enhancement, should the development be acceptable*
- *The requirements of the management plans of the AONBs*
- *Whether the existing infrastructure is adequate- additional provision will be required where it is not.*

³ Forest of Dean District Council. (2024) Available at: [Forest of Dean District Council Plan 2024 to 2028](#) Accessed November 2025.

⁴ Forest of Dean District Council. (2012) Core Strategy Adopted Version. Available at: [Core Strategy Adopted Version](#) Accessed: 28th November 2025

⁵ Forest of Dean District Council. (2018) Allocations Plan 2006 to 2026. Available at: [Allocations Plan 2006 to 2026 Adopted June 2018 web](#) Accessed: 28th November 2025

- *Whether the development is at risk from flooding, whether it can be permitted taking into account any risks, and the sequential approach and any mitigation that may be necessary to ensure the development is safe and flood risk is not increased elsewhere.*
- *The impact of the development on any land contamination or risk to the development from ground instability including the mining legacy- Proposals must undertake appropriate remediation measures and verification works where contamination and /or stability issues are identified.*
- *The potential for the development to cause pollution and any mitigation measures to avoid pollution or make environmental improvements where existing problems occur.*
- *The provision of water supply and the development's impact on groundwater, watercourses and any protected abstractions.*
- *Any potential impact on the sterilisation of mineral resources and consideration of the potential for the prior extraction of those mineral resources ahead of development Proposals for waste minimisation and management. Development that is not able to be satisfactorily accommodated in respect of the above will not be permitted.'*

Strategic objective: Providing quality environments



Policy CSP.2 - Climate Change Adaptation (Strategic objective: thriving sustainable communities)

Policy CSP.2 states:

Proposals for development will be required to demonstrate that their design and layout will reduce the impacts of climatic change as identified in national, regional and local predictions over the lifetime of the development concerned. The following should be addressed in an integrated way, demonstrating that one element benefits another:

1 Water management

- 1. Improving water efficiency- proposals should demonstrate high levels of water efficiency. Rain water harvesting and grey water recycling systems should be incorporated unless it can be demonstrated that it is not appropriate in a specific location*
- 2. Managing surface run off- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and measures to reduce or avoid water contamination and safeguard ground water supply should be incorporated into all development unless it can be demonstrated that this is not appropriate in a specific location*
- 3. Flood risk- ensuring that risks (including changing risks due to climate change) are taken account of in new development, including improving resistance, resilience and safety of the areas concerned.*

2 Heating and cooling

Proposals will be required to demonstrate how the development comprehensively utilises passive solar gain and provides cooling for buildings, gardens and communal areas at the appropriate times of the year.



3 Biodiversity

1. Developments must support green infrastructure corridors that link to existing habitat features and networks. They must show that the integrity of any affected nature conservation sites is not compromised by the development proposed. Proposals that prevent or restrict network connections will not be supported.

2. Developments will be required to make long lasting biodiversity enhancements which could include the creation of new habitats where these would be appropriate. They should support existing features (trees, ponds, hedgerows etc), provide and manage public open space and should also provide additional features for a wide variety of species and habitats in appropriate locations throughout the development. Additional features provided should be consistent with the characteristics of the surrounding area”.

Strategic objective: Thriving sustainable communities.

