



BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

Lancaster City Council
April 2026



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BACKGROUND

Lancaster City Council's Biodiversity Duty

Background

The Environment Act 2021 requires all public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This report sets out how Lancaster City Council has integrated biodiversity considerations into its policies, strategies, and operations, and outlines the progress made during the reporting period (January 2024 – January 2026). It also outlines the Council’s future plans and actions for continued improvement and delivery of biodiversity objectives across the district.

Lancaster City Council

Lancaster City Council is a district-level authority located within Lancashire. The district area has a population of approximately 145,000 and includes the city of Lancaster and the towns of Morecambe and Carnforth, as well numerous villages, hamlets and open countryside.

The landscape is varied, from the upland of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in the east, a small portion of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in the northeast, right down to a sizable stretch of the Morecambe Bay coastline, and the diverse area of limestone outcrops and rich habitats in the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape in the north.

Infrastructure is also an important part of the district, some of which is of national importance, including the UK’s most productive nuclear power station, a stretch of the M6 motorway, an international shipping port, and a connection to the Morecambe Bay offshore wind farm.

The district has a rich heritage, with over 1,300 listed buildings and thousands more heritage assets of various types. Local landmarks include Lancaster Castle, the cathedral, the Lancaster Canal and aqueduct and the Ashton Memorial in Williamson Park, one many public parks.

Lancaster City Council is responsible for making many important decisions on behalf of local people. Strategic decisions, budget setting and performance monitoring are the responsibility of the elected councillors.

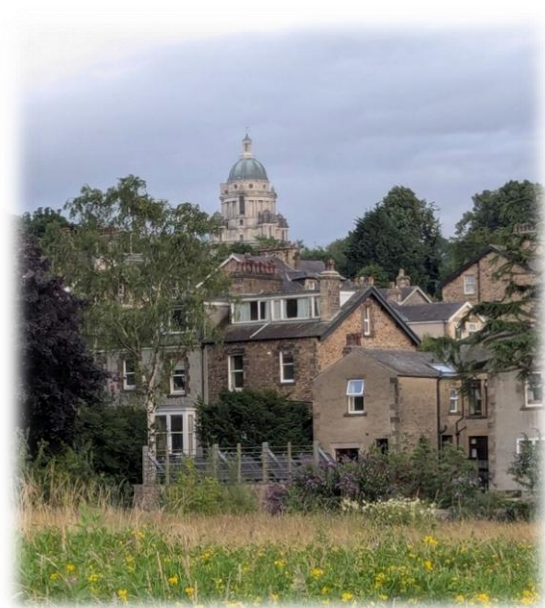


Figure 1 - Ashton Memorial from Miss Whalley’s Field

Lancaster City Council is responsible for:

- Local planning and development control
- Street cleaning
- Household bins and recycling
- Administering council tax and housing benefit locally
- Providing council housing and generally promoting good quality housing provision
- Environmental health and safety
- Parking enforcement
- Licensing
- Promoting economic development and tourism in the area
- Providing parks and leisure facilities

In carrying out its responsibilities the Council has the potential to directly or indirectly affect biodiversity within the district in many ways through its varied work.

Biodiversity Duty

In November 2021 the Environment Act received royal assent. This Act introduced several new requirements on local authorities, including those of mandatory biodiversity net gain, and the enhanced biodiversity duty. In May 2023, government confirmed that all English public authorities must complete a ‘first consideration’ of actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Shortly thereafter, Lancaster City Council produced its first consideration report, including introductory information on biodiversity net gain, ecological data, information on existing local and national strategies, and an action plan. This was adopted by Cabinet in 2024 and made available to the public on our website here: [Fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty First Considerations Report](#).

In autumn 2024 the Council appointed a Biodiversity Officer to support the Council in meeting the requirements of the biodiversity duty.

The Environment Act 2021 requires a Biodiversity Duty Report be produced by every council on a five-year cycle, starting in 2026. This report shows the actions that the Council has taken in various services and departments regarding the biodiversity duty and shows future actions planned. It also provides details on biodiversity net gain where this is required in new developments. An overview is provided in section 3 below and data on biodiversity gain plans is included in a spreadsheet format in the template provided by Defra (Appendix A).



SECTION 1

Policies, Objectives and Actions

Section 1 - Policies, Objectives and Actions

Local Planning Policies

Lancaster City Council local plan provides the local planning policy to guide all local development. After declaring a climate emergency in January 2019, the Council undertook a Climate Emergency Local Plan Review, and soon after declared an Ecological Emergency in December 2022. This review led to the development and then adoption of the current Development Plan Documents Part One: Strategic Policies and Land Allocations (climate emergency) DPD and Policies Map and Part Two: Development Management (climate emergency) DPD (adopted 22 January 2025) for the Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031.

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/land-allocations-dpd>

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/development-management-dpd>

The Council has now started on the preparation of a new Local Plan (Lancaster District Local Plan Review 2028/29-2043/44). Having completed the scoping and early participation stage of the Local Plan in January 2026 the Council is about to start on the 30-month plan preparation process.

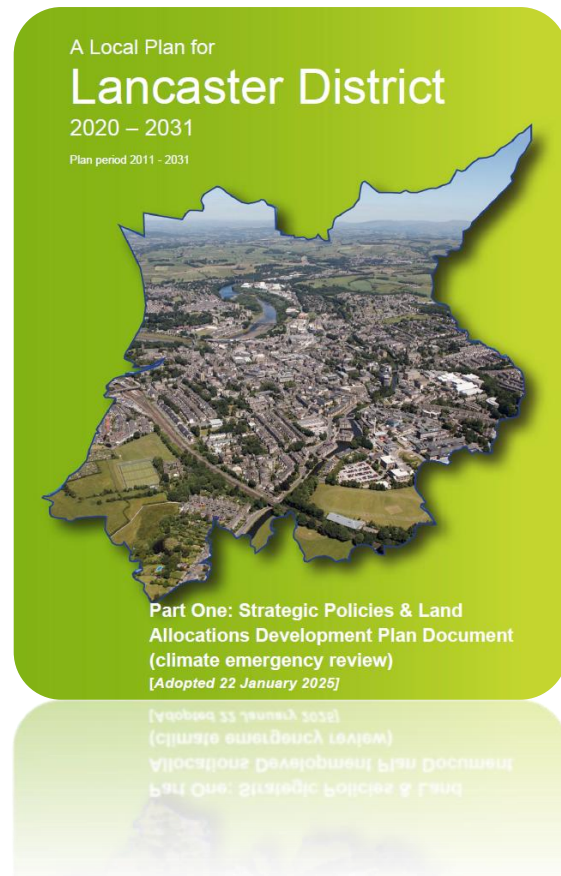
The Adopted Plan Part One includes strategic policies on:

- **SP8** Protecting the Natural Environment
- **SC2** Local Green Spaces and
- **SC4** Green and Blue Corridors and Chains.

