

Biodiversity Duty Objectives and Initial Actions (May 2024)

Proposed Biodiversity Duty Objective	Initial assessment of current position and actions already planned	Proposed Initial actions	Timescales	Dept/resource implications
<p>Objective 1</p> <p>Relevant external strategies To ensure Dover District Council contributes to the preparation of, and implementation of, the following relevant strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Nature Recovery Strategy Species Conservation Strategies Protected site strategies 	<p>Kent County Council (KCC) is the responsible authority for preparing the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Dover District Council is contributing to the process, with Officers and Members involved its development.</p>	<p>1.1 To continue to be involved with and cooperate with KCC who are preparing the LNRS.</p> <p>1.2 Further actions related to the LNRS will be identified once it is finalised in 2025, and incorporated into DDC strategies, where possible.</p>	<p>2024- 2025</p> <p>2025</p>	<p>Planning and Development</p> <p>Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside</p>
	<p>Natural England (NE) is the responsible authority for preparing Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Site Strategies. These strategies are yet to be prepared by Natural England.</p>	<p>1.3 Dover District Council will cooperate and consider how to contribute to the implementation of the strategies, where relevant.</p>	<p>TBC (subject to NE timescales)</p>	<p>Planning and Development</p>
<p>Objective 2</p> <p>Planning and Development including Biodiversity Net Gain.</p> <p>To secure biodiversity conservation and enhancement through planning approvals, including</p>	<p>Emerging Local Plan 2040 (currently at Examination) is a new policy framework to support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SP13 Protecting the Districts Biodiversity Assets; SP14 Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity; 	<p>2.1 Adopt emerging Local Plan in Autumn 2024.</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Planning and Development</p>

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Biodiversity Net Gain where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM1 Achieving High Quality Design, Place Making and the Provision of Design Codes; • NE1 Biodiversity Net Gain; • NE6 The River Dour. <p>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is carried out alongside all qualifying policies, plans and programmes. This includes an objective to conserve, connect and enhance the District's wildlife, habitats and species. The Local Plan has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal which includes SEA.</p>			
	<p>The Dover District Green Infrastructure Strategy is currently in draft form and was subject to consultation in 2023.</p> <p>The GI Strategy is due to be adopted in June 2024.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Strategy Core Action 1: Develop and implement BNG Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Strategy Core Action 2: Develop and implement</p>	<p>2.2 To Adopt the Green Infrastructure Strategy and deliver Action Plan</p> <p>2.3 Implement Core Action 1 of Green Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>2.4 Implement Core Action 2 of Green Infrastructure Strategy</p>	<p>2024</p> <p>2025</p> <p>2025</p>	<p>Planning and Development</p>

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	Biodiversity Design Code for new development			
	<p>Development proposals are required to provide a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the Statutory Framework.</p> <p>Planning department preparations for implementing BNG are already in progress, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint funded BNG Officer based at KCC with whom we are working with to prepare, procedure notes and guidance, and training for officers and members • Information and guidance provided online on the LNRS website • Kent BNG Site Register – market place for local off-site biodiversity • Interim Strategic Significance Guidance published • Purchased new software to assist in managing, assessing and monitoring the BNG 	<p>2.5 To consider Biodiversity Net Gain information needs in a revised list of Local Validation Requirements for planning applications.</p> <p>2.6. Continue training activity with Officers and Members</p> <p>2.7 Monitor and review initial processes developed for managing considerations of BNG in the planning process, including level of support required externally from KCC Biodiversity</p> <p>2.8 Update DDC website to provide guidance for applicants and developers</p> <p>2.9 Review and develop monitoring processes for BNG, including developing a fee calculator to ensure costs of monitoring BNG are covered by development. Update Fees and Charges schedule.</p> <p>2.10 Undertake review of enforcement and develop new processes and procedures where necessary</p>	2024/2025	<p>Planning and Development</p> <p>Some additional resource is to be funded by DEFRA grant for BNG implementation, and S106 monitoring fees.</p> <p>Review of any further resource requirements to be carried out through actions</p>

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	<p>requirements through the planning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed processes for dealing with BNG considerations, including entering into an SLA for Kent County Council Biodiversity Service to provide advice on planning applications in relation to BNG 	<p>2.11 Make preparations to enable the Council to enter into S106 agreements for prospective Habitat Banks to deliver off-site BNG in the District, including developing new internal processes to manage this and criteria to assess proposals</p>		
<p>Objective 3</p> <p>Council Plans, Policies and Strategies To ensure biodiversity is considered within Council Plans, Policies and Strategies, decision-making and other internal processes, where relevant.</p>	<p>Corporate Plan (2023 - 2027) – Strategic priorities contribute to the biodiversity duty, including a specific reference to supporting biodiversity in greenspaces, parkland and wider countryside.</p> <p>Local Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy – see above</p> <p>Other Plans and Strategies – a number of other plans and strategies already include consideration of the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including Climate Change Strategy 2021, Dover District Heritage Strategy (2020), Tourism Strategy (2020-2030).</p>	<p>3.1 As Council’s Plan and strategies are reviewed, consideration is given to biodiversity and opportunities for enhancement.</p> <p>3.2 Consider how information can be shared across the Council and training and education for Councillors and Council employees can be provided in relation to the Duty.</p>		<p>Heads of service</p> <p>Planning and Development</p>