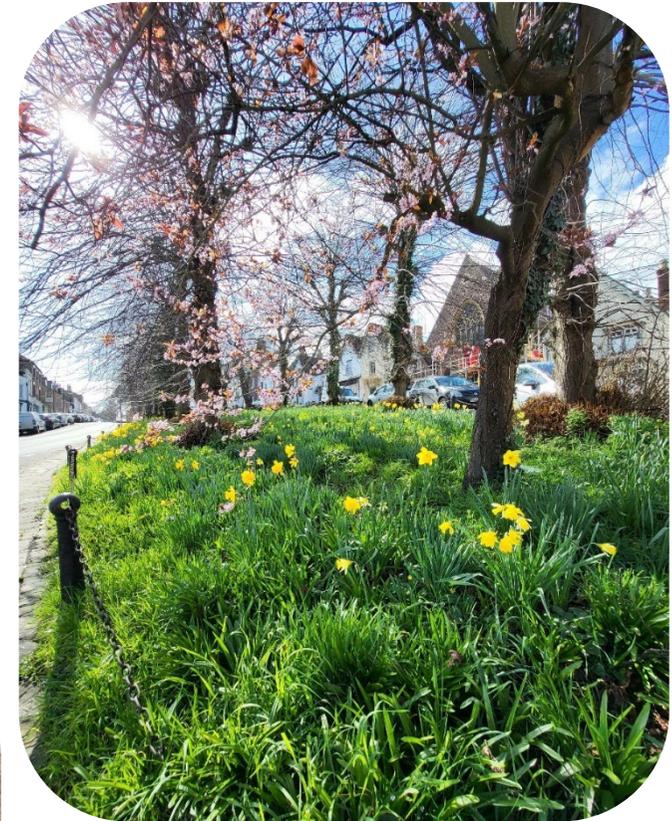


Photo by Tom Cosgrave





Policy CSP.3 Sustainable Energy within Development Proposals

Policy CSP.3 states:

'All major developments and other developments involving the construction of one or more dwelling(s) will be expected to provide, as a minimum, sufficient on-site renewable energy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from energy use by 10%.

The proportion will increase to 15% from 2015 and 20% from 2020.

Proposals must be accompanied by an energy use assessment which should demonstrate how the requirements of this policy will be achieved within the wider energy hierarchy context. The assessment must set the baseline for the calculation of the proportion of on site generation, describe the measures that are being undertaken and the predicted levels of efficiency. A nationally recognised evaluation of energy requirements such as the Targeted Emission Rates (TER) as set out in the building regulations should be used for assessments.

Where a dwelling is proposed to be extended the Council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that cost effective energy efficiency measures have been or will be carried out on the existing dwelling. Energy efficiency measures which would have an adverse impact on a Listed Building or the character of an area will not be required.

Measures which may be considered will include the level of loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, draft proofing, and boiler efficiency.'

Strategic objective: Sustainable energy within Development Proposals.



Policy AP7: Biodiversity

Policy AP7 states:

'Development proposals where protected and priority species or habitats as described by section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act and those covered by local biodiversity plans are concerned should provide for net biodiversity gains for these species and habitats unless it can be demonstrated that no enhancement options exist or that they are likely to be ineffectual. Developments shall safeguard features and supporting habitats which form parts of ecological networks and where appropriate provide 'missing' connections. Proposals must take account of the hierarchy of nature conservation sites and species including: International – Special Protection Areas (SPA) Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar Sites National – Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Ancient woodland, Section 41 Species and Habitats Local – Key wildlife areas, Strategic Nature areas, Green Infrastructure strategies.'

Policy AP8: Green Infrastructure

Policy AP8 states:

'New development proposals must consider and where appropriate provide green infrastructure(7) as an integral part of development schemes. Such provision must take best advantage of nearby features in a manner that safeguards or enhances the biodiversity of the development site concerned and its surroundings, and these should consider how they can also enhance the landscape. Proposals will be evaluated against and should be guided by the Strategic Framework for GI in Gloucestershire. In order to achieve this some or all of such provision may be made off site subject to the agreement of the Council. Where specific opportunities arise for the further development of Green infrastructure, they will be taken and planning agreements or other mechanisms will be used to secure appropriate provision. In particular the restoration of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal is expected to provide an important new or enhanced GI corridor. Other features, not all linear will also be expected to consider and fulfil a dual role and these include cycle tracks, footpaths and the possible extension of the Dean Forest Railway along with any new roads.'





4 Current actions

The Forest of Dean District Council is committed to safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity through strategic partnerships, planning controls and stakeholder engagement. The Forest of Dean is rich in biodiversity, and its diverse habitats including woodland, heathland and floodplains provide many species with supporting habitats. The Forest of Dean supports at least 26% of the UK's lesser horseshoe bat populations and was the chosen location of a pine marten re-introduction scheme. Newt Conservation Partnership data shows that the Forest of Dean contains the most botanically diverse ponds within the NatureSpace District Licencing Scheme⁶.