Part Two has several specific policies on the Natural Environment and biodiversity, including:

- **DM43:** Green and Blue Infrastructure,
- **DM44:** The Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity
- **DM45:** Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland, and
- **DM29:** Key Design Principles.

These policies focus on protection and enhancement of natural assets, on incorporating green and blue infrastructure within development and providing open space areas to mitigate impacts on adjoining areas. DM29 also directs development



design to take opportunities to support species such as bats and swifts, and to incorporate sustainable surface water drainage.

The Monitoring Framework of the Local Plan (Part One, Appendix F) includes cross-cutting strategic objectives and sub-objectives which relate to multiple policies. Those related to biodiversity include:

- Recognising and respecting the international importance of Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary, Morecambe Bay Pavements, Bowland fells, Leighton Moss and Calf Hill/Crag Wood, where possible securing opportunities for habitat restoration and enhancement within them and protecting them from inappropriate development and increased recreational pressure
- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty and special qualities of the district's two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), securing appropriate opportunities for sustainable growth linked to the natural environment and landscape capacity
- Protecting, enhancing and extending the connectivity of our green and blue spaces, corridors and chains that make up the wider green and blue infrastructure network, harnessing the multifunctional value and benefits such spaces can provide in adapting and mitigating to the impacts of climate change providing new and maintaining existing ecological corridors, preventing habitat fragmentation and allowing species adaptation and migration and protecting natural features which provide local distinctiveness including mature trees and ancient woodland, hedgerows and ponds.

For each of the sub-objectives within the Monitoring Framework the related policies are referenced, together with relevant Indicators, Targets, Triggers for action and Proposed action for targets not being met.

Internal Council Policies

Several internal Council policies (both formal and informal) are in place to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the district.

Some of these policies include:

- The Council's grassland management strategy – which involves cutting public grassland less regularly in order to encourage pollinators and other insects, as well as planting out species of native wildflowers to increase biodiversity
- Masterplans for several regeneration sites (such as the Canal Quarter and the former Frontierland Site) now include ecological enhancements
- No longer routinely using glyphosate weed killer – since April 2020 the Council took the decision to stop using glyphosate weed killers within the public realm under its direct management, other than to control invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed¹

¹ This is the case for land owned and managed by Lancaster City Council. There is still of use glyphosate, in particular on pavements and roadways (including back alleys) where these are maintained by the County Council, which is the highways authority, or by other bodies.

- Switching to bio-degradable cups in Williamson Park café
- No longer using single-use plastics for council events

Biodiversity Action Plan

In 2024 Lancaster City Council developed and adopted its Biodiversity Action Plan. The primary objectives were:

1. Improve biodiversity evidence base
2. Work with key partners to support biodiversity delivery across the district
3. Deliver measurable increase in biodiversity across the district
4. Embed biodiversity in leadership and decision making
5. Promote education and awareness
6. Promote and support projects that deliver enhancements in biodiversity

Against each of these objectives the plan includes actions, some specific to individual departments, others applying across the Council. The actions in the plan are shown on the website link to the Action Plan in section 10 of the report produced in 2024 on 'Fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty: First Considerations'.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/9e282a19acdb43509596657fff3fa06d>

An expanded version of this is in Appendix B of this report, which includes updates on progress and future actions.

Grassland Management Strategy

In 2021 the Council developed a new Grassland Management Strategy for the land it manages in the district. Following public consultation, the Council adopted the strategy and is applying it in parks and other areas in the district. Some prestige areas and the sports pitches continue to be mowed frequently. In other areas the strategy is for low intensity management, with grassland left long and only cut annually. Selected areas are being progressively enhanced for biodiversity through the introduction of perennial wildflowers and by management that removes the cuttings. Details are set out here:

www.lancaster.gov.uk/grassland-management

Lancaster City Council does not use insecticides in managing its land and avoids use of herbicides, except where necessary for actions such as control of some invasive species.

Actions Undertaken

The Council has undertaken many actions in the last two years to enhance biodiversity. The following highlights show the progress being made on the Biodiversity Action Plan (further detail of actions - along with the complete list - can be found in Appendix B and C of this report:

Improved biodiversity evidence base

- Carried out a strategic wintering bird survey to identify functionally linked land associated with Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA.
- Commissioned a visitor survey around Morecambe Bay to understand current recreational pressure and the potential for increase associated with future development, a project funded jointly with Wyre Council and Westmorland and Furness and coordinated by the Morecambe Bay Partnership, with Natural England as a consultee. This is a step towards an integrated access management strategy in the coastal area.
- Undertook a feasibility study on delivering a habitat bank on Council-owned land
- Carried out detailed studies on the Burrow Beck solar farm site to fulfil requirements to set up a habitat bank there, but with additional surveys on soil health, embodied soil carbon and above-ground and below-ground bioacoustics, all of which will provide a baseline to allow a wider range of biodiversity to be monitored than the habitat condition in the biodiversity metric could do on its own.



Figure 2 - Opening of the Memorial Forest at Half Moon Bay, an example of collaboration between the Council and the charity group Life for Life.

Worked with key partners to support biodiversity delivery across the district

- Worked with the County Council as a participating partner in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Worked with Arnsdale and Silverdale National Landscape and Forest of Bowland National Landscape teams through support for plan-making and projects
- Worked as a member of the Lancashire Local Nature Partnership.
- Worked with Butterfly Conservation on the Community Wings project and pledged as a Butterfly (and moth)-Friendly Council to work on the following key actions in the next three years:
 - Creating a biodiversity plan to save nature
 - Improving and creating places for butterflies and moths
 - Ensuring access to green spaces within 15 minutes' walk

- Ending the use of pollinator-killing pesticides²
- Taking light pollution seriously.

Delivered measurable increase in biodiversity across the district

- Through further expansion of grassland enhancements as part of the Grassland Management Strategy³, an ongoing initiative involving Council staff and many volunteers. The work includes locally sourced wildflower seed collection, propagation in the Council's polytunnels at White Lund and planting at sites, both on Council land and to support projects on other land in the district.

Embedded biodiversity in leadership and decision making

- Encouraging staff in different departments to consider effects of decisions and operations on biodiversity. For example,
 - new lighting at Salt Ayre will be shielded to minimise light spill into adjacent habitats,
 - lighting for events at Williamson Park will avoid lighting features that may be in use by bats, and
 - decisions regarding Council land assets will consider current biodiversity and future opportunities as well as economic costs and benefits.
- providing in-house training to council members and the development management team on biodiversity net gain
- employing an ecologist to support preparation of the Local Plan and advise on biodiversity net gain and other biodiversity matters.