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	<p>Decision reports require consideration to be given to the ‘climate change and environmental implications’ of the decision. This currently focuses on the impacts of decisions on the Council’s commitment for it to be net zero by 2030.</p> <p>Other internal Council processes</p>	<p>3.3 To consider the benefit of including a requirement for high-level assessment of biodiversity conservation and potential for enhancement within decision reports, to embed within decision making.</p> <p>3.4 Each department, where relevant to their operations, to undertake consideration and where relevant propose actions for biodiversity and enhancement, including reviewing other internal Council processes which could contribute.</p>		<p>CMT</p> <p>Heads of Service</p>
<p>Objective 4 Council owned Land and buildings To consider the potential for Council owned land and buildings to conserve and enhance biodiversity</p>	<p>Council Land</p> <p>Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>Council owned land includes parks; outdoor sports facilities; amenity spaces; cemeteries; woodlands; nature reserves; arable farmland; rented grazing; and water dependent and coastal habitats.</p> <p>Amenity open space, including sports facilities, provides opportunities for</p>	<p>4.1 When preparing the next Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, identify any areas of Council owned parks, amenity open spaces, cemeteries and closed churchyards that would be suitable for implementation of site-specific management plans to meet objectives within the KCC Local Nature Recovery Strategy and / or Natural England (NE) Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Site Strategies.</p>	<p>2024/25</p>	<p>Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside</p>

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	<p>residents and visitors enjoyment the natural environment and to take part in outdoor activities. Such areas are also valuable in attracting users to suitably managed sites and away from sensitive, more biodiverse sites.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the potential for Parks and Open Spaces, to contribute to promoting biodiversity through amended management practises, where appropriate. For example, some areas of amenity grassland are managed using a low intensity mowing regime and, when appropriate, a diverse range of native tree species are selected for planting schemes.</p> <p>Parks and Amenity Open Space Strategy (2013) – Strategic aims include raising standards of major parks and other green spaces and identifying gaps in provision. The Green Flag Award scheme refers to conservation and management of natural features. Kearsney</p>	<p>4.2 Continue to work with local stakeholders in identifying additional areas of Council owned amenity grassland that can be managed using fewer cuts per year, to encourage greater biodiversity.</p> <p>4.3 When preparing the proposed tree strategy, consider opportunities for promoting biodiversity through management of trees on Council owned land, e.g. when possible using a range of native species in any planting schemes.</p> <p>4.4 Carry out an audit of site-specific management plans of protected and designated sites in Dover District Council ownership, with the intention to identify any which require reviewing and/or where new management plans are required to increase positive conservation management</p> <p>4.5 Undertake a review of Council landholding (including waterways) to assess potential suitability for providing off-site BNG funded through the sale of BNG units to developers.</p>	<p>2024</p> <p>On-going</p>	

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	<p>White Cliffs Countryside Partnership White Cliffs Countryside Partnership works to protect, enhance and promote biodiversity on the seven nature reserves it manages in Dover district. It also works with other community groups and other stakeholders through planned programmes and on an ad hoc basis to deliver benefits for biodiversity.</p> <p>Protected and designated sites owned and/or managed by Dover District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Heights Local Nature Reserve (LNR) • Western Heights, Dover LWS (most of site owned by DDC) • Prince’s Beachland LNR • High Meadow LNR (part of site owned by DDC) • Whinless Down LNR • Whinless Down and Long Wood LWS (part of site owned by DDC) • Kingsdown and Walmer Beach Local Wildlife Site (LWS) • Great Farthingloe Downs, Aycliff LWS (part of site owned by DDC) 	<p>4.6 White Cliffs Countryside Partnership to continue working to protect, enhance and promote biodiversity on the seven nature reserves it manages in Dover District.</p>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Hill and Combe Hole, Dover LWS (part of site owned by DDC) • River Valley Woods, Dover LWS (part of site owned by DDC) • St James Charlton Cemeteries, Dover LWS • St Radigund's Valley LWS (part of site owned by DDC) • Limekiln / Long / Slead Wood ancient woodland (part of area owned by DDC) • The Knees and Disused Railway Line, Shepherdswell LWS (small part of site owned by DDC) • Whitfield Down and Buckland Down LWS (part of site owned by DDC) • Spinney Wood, Aylesham ancient woodland 			
	Council owned or managed buildings	4.7 Review current processes in relation to maintenance of buildings and sites to ensure biodiversity is being considered where necessary.	2025	Property Services

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		<p>4.8 Consider potential for small scale habitat enhancements on Council owned buildings.</p> <p>4.9 Ensure biodiversity net gain is embedded in the early stages of new project delivery.</p>		
<p>Objective 5</p> <p>Partnerships, communities and volunteers</p> <p>To promote (and identify opportunities for) biodiversity in the Council’s work with partnerships, communities and volunteers, including engaging with the public and other stakeholders to educate, advise and raise awareness of biodiversity</p>	<p>The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) has a range of partners supporting its work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affinity Water • Aylesham Parish Council • Dover Distirct council • Dover Town Council • EDF Energy • Eurotunnel • Folkestone and Hythe District Council • Kent County Council • The Land Trust • Natural England • Network Rail • Taylor Wimpey • St Margaret’s Parish Council <p>Inspiring Local Communities is one of the focus areas of WCCP’s work and it runs a range of education and</p>	<p>5.1 Existing activities to continue</p> <p>5.2 Consider, with the Communities and Communications teams how to engage the public to educate, advise and raise awareness of biodiversity.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2025</p>	<p>Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside</p> <p>Communities, Communications</p>

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	<p>awareness programmes across the district. In addition, it provides a range of volunteering opportunities – in 2023/24 384 individual volunteers volunteered 3,175 days of their time.</p> <p>Work with Kent Wildlife Trust to manage Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>A Climate and Nature Forum has recently been set up with Town and Parish Councils and local community groups.</p> <p>Kent Downs National Landscape - The Kent Downs AONB Management has been adopted by the Council, and the Council is an existing member of the Kent Downs Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)</p>	<p>5.3 Continue to support the work of the Kent Downs AONB unit to identify opportunities for improvements to nature in the Kent Downs National Landscape.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning and Development</p>