Due to the biodiverse nature of the district, the Council is preparing an application to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for Biosphere status. This designation if granted will recognise the Forest of Dean as a model for balancing conservation, sustainable development, and community engagement.

The Council works with many organisations to support biodiversity including:

- Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership
- Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA)
- Severn Estuary Partnership
- Severn Vale Catchment Partnership
- Natural England
- NatureSpace
- Forestry England
- Parish and town Councils
- Environment Agency
- Wetland and Wildfowl Trust



**FOREST OF DEAN
BIOSPHERE**

⁶ Newt Conservation Partnership. (2025) Available at: [Newt-Conservation-Partnership-Monitoring-Report-2024.pdf](#) Accessed December 2025

In addition to the measures outlined above, many of the Councils planning applications require ecological expertise due to consideration of protected sites and species and to ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced. Since the 1st January 2025 the Council’s ecologists have assessed at least 330 planning applications. The majority of these applications have been subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) due to potential impacts to European Protected Sites within the Council which include Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Severn Estuary SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodlands SAC and Walmore Common SAC and Ramsar.

Due to the species and habitat richness of the district there are many considerations that the Council undertake to ensure that the biodiversity within the district is enhanced and protected. All of the Councils actions are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Current actions undertaken to show how the Council has met its statutory biodiversity duty. Actions up to and including to 31st December 2025		
Action	Team responsible	Date completed
The Council has produced a Climate Emergency Strategy ⁷ which is being reviewed and updated to include a nature strategy and is due to be adopted early 2026.	Environment and Sustainability	2022 –2025 New strategy being produced
Consideration of all designated and non-designated statutory sites when considering planning applications. Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) are undertaken for any development which may impact a European Site. Planning permission for sites which may impact a European Site are not granted unless the scheme can demonstrate that any adverse impacts can be avoided or cancelled out with an appropriate mitigation strategy.	Environment and Sustainability Development Management	Ongoing
Any development which may result in pollution will receive advice from the relevant consultees. Development that will result in pollution of surrounding habitat will not be granted unless adequate mitigation is provided.	Environment and Sustainability Development Management Environmental Health Lead local Flood Authority	Ongoing

⁷ Forest of Dean District Council. (2022) Available at: [FoDDC Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022-25](#) Accessed November 2025

Table 1: Current actions undertaken to show how the Council has met its statutory biodiversity duty. Actions up to and including to 31st December 2025

Action	Team responsible	Date completed
When assessing planning applications opportunities are sought wherever possible for biodiversity enhancements including in the form of artificial habitats, planting opportunities where native and pollinator friendly species are encouraged, and Bug life's beeline layers are incorporated into the Local Authorities (LAs) GIS systems so that opportunities for pollinator friendly plants can be included within these areas.	Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing
The Council has previously rolled out pilot schemes for Biodiversity including three grassland sites off Centurion Road, Lydney (south of Centurion Road and two north of Centurion Road), land off Tiberius Avenue, Lydney and Newerne car park, Lydney.	Land and estates	2022 - ongoing
The Council has actively engaged with the local community to discuss the importance of biodiversity through Project Bloom which is part funded by the Council. The Council also helped produce the Town Council's Climate Adaption Plans ⁸ A monthly climate newsletter is also sent to residents who have signed up for the letter.	Environment and Sustainability	2025 - ongoing
The Council operates a 'No Mow May' initiative across designated public green spaces to promote pollinator habitats.	Facilities and waste	Ongoing
Actions within our emergency climate strategy restricts the use of herbicides and pesticides on council land except in exceptional circumstances such as control of Schedule 9 non-native invasive species	Facilities and Waste Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing
The biodiversity and climate team are working collaboratively to produce an updated Climate Emergency Strategy. The updated strategy will be re-titled 'Nature and Climate Strategy' and will include themes of nature. The Nature and Climate Strategy is due to be published in 2026.	Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing/ end of 2026

⁸ Forest of Dean District Council. (2025) Climate Action and what we are doing. Available at: [Climate action and what we are doing - Forest of Dean District Council](#) Available 28th November 2025