Promoted education and awareness

- Continued a busy ongoing programme of engagement with local communities, including activities around biodiversity and sustainability
- Hosted several workshop sessions focused on nature, including bat/bird box making and earwig hotels, including joint events with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and with support from the North Lancashire Bat Group.

Promoted and supported projects that deliver enhancements in biodiversity

- Integrated the opportunity to contribute to reducing the Council's carbon footprint with biodiversity by working to set up a habitat bank at the Burrow Beck Solar Farm, currently in construction.

² The Council does not use insecticides on the land it owns and manages and also avoids use of herbicides, except where necessary to control invasive species. The Council is not responsible for herbicide use by other bodies which manage land such as roadsides which are the responsibility of the highways authority (County Council). The Council will encourage everyone to avoid or minimise use of pesticides, and to use them safely if they are required.

³ Grassland Management Strategy: www.lancaster.gov.uk/grassland-management



SECTION 2

Future Actions



Section 2 - Future actions

Appendix B of this report (the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan) shows actions the Council will take over the next 5 years. It includes work on some incomplete actions in the First Considerations Report, as well as new actions. Appendix C (Actions and Projects) shows actions which have been undertaken and are planned by individual departments and contribute towards the goal of biodiversity enhancement throughout the district.

Some examples of our future actions include:

- Start the Council's first habitat bank, which we expect to have operating in 2026
- Implementing new planning policies with enhanced protections for biodiversity
- Designate at least one new Local Nature Reserve
- Establish a biodiversity 'hub' for knowledge-sharing within the Council
- Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening, including avoiding of use of insecticides (the Council does not use insecticides on its own land)
- Increase public awareness on light pollution, starting with a student project on light levels and bat activity in 2026
- Work with partnering organisations to develop management strategy and action plan for recreational access around Morecambe Bay including identifying new areas for recreational access and/or for enhancement for waders and other coastal birds.



Figure 3 - Council Polytunnel at White Lund growing wildflowers



Figure 4 – Toads

Further actions can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C

A close-up photograph of a green shield bug (Pentatomidae) resting on a green leaf. The bug's body is a mottled green color, matching the leaf, providing camouflage. It has a shield-like shape and long antennae. The background is a blurred green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. A semi-transparent purple banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

SECTION 3

Biodiversity Net Gain Information

Section 3 - Biodiversity net gain information

Biodiversity in development management

The legal requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) came into force in England on 12th February 2024. Lancaster City Council has made changes to the development management processes to implement these requirements and to monitor their success in future in increasing biodiversity throughout the district.

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, GMEU, provided technical support to Lancaster on ecology issues on major applications and on previous iterations of the Local Plan, up to January 2025. Following the appointment of an ecologist by Lancaster City Council in autumn 2024, technical support on biodiversity net gain and other biodiversity matters has been provided internally.

Having an in-house ecologist has given the Development Management department more support and informal training on biodiversity net gain. It has enabled technical support on most applications requiring biodiversity net gain (both minor and major). It has also allowed the Council to provide applicants with guidance at application stage to help them meet the biodiversity net gain requirements.

Biodiversity net gain digital management

The format of the official biodiversity metric makes it time-consuming to review as a spreadsheet. Furthermore, the planning case system was not designed to cope with cases that would remain for 30 years or more. It would quickly become difficult to keep track of a growing number of cases going into the monitoring stage post-decision. For these reasons in February 2025, Lancaster City Council started using specialised BNG software.

On all planning applications which are not exempt from the requirements of mandatory BNG staff can now:

- get initial checks done automatically at validation stage
- review and comment on the metrics
- keep relevant supporting information including plans and ecology surveys directly accessible from the software
- record the stage of an application
- review for approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan post-decision
- update the case with progress towards habitat targets when monitoring reports are provided or site visits are made
- obtain reports on overall habitat losses and gains from approved Biodiversity Gain Plans.

Planning Applications and Biodiversity Net Gain

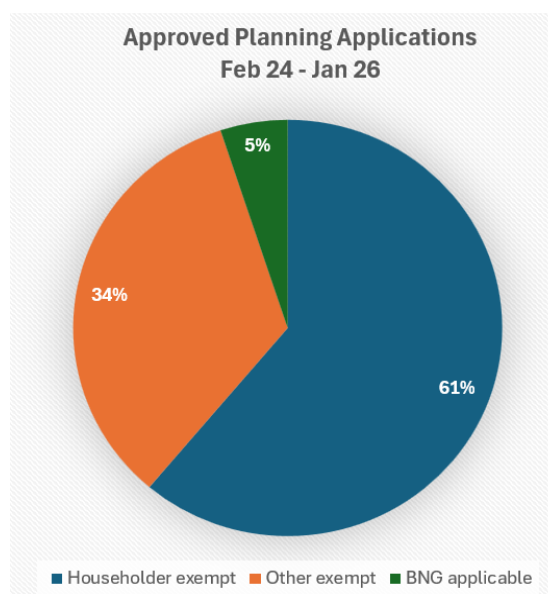
Appendix A (Quantified Biodiversity Net Gain) contains the spreadsheet provided by Defra for reporting on Biodiversity Net Gain with all the required fields completed. The main points are summarised here.

Since the start of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain in February 2024 Lancaster City Council had 888 planning approvals.

Most of these (543) were householder applications which were exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. There were 300 applications of other types, giving a total of 843 exempt approvals - 95% of all applications approved from 12th February 2024 to 31st December 2025.

Other types of exemptions included:

- 183 de minimus (affecting <25m2 of habitats and not affecting any priority habitat)
- 7 self-build developments
- 12 retrospective applications
- 50 pre-dating mandatory biodiversity net gain (these are subject to local policy which seeks to obtain at least no net loss).
- 39 temporary exemptions
- 9 outside scope of BNG



In total 45 planning applications were granted that required biodiversity net gain. Of these only 7 consented applications had progressed to the stage of having a biodiversity gain plan approved by 1st January 2026.

The approved biodiversity gain plans all involved only small areas of habitat, with a cumulative baseline area of 1.03ha. The losses of habitat including in the biodiversity gain plans were largely grassland and were made up mainly by vegetated gardens and individual urban trees.

The on-site gains were secured by the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement, rather than individual legal agreements (s106 agreement). With only 7 small cases so far, the requirement for off-site biodiversity was only 0.03 units.

As of 1st January 2026, there were a further 41 applications with biodiversity net gain requirement at various stages in the planning process between initial application and post-decision approval of the biodiversity gain plan.

In addition to the approved applications, there were also 26 applications which had been refused and 10 which had been withdrawn, returned or were invalid that would have had a biodiversity net gain requirement if they had progressed.