Table 1: Current actions undertaken to show how the Council has met its statutory biodiversity duty. Actions up to and including to 31st December 2025		
Action	Team responsible	Date completed
The Council has two permanent full time Biodiversity officers since 2024 to assist with planning applications and Biodiversity Net Gain.	Environment and Sustainability	2024
The Council are currently in the process of recruiting an Environment and sustainability apprentice to assess and assist with biodiversity management of our current landholdings and assist with biodiversity aspects within the Forest of Dean.	Environment and Sustainability Facilities and Waste	November – December 2025
The Council liaise and support stakeholders with projects which promote and improve biodiversity by offering advice and support and promotion of relevant projects.	Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing
The Forest of Dean District Council has supported provisions for Eco schools to raise awareness of biodiversity and ensure that schools are ecofriendly. The Council also supported the Youth Environmental Award in partnership with Forestry England ⁹	Environment and Sustainability	2024 - ongoing
The Forest of Dean District Council is an actively involved partner or member in a number of organisations including Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership ¹⁰ and Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities ¹¹ ASERA. Our membership with ASERA discharges our statutory duty for protection of the Severn Estuary.	Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing
The Council holds a NatureSpace licence which allows developers the opportunity to pay to join the NatureSpace scheme with the Council (rather than through the traditional licencing route which requires further survey work). The NatureSpace scheme ensures that developers do not cause adverse impacts to the distribution and population of great crested newts and negates the requirement for surveys before planning permission is granted. Ponds are provided at a landscape	Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing

⁹ Forestry England. (2025) Available at: [Home | Forestry England](#) Accessed: November 2025.

¹⁰ Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership. (2025) Available at: [Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership](#) Accessed: November 2025.

¹¹ ASERA. (2002) Available at: [ASERA](#) Accessed: November 2025.

Table 1: Current actions undertaken to show how the Council has met its statutory biodiversity duty. Actions up to and including to 31st December 2025

Action	Team responsible	Date completed
scale, current reports show that one of the district's ponds at Woorgreens is the most botanically biodiverse of the ponds monitored across the country (336 ponds). ¹²		



¹² Newt Conservation Partnership. (2025) Available at: <https://freshwaterhabitats.b-cdn.net/app/uploads/2025/01/Newt-Conservation-Partnership-Monitoring-Report-2024.pdf> Accessed: 10th December 2025



5 The Council's Future Actions

The Forest of Dean Council is committed to delivering its Biodiversity Duty and aims to undertake the following actions over the next 5 years.

Table 2: Actions for Biodiversity over the next 5 years.		
Actions to 2030	Start date	End date
<p>Continue to pursue opportunities to gain Biosphere Reserve status within the Forest of Dean, including an application to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO. Biosphere status would mean international recognition of the Forest of Dean's landscapes, wildlife, and heritage.</p> <p>This will provide opportunities to apply for funding and partnerships for projects associated with conserving and improving biodiversity.</p>	2026	2030
<p>Support and influence the development of Gloucestershire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), working strategically and collaboratively with partners and stakeholders across the District. Fully develop and implement the LNRS at a District scale to ensure that it delivers on its ambitions.</p>	Ongoing since 2022	2027
<p>Post publication of the LNRS, the Council will investigate and support the production of a Nature Recovery Plan for the District.</p>	2025	2030
<p>Continue to raise the importance of healthy water environments for biodiversity, including through the Local Plan and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	Ongoing since 2024	2030
<p>The Council will support the development of the emerging Local Plan to ensure that there are strong planning policies around habitats and species, Biodiversity Net Gain, water and air quality, artificial lighting and biodiversity enhancements including artificial provisions for wildlife.</p>	2025	2030

Table 2: Actions for Biodiversity over the next 5 years.

Actions to 2030	Start date	End date
Review and update biodiversity information and guidance on the Council's website, designed to aid homeowners/developers/applicants, and add additional specifications on hedgerow and tree planting, general biodiversity enhancement for small scale developments.	2025	2030
The Council will undertake a Biodiversity Audit of its landholdings and ensure that risks and opportunities are identified for Biodiversity. Where open spaces are to be managed by the Council, the Council will ensure that biodiversity will be a material consideration, including the consideration of risks and opportunities for wildlife within any current and future management plans. For example, timing works such as vegetation clearance to avoid the nesting bird season and utilising any vegetation from clearance to create habitat piles etc.	2025	2030
Review all existing Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) on our land and ensure that management/maintenance plans are in place, implemented and reviewed at appropriate intervals to ensure effective active management for biodiversity.	2025	2030
Investigate further suitable designation for Council owned land as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) or onward management by appropriate bodies by year 1 of this action plan and if appropriate achieve any designated status by 2030.	2025	2026 and 2030
Identify other suitable sites on Council land and implement measures to manage for nature. Develop a programme of management plans with grounds maintenance teams and other relevant partners. Involve the local community with any changes.	2025	1st phase 2026 with subsequent reporting until 2030
Review management of Council owned trees to ensure effective management for biodiversity is included within any tree works and ensure that management/succession plans are in place.	2025	2030

Table 2: Actions for Biodiversity over the next 5 years.		
Actions to 2030	Start date	End date
Support Plant Life's No Mow May ¹³ initiative by suspending grass cutting throughout May in suitable areas on our land and helping to inspire local action for nature.	2025	2030
Respond to academic institutions to highlight research opportunities for monitoring and measuring changes in biodiversity.	2025	2030
Maintain access to live and accurate habitat data or the district through continued support for the Gloucestershire Environmental Records Centre.	2025	2030
The Council will continue to support and promote the '30 by 30' ¹⁴ⁱ global conservation target to protect 30% of the districts land. This will be achieved through implementation of the actions set out in this report, adoption of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and supporting strategic Biodiversity Net Gain proposals that align with the LNRS. The council will investigate opportunities to assess how much of council land is currently undeveloped and protected to assess if the council is currently meeting these targets.	2025	2030
The council will support development applications that demonstrate that they align with the Building with Nature Framework ¹⁵ or hold Building with Nature accreditation.	2026	2030

¹³ Plantlife. (2025) Available at: [Plantlife's No Mow May Movement](#) Accessed: November 2025

¹⁴ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (2024) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criteria-for-30by30-on-land-in-england/30by30-on-land-in-england-confirmed-criteria-and-next-steps> Accessed: 10th December 2025.

¹⁵ Building with Nature. (2025) Available at: <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/standards-form>

Table 2: Actions for Biodiversity over the next 5 years.

Actions to 2030	Start date	End date
<p>A strapline will be created to add to consultee comments for appropriate developments to raise awareness to the scheme among local developers.</p> <p>The council will also seek opportunities to promote Building with Nature to local developments through the council’s website and wider communications.</p>		
<p>Embed consideration of biodiversity impacts into all Council operations and services. Inform and engage Forest of Dean District Council officers, Councillors and grounds maintenance contractor staff in the delivery of this plan using activities such as workshops, annual biodiversity days, activity days (e.g. tree planting, etc.), lunchtime nature walks, infographics to report on progress, sharing success stories, etc.</p>	2025	2030





6 Biodiversity Net Gain including current and future actions

Actions that have been undertaken by the Council to meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations so far will be listed in this section.

Table 3: Actions made by the Council to implement and meet Biodiversity Net Gain obligations.		
Actions	Team responsible	Completed
The council applies the mitigation hierarchy where sites contain priority habitats and species and encouraging loss of priority habitat to be avoided. Where loss of priority habitat is unavoidable conditions are applied to planning applications to ensure that any impacts are minimal and compensatory habitats must be of a greater area/ length than that of what is lost, and enhancements must be significant.	Environment and Sustainability Development Management	Ongoing
The Council have updated validation checklists to incorporate Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.	Development Management Environment and Sustainability	2024
The Forest of Dean District Council's validation team have undertaken training to ensure that the basic net gain requirements are met including ensuring that the statutory metric has been completed by a competent ecologist with an appropriate date associated with the metric and to ensure there the baseline habitats have been completed with no error boxes.	Environment and Sustainability Development Management	2024
The Council has invested in software which assists with assessing of Biodiversity Net Gain applications and scans for errors within the submitted calculation tool.	Finance Environment and Sustainability	2024
Biodiversity and Planning officers have undertaken various training for the Biodiversity Net Gain obligation including training on use of the metric calculation tool for both statutory and small sites metrics, understanding relevant legislation and assessing Biodiversity Net Gain considerations.	Environment and Sustainability Development Management	2023 - 2024
Two new Biodiversity Officers have been appointed to the Forest of Dean District Council. One of the roles is to help assist with BNG applications.	Environment and Sustainability	2024