SECTION 4

Future Challenges and Opportunities

Section 4 - Future Challenges and Opportunities

There are some challenges ahead which will need to be overcome, and some future opportunities, arising from:

- Local Government reorganisation
- Changes in national Government legislation and policies
- Interaction of biodiversity and recreation
- House-building targets
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy and opportunities for enhancement at large scale

Local Government reorganisation

Government announcement of changes is expected in summer 2026 following further consultation, with new Combined Authorities expected to be operating by spring 2028. This will require Lancaster and other local authorities to work rapidly to integrate, requiring staff time in addition to the ongoing duties.

Once reorganisation is achieved this will offer opportunities for better integration of services and greater access to internal technical resources on plans and projects, including those that support biodiversity.

Changes in Government Legislation and Policies

The Planning and Infrastructure Act was given assent in 2025. The Act is intended to streamline planning processes and accelerate house-building. Among the wide range of measures included, it introduces Environmental Delivery Plans. These Environmental Delivery Plans are intended to facilitate development by enabling some compensation measures for biodiversity to be delivered at a strategic scale through the use of levies.

The first Environmental Delivery Plans will be for nutrient neutrality, to compensate for the cumulative impacts of new development on the nitrogen and phosphate inputs to rivers and estuaries. An Environmental Delivery Plan will be introduced in Cumbria, but will not include Lancaster district in the near future. Other Environmental Delivery Plans will replace the existing District Level Licensing scheme for great crested newts. Under the current scheme, where development leads to loss of habitat of the newts and replacement habitat cannot be incorporated in development, developers can opt to pay a levy which secures the creation or enhancement of ponds to support newt populations in other parts of Lancashire.

Depending on the outcome of the initial Environmental Delivery Plans and the evidence available to support other types, it is likely that additional ones will be introduced and some may apply in Lancaster or the Northwest more generally.

The Planning and Infrastructure Act also introduces changes to the current Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, raising existing thresholds for exemptions from Biodiversity Net Gain. This will require secondary legislation, and it is not clear when amendments are likely to apply.

The Government has proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, which is under consultation (at time of writing). This new draft NPPF separates policies for local plan-making from those for development management. It aims to make the NPPF more comprehensive, consistent and rules-based. There will be more emphasis on the role of national policy and on policy to deliver the Government's house-building agenda. As presented it will limit the ability of Councils to set higher local standards for biodiversity net gain, or energy efficiencies.

The Government had a consultation in 2025 on a land use Framework, which considered the multiple needs for land use in England and the importance of strategic planning and this may lead to further changes in Government policy in future.

Various changes in policy and legislation that will affect biodiversity are expected to come into effect during the current period of Local Plan review. These will require the planning departments to integrate the changes into local policy and procedures and to guide applicants on new measures as necessary.

Interaction of biodiversity and recreation

The Lancaster district has some outstanding natural resources, including the limestone landscape of Arnsdale and Silverdale National Landscape, the western end of the Bowland Fells National Landscape and above all Morecambe Bay, with its coastal and intertidal habitats and internationally important populations of wintering birds. The coast is a great scenic asset and hugely popular for recreation, but there is limited public awareness of the effects of human disturbance on the birds that feed on the rich intertidal areas. Natural England has recognised recreational disturbance as a factor



Figure 5 - Recreational dog walkers at Half Moon Bay near Heysham

affecting the migratory bird populations in the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA.

The coast provides recreational opportunities for residents in coastal settlements and for people from all over the district. Ambitious Government targets for housebuilding in the district will increase the population and so increase the use of the coast. In some areas extension of settlements may affect farmland which provides feeding or roosting opportunities for the birds of Morecambe Bay (functionally linked land). Tourism has led to growth of holiday camps in the coastal zone in recent years. In addition, the Eden project, is expected to provide a transformational boost to the local economy, with potentially around 500,000 visitors a year. This is likely to increase tourism development locally and with it the associated potential for recreational disturbance at Morecambe Bay.

Strategic action will be needed by Lancaster City Council and other stakeholders to increase public awareness of the need to share space with wildlife throughout the Morecambe Bay area and to increase the opportunities for access to natural greenspace within this district.

House-building targets

There is a growing need for good quality accessible local greenspace, both to meet existing needs and for the future areas for housebuilding. Although the Council can apply standards for provision of greenspace within new developments, it is only large-scale developments that are likely to be able to provide sufficiently extensive additional natural greenspace to meet recreational needs, especially for dog-walking away from the coast.

Piecemeal development with small and medium-sized sites will make it difficult to secure the gains of accessible natural greenspace needed and to ensure well-connected footpaths, cycleways and green corridors across multiple application sites. The requirement to provide sufficient land to meet the housing targets set by Government risks open space and biodiversity being reduced in developments in order to maximise dwelling units per area, however, Biodiversity Net Gain provides a counter-balance to reductions of habitats within developments. It incentivises developers to provide on-site biodiversity gain to avoid the cost of off-site compensation.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The targets for on-site biodiversity need to be deliverable and sustainable for the whole 30-year period and beyond. Feasibility checking of biodiversity gain proposals is essential. Over-estimate of future achievement risks development resulting in net loss rather than gain. Monitoring and enforcement of the biodiversity net gain requirements and the resources the Council will require to do this will be an ongoing challenge. The Council is still in the early stages of setting up procedures on this.

Where developers cannot provide sufficient net gain within a development they must purchase offsite biodiversity units from a Biodiversity Gain Site (habitat bank). Currently there are no habitat banks registered in the district and Council is not aware of any in preparation, except for the Council's own small scheme within Burrow Beck Solar Farm, which is expected to be registered in 2026.

Forthcoming changes to the Government requirements on biodiversity net gain bring some uncertainty into the developing habitat bank market, although it has developed well over the past two years. It is unclear how changes will affect investment in new habitat banks. Initial costs and land management efficiencies mean that most existing habitat banks are at a scale of 10s of hectares or more. Lancaster City Council would welcome suitable habitat bank proposals within the district, especially those which would contribute to implementation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy and opportunities for large scale enhancement

The adopted Local Nature Recovery Strategy maps the best opportunities to enhance and extend areas of value for biodiversity and improve networks of habitat through the district. These can inform habitat creation opportunities in new development or if new habitat banks are proposed.

Lancaster City Council is already working on enhancing biodiversity on areas of its own land where possible. Opportunities to deliver projects at landscape or catchment scale will need partnership-working with farmers and landowners, statutory authorities, local environmental organisations and others. The Council works collaboratively with a range of stakeholder groups at present and will continue with this in future to help deliver projects. Examples of opportunities include:

Middleton Nature Reserve and environs

There is a great opportunity for Lancaster City Council to contribute to local nature recovery at scale near Middleton on and around the former Trimpell industrial site.

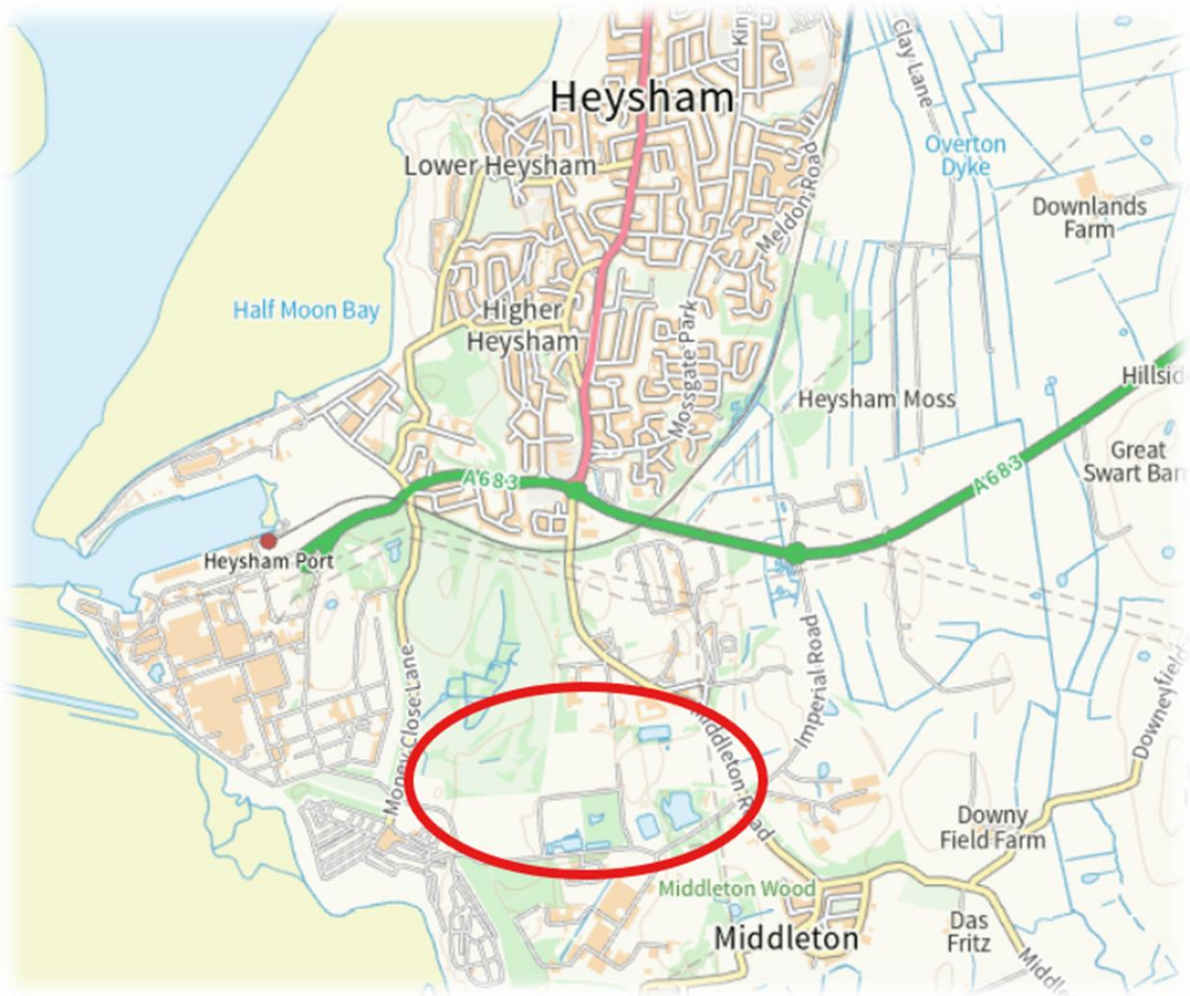


Figure 6 Map: © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey AC0000809397

This area is a unique asset in the district because it is:

- The largest area of semi-natural habitats in the district outside the National Landscapes and the intertidal areas
- Owned by Lancaster City Council and in part by the County Council
- Part of the strategic Heysham green crescent, an irregular swathe of near continuous biodiverse sites that extend from the coast south of Heysham around to the east and across the Bay Gateway to Heysham Moss SSSI. Part is already in the care of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust.
- There is the opportunity to consolidate an area as a formal Local Nature Reserve, with zoning to allow for safe public access to parts of the reserve, providing valuable scope for recreation combined with protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Offers opportunities to create a local visitor attraction, showing the progression from environment impacts to environmental benefits. It could show the changes

- from its original wartime use for aircraft fuel production and later chemical works to an area which has high biodiversity value and where the energy production in the local area is transitioning to renewable resources.

This will be a priority area for future action.

South Carnforth

There is a series of Biological Heritage Sites and a SSSI south of Carnforth.

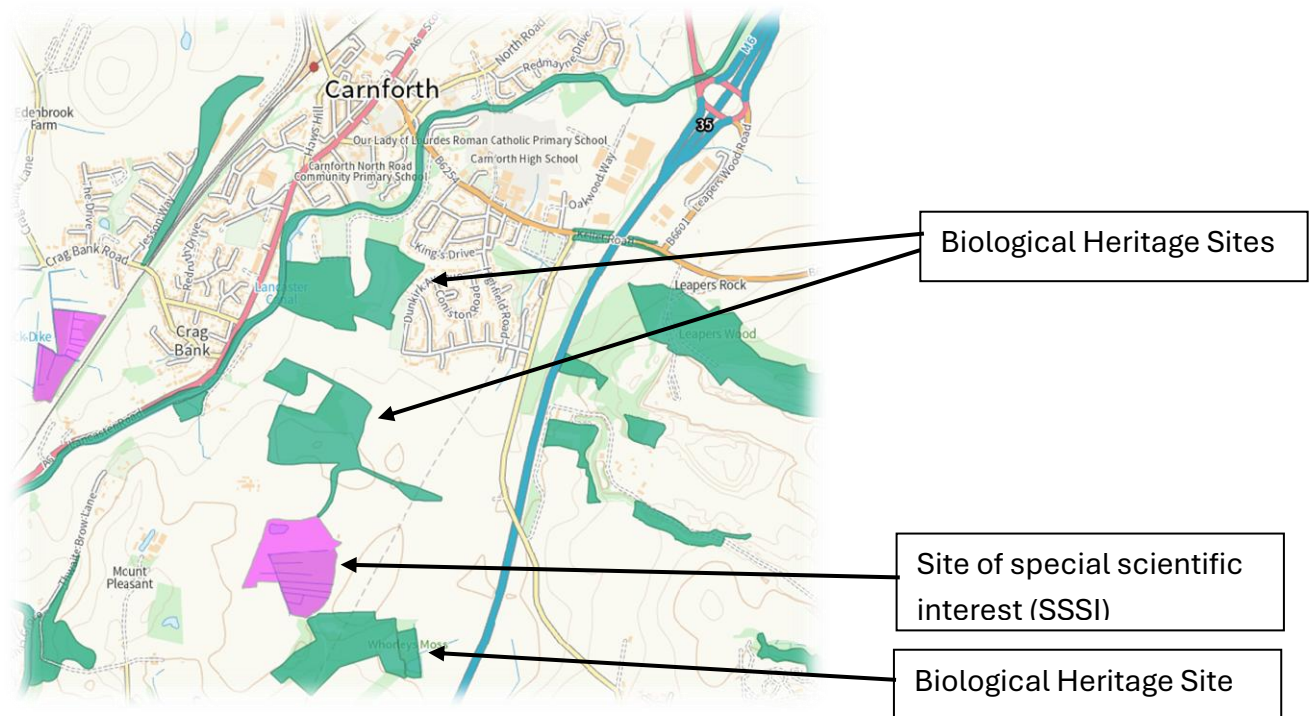


Figure 7 Map - © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey AC0000809397

Depending on site allocation and future development, there is potential to join these sites as part of a large Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. This could enhance opportunities for existing residents in Carnforth and those in new developments which are expected locally.

Functionally linked land and future wetland opportunities

With future climate change forecast to increase the risk of flooding in some parts of the district, there are areas that will not be suitable for housing development. Farming is likely to need to respond to increasing risks of flooding in future. Some opportunity areas are identified in the LNRS. These are areas where incorporating more wetland areas with lower input farming could provide habitat enhancement, better areas for the birds of Morecambe Bay and local compensation for areas of the coast subject to frequent recreational use. There may be scope for landowners to deliver this through existing agri-environment schemes, or by setting up habitat banks to help

developments meet at least some of their off-site biodiversity gain requirements within the district, and/or with additional funding mechanisms with partnering stakeholders in Lancashire.



End of Report





APPENDICES

Glossary & Appendix A, B, C



Appendices

Glossary of Terms

Appendix A Quantified Biodiversity Net Gain (separate spreadsheet)

Appendix B Biodiversity Action Plan – summary of actions and future actions

Appendix C Actions and projects – Actions and future actions undertaken by departments as part of ongoing work

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Biodiversity Duty	A requirement of the Environment Act 2021 for all public authorities in England to consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity and provide 5-yearly Biodiversity Duty Reports
Biological Heritage Site (BHS)	A Lancashire-wide designation that identifies valuable local habitats such as ancient woodland, species rich grassland and peat bogs. Many of these sites provide habitats for rare and threatened species of plants and animals
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	An approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand
National Landscape	A designated exceptional landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. These areas were formally referred to as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	These are protected sites that have been designated by Natural England in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act for their importance for biological features or geological value
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	These are protected areas for birds in the UK and are designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in the UK offshore area. SPAs, together with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), form the UK's national site network
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Local strategies that cover 42 areas of England, including Lancashire. The strategy developed with local stakeholders identifies existing areas of importance and maps potential nature recovery opportunities. The LNRS target actions in locations where they could provide the best environmental outcomes. The strategies will help to coordinate actions by local stakeholders for nature recovery and contribute to national efforts to reverse the decline of biodiversity

Appendix A - Quantified Biodiversity Net Gain

The text which follows is copied from a spreadsheet template provided by Defra for compilation of information on planning applications subject to the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. Spreadsheet version is available for ease of use.

Biodiversity duty: biodiversity net gain information

Lancaster City Council LPA

12 February 2024 to 8

[Percentage Net Gain required by the LPA]

January 2026

10%

Table of Contents

This spreadsheet contains 8 worksheets.

Worksheet 1 covers information about the number of eligible planning permissions granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring biodiversity net gain

Worksheet 2 covers the overall expected gains and losses from biodiversity gain plans approved during the reporting period

Worksheet 3 covers the number of biodiversity gain plans approved during the reporting period that impact irreplaceable habitat

Worksheet 4 covers the number of biodiversity gain sites and biodiversity units delivered

Worksheet 5 covers a summary of whether approved development is meeting its monitoring requirements

Worksheet 6 covers the composition of gains split by area habitat type

Worksheet 7 covers the composition of gains split by hedgerow and line of trees type

Worksheet 8 covers the composition of gains split by watercourse type

Worksheet 1

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

This information can be manually collected from approved biodiversity gain plans or statutory metrics if you are not using a software package

This worksheet contains one table.

This is Table 1.

ID	Consented applications requiring net gains	Number	Proportion (%)
A	Total number of planning permissions granted that require biodiversity net gain in the reporting period	45	Not applicable
B	Total number of planning permissions granted in the reporting period where an exemption to the biodiversity net gain condition applies	843	Not applicable
C	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period	7	Not applicable
D	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through on-site units only	6	85.71

E	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through off-site units only	1	14.29
F	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through statutory credits only	0	0.00
G	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site and off-site units	0	0.00
H	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site units and statutory credits	0	0.00
I	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of off-site units and statutory credits	0	0.00
J	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site, off-site units and statutory credits	0	0.00

Worksheet 2

Biodiversity duty: biodiversity net gain information

Lancaster City Council LPA

12 February 2024 to 8

[Percentage Net Gain required by the LPA]

January 2026

10%

worksheet 3

Impact on Irreplaceable Habitat

This worksheet contains one table.

This is Table 3

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

Worksheet 4

Location of off-site biodiversity units

This worksheet contains one table.

This is Table 4

ID	Location of off-site biodiversity units	Total	Proportion (%)
A	Number of off-site biodiversity units located inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site	0.03	100.00
B	Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside LPA or NCA of impact site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA	0.00	0.00

C	Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside of LPA or NCA of impact site and neighbouring LPA or NCA	0.00	0.00
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Worksheet 5

Results of monitoring biodiversity gains

This worksheet contains two tables.

This is Table 5

ID	Results of monitoring biodiversity gains where the LPA is part of the legal agreement	Total	Proportion (%)
A	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans including the delivery of 'significant' on-site gains	0	0.00
B	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements and habitat delivery expectations for 'significant' on-site gains		
C	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements but not meeting habitat delivery expectations for 'significant' on-site gains		
D	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are failing to meet monitoring requirements for 'significant' on-site gains		
E	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans where the status of monitoring requirements is unknown for 'significant' on-site gains		

F	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans including the delivery of offsite gains, where the LPA are responsible for monitoring.		
G	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements and habitat delivery expectations for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring		
H	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements but not meeting habitat delivery expectations for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring		
I	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are failing to meet monitoring requirements for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring		
J	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans where the status of monitoring requirements is unknown for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring		

ID	Enforcement actions taken in the reporting period	Total	Proportion (%)
L	Number of enforcement actions taken during the reporting period associated with Biodiversity Net Gain policy	0	0.00

ID	Tracking monitoring of biodiversity gains	Free Text	
K	<p>Please describe how you have collected information on monitoring (e.g., use of digital software to collect and analyse monitoring data/ manual checking of monitoring reports/ internal monitoring system etc.</p>	<p>The Council is using digital software (Mycelia) as a BNG tool and expects to use this for collecting, checking and reporting on monitoring in future.</p>	

areas

This worksheet contains one table.

This is Table 6

ID	Habitat Type - Area	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total hectares at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total hectares post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in hectares
A	Cropland	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B	Grassland	1.04	0.51	0.83	0.40	-0.21	-0.11
C	Heathland and shrub	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
D	Lakes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
E	Sparsely vegetated land	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.00
F	Urban	0.00	0.48	0.02	0.59	0.02	0.11
G	Wetland	0.58	0.04	0.65	0.04	0.07	0.00
H	Woodland and forest	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
I	Intertidal sediment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
J	Coastal saltmarsh	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
K	Rocky shore	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
L	Coastal lagoons	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
M	Intertidal hard structures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	Watercourse footprint	Not applicable	0.00	Not applicable	0.00	Not applicable	0.00

O	Individual trees	0.00	0.00	0.53	0.18	0.53	0.18
Total		1.64	1.03	2.04	1.21	0.40	0.17

hedgerows and lines of trees

This worksheet contains one table.

This is Table 7

ID	Habitat type - hedgerows and lines of trees	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total kilometres at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total kilometres post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in kilometres
A	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
C	Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
D	Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
E	Species-rich native hedgerow	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
G	Native hedgerow with trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

H	Ecologically valuable line of trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
I	Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
J	Native hedgerow	0.04	0.01	0.24	0.07	0.20	0.06
K	Line of trees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
L	Line of trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
M	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	Total	0.06	0.02	0.25	0.08	0.19	0.06

watercourses

This worksheet contains one table.

This is Table 8

ID	Habitat type - watercourse	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total kilometres at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total kilometres post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in kilometres
A	Priority habitat	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B	Other rivers and streams	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
C	Ditches	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
D	Canals	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
E	Culvert	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve biodiversity evidence base

Action No	Action required	Progress (up to Jan 2026)	Future Actions (post Jan 26)
Action 1.1	Work with relevant partners to establish a more robust database of the biodiversity of the district.	New software now captures the BNG data that comes through the planning system.	Work with LERN to see whether there is more scope to get biodiversity data produced for planning applications into the county records system.

Action 1.2	Develop, launch, and maintain interactive mapping to display biodiversity data for the district.	None	Require biodiversity gain plans to submit GIS compatible mapping to enable habitat losses and gains to be shown spatially within the district, at least for any with a s106 agreement and all of them where possible.
Action 1.3	Develop internal monitoring system to support the delivery of BNG across the district, ensuring its delivery and condition can be monitored over 30 years. Identify mechanism for enforcement where delivery and maintenance are not occurring as agreed.	New software now captures all BNG data that comes through the planning system.	Continue to assess the effectiveness of Mycelia software in monitoring BNG, including making recommendations for future software updates where necessary. Where a s106 agreement is made to secure significant on-site BNG this will include requirements on applicants to provide future monitoring evidence of progress to BNG targets and corrective actions through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. There will be a fee component for staff overseeing of monitoring, based on risks to delivery of target habitats. For cases where BNG is only secured by condition there are no fees payable for future monitoring and enforcement of BNG and this is likely to limit the ability of Council to take enforcement action on BNG, especially in minor cases, unless an alternative mechanism is found.

Action 1.4	Develop Council wide programme to monitor the delivery of actions agreed within this first consideration of the Council's Biodiversity Duty.	Service wide inputs on actions undertaken for reporting Biodiversity Duty 2026	Improve internal method of monitoring which spans the entire Council, likely to be through actions planned and monitored through the Service Business Plans.
Action 6.6	Identify monitoring and enforcement protocol to ensure the delivery of BNG in the planning system.	New software includes a monitoring and prompting function where a habitat management and monitoring plan includes pre-determined years for reporting.	Implement monitoring and enforcement.
Action 10.2	Utilise Natural England Functionally Linked Land mapping to identify where land outside designated sites is used for protected species.	Wintering bird surveys in strategic areas carried out in winter 2024-2025. District-wide deskbased study of potential functionally linked land carried out in 2025 for evidence to support Local Plan development.	FLL and public access included as factors in 2026 SHELAA appraisal of potential sites for allocation for development.
Action 11.1	Monitor delivery of the Grassland Management Strategy assessing biodiversity value of the site against baseline studies.	GMS is monitored via GIS mapping, however this does not include any specific biodiversity assessment.	Undertake renewed biodiversity assessments of sites in enhanced management and compare to 2019 baseline data.
Action 12.2	Review Tree Protection Orders within the District	None	Appoint additional tree officer or commission TPO review. Digitised survey of tree assets in public realm started in 2025 with appointment of a tree surveyor, ongoing.

Action 17.1	Monitor and Report on Delivery of the One Millions Tree project.	Project included in Council GIS layers. Public realm record trees planted on Council land.	Ongoing. When digital mapping of BNG is available it will be possible to identify Individual Trees planted within public open space in developments, also new woodland (but not trees within woodland).
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OBJECTIVE 2 : Work with key partners to support biodiversity delivery across the district

Action No	Action required	Progress up to Jan 2026	Future Actions (post Jan 26)
Action 2.1	Support the County Council in the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery strategy ensuring that local priorities are identified.	The LNRS was supported by officers providing data and review of objectives. The adopted Lancashire LNRS was published 16th January 2026.	Ongoing engagement with LNRS delivery through existing and new stakeholder partnerships.
Action 2.2	Actively engage with Lancashire County Council to identify areas of strategic significance in the district for inclusion within the LNRS	LNRS completed.	Ongoing engagement with LNRS delivery through existing and new stakeholder partnerships.

Action 3.1	Continue to monitor the announcement of any future Protected Site or Species Conservation Strategies that are relevant to Lancaster City Council, or the LNRS.	Involvement with the Lancashire Local Nature Partnership allows officers insight into other strategies and site designations. Updates to Biological Heritage Sites 2025 included in Council GIS and used when assessing planning applications.	Ensure all relevant changes are communicated to relevant staff, in planning services and others.
Actions 4.1 & 10.8	Continue membership on the new District Licensing Steering Group representing the City Council and implementing actions emerging from the Steering Group.	Mainly involved via the Lancashire Local Nature Partnership.	Ongoing engagement with Natural England on introduction of Environmental Delivery Plans for great crested newt. Ensure development management kept informed of any changes to DLL and/or EDPs that may affect planning applications.
Action 10.9	Explore with Natural England and the Northwest Wildlife Trusts Living Seas Team opportunities for marine net gain.	None	Engage with stakeholder organisations regarding the Our Future Coast project. Keep informed about new or updated marine management plan and any changes in application of biodiversity net gain to marine environment.
Action 10.10	Work closely with Lancashire LNP moving forward.	Biodiversity officer is an active member	Continue to ensure an active presence is maintained within the group
Action 10.11	Explore establishing a Lancaster District LNP Steering Group moving forward that includes LNP and other key stakeholders.	None	

Action 10.12	Help support and facilitate the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Network	Ongoing BNG metric work now takes account of sites identified as opportunities in the adopted LNRS.	Integrate the LNRS network into Local Plan through policy and updates of mapping of green and blue infrastructure where appropriate.
Action 5.1	Work with the County Council to prepare the Lancashire 2050 strategy ensuring that biodiversity considerations are prioritised.	None	State of Nature Report for Lancashire will be prepared by LERN in 2026 - support with data where possible. Include findings in Local Plan evidence.
Action 12.3	Support Lancashire County Council in their review of ancient tree cover through the preparation of the LNRS.	LNRS was supported by officers and was adopted in early 2026	Continue to implement policy to avoid loss of ancient and veteran trees. Develop procedure to ensure trees identified as ancient or veteran are recorded, mapped and protected.
Action 12.4	Engage with the county council's treescapes team, to encourage more tree planting in the district	The treescapes team are primarily looking for council-owned sites and can aid with securing grant funding for tree planting, however they cannot deliver the works themselves. Ongoing work on tree-planting by Council public realm staff and volunteers.	Ensure that sites for tree planting are assessed for synergies and conflicts with other objectives prior to planting, e.g. avoid planting in areas with grassland of biodiversity value.
Action 16.1	Support National Landscape teams in production of reviewed Management Plans.	Officers provided detailed feedback on the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Management plan in 2025 and will complete a response to the Forest of Bowland plan early in 2026.	Support the adoption of these two plans and continue with regular engagement in management of the two National Landscapes.

Action 16.2	Consider how the Council can help implement Management Plans taking account of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.	The Council contributes to funding of the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape management, supporting staff, including for management of two sites owned by Lancaster City Council - on going, together with funding from other sources.	Ongoing
Action 16.3	Support National Landscape teams in meeting targets set out in the Environment Act.	The NL management plans include targets and actions.	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3 : Deliver measurable increase in biodiversity across the district

Action No.	Action required	Progress up to Jan 2026	Future Actions (post Jan 26)
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<p>Actions 6.1 & 9.4</p>	<p>Explore the preparation of a local off-site BNG register at either a local or county level.</p>	<p>None - Online tools have begun to appear which fill this gap nationally and provide details of the nationally registered biodiversity gain sites.</p>	<p>Keep up to date regarding online tools and direct developers towards potential sources of information when required.</p>
<p>Action 6.2</p>	<p>Investigate opportunities for BNG delivery on Council owned land.</p>	<p>Feasibility study carried out on 13 sites (Middlemarch, autumn 2023-2024). Pilot site identified at Middleton, but too small to be viable as a stand-alone habitat bank. The potential to deliver BNG is expected to be incorporated into a planning application area to offset habitat losses from a high diversity brownfield site.</p> <p>Work is in underway to set up a habitat bank on Council-owed land within the Burrow Beck Solar Farm. This has to be legally secured as a biodiversity gain site. An arrangement has been made, in principle, with another local planning authority for reciprocal legal agreements.</p>	<p>Complete preparations for habitat bank at Burrow Beck solar site</p> <p>Investigate additional opportunities for delivery of further habitat banks on land owned or acquired by the Council, alone or in conjunction with renewable energy projects.</p>

<p>Actions 6.3 & 9.2</p>	<p>Explore the potential to deliver BNG above mandatory 10% in the next Local Plan.</p>	<p>Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) following the draft NPPF in December 2025 may not allow local authorities to set higher targets unless there are specific local needs. Outcome awaited.</p>	<p>Await the new NPPF. Follow experience of other local authorities through the forum of the Planning Advisory Service. Assess feasibility of delivering above 10% BNG within the plan once adopted, taking into account other tools and opportunities to benefit biodiversity through Open Space requirements and standards for access to natural greenspace, urban greening factors for developments and ecosystem services needs including the national standards for Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) 2025.</p>
<p>Action 9.1</p>	<p>Prepare and adopt a new Local Plan which includes policies relating to BNG, habitat and species protection and enhancement.</p>	<p>The Local Plan Review will commence in 2026</p>	<p>Ensure that measures that include stronger protections for wildlife, ecology and biodiversity within the local plan are incorporated through the planning process.</p>
<p>Action 9.3</p>	<p>Explore the need for the preparation of additional BNG guidance.</p>	<p>As part of the first consideration report basic guidance on BNG has been provided, as well as updates to the planning section of the website and training sessions delivered specifically to both the DM team and Council members.</p>	<p>Monitor the Government position on BNG and prepare guidance when any changes occur.</p>
<p>Action 9.5</p>	<p>Implement measures emerging from the Habitat Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Work to end of 2025 has focused on getting up-to-date information on key topics, including wintering bird survey and visitor survey.</p>	

<p>Actions 9.6 & 10.3</p>	<p>Explore the preparation of additional guidance on recreational pressure. This will be prepared in partnership with Natural England and other Morecambe Bay authorities. The potential work programme for this is currently under investigation.</p>		
<p>Action 10.1</p>	<p>Utilise Natural England Habitat Network Mapping data to highlight 'network enhancement zones' and 'network expansion zones' which is based upon the Priority Habitat Index, to extend and enhance the existing GBI network from an ecological perspective.</p>	<p>This has been superseded by the work on habitat network undertaken for the production of the LNRS.</p>	<p>Future actions will focus on updating the existing green and blue network for the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which supports the Local Plan. Implementing local plan in development management to avoid loss or severance of strategic green and blue network where this cannot be mitigated by equivalent functional connectivity in the vicinity. Take opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value and extent of green and blue infrastructure on Council land and wherever this can be included in association with developments.</p>
<p>Action 10.4</p>	<p>Better consider the ecological value that all green spaces could potentially provide (not just those that are formally designated) – all have an important role to play in providing stepping stones and corridors between these core areas and so this should be a key consideration when designing the layout of development proposals.</p>	<p>Biodiversity officer provides regular comments on development proposals and assesses all green space therein.</p>	<p>Provide more detailed training and guidance to DM team to ensure