Since the implementation of mandatory BNG on 12th February 2024 (major developments) and 2nd April 2024 (small sites), the Council has received two Biodiversity Gain Plans for approval, with one having been subsequently withdrawn by the applicant, and the other approved in December 2024. The approved plan is a Small Sites Metric, expected to deliver a net change of 0.1169 biodiversity units, (45.65% net gain) in onsite habitat units (grassland habitat types), with monitoring starting in 2026.

The multiple European Protected Sites and Species found in the Forest of Dean, has affected the majority of planning applications for development made within the Forest of Dean. Mitigation for protected species can only be included in the metric up to no net loss which has resulted in the appointed ecologist needing to resubmit two metrics in most cases showing which habitats are BNG enhancements/ creations and which habitats are mitigation for protected species.

The effects of the above has resulted in more time required to determine applications subject to mandatory BNG requirements.

Table 4: Actions that will be continued to meet the Council’s Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and further actions to ensure that the Council has met its Biodiversity Net Gan obligations.	
Actions	Responsible Team
The Council will ensure that biodiversity officers, planners and the validation team continue to undertake relevant training to assess biodiversity net gain applications and ensure that a Biodiversity Net Gain statement has been submitted with each application	Environment and Sustainability
Biodiversity Officers will continue to ensure that the baseline habitat has been correctly completed and will cross reference the baseline habitat in reports with the condition assessments to ensure that these have been completed appropriately, that we concur with the condition assessments and that biodiversity net gain can be achieved.	Environment and Sustainability
Biodiversity Officers will continue to assess Biodiversity Net Gain applications, the post development habitats and the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans to ensure that information provided is sufficient and that Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy has been considered.	Environment and Sustainability
The biodiversity statements will continue to be reviewed, and the Council will ensure that 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved before granting planning permission.	Environment and Sustainability

Table 4: Actions that will be continued to meet the Council's Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and further actions to ensure that the Council has met its Biodiversity Net Gain obligations.	
Actions	Responsible Team
	Development Management
The Biodiversity Team will support Local Plan Policies regarding BNG and will assess the feasibility of increasing Biodiversity Net Gain to 20% on large scale developments/ large areas of land subject to mandatory BNG.	Environment and Sustainability Forward Plans
The council will keep a record of BNG plan polygon layers within our GIS systems to support future reporting.	ICT – Spatial information manager Environment and Sustainability
Biodiversity Officers will assess application sites for enhancement opportunities onsite and in accordance with any adopted LNRS for all applications where there is mandatory BNG to ensure that the appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities have been explored.	Environment and Sustainability
Biodiversity Officers will review Biodiversity Net Gain plans and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans accordingly and begin to monitor sites where there are onsite biodiversity net gains or where a Section 106 is required in accordance with the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.	Environment and Sustainability



7 Conclusion

This report outlines the Council's compliance with the Biodiversity Duty under the Environment Act 2021 and NERC Act. It summarises current actions, future commitments, and Biodiversity Net Gain obligations. Key priorities include habitat enhancement, policy integration, and community engagement.



APPENDIX 1 Sustainability Impact Assessment

The biodiversity duty report has been assessed using the Council’s Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool. Please see results in figures below.

Figure 1: Sustainability Impact Assessment results



Figure 2: Equality Impact Assessment



Key	Impact	Action
■	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified.	No changes needed.
■	Slight or short-term positive impact identified.	No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
■	No net change or not applicable.	No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
■	Slight or short-term negative impact identified.	Review to identify possible improvements.
■	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified.	Changes needed before proceeding. If changes are not possible, justification is required.
■	Responses incomplete.	Please return to assessment and answer all questions in this section.



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

Annex A

Biodiversity Duty Report (BDR)
January 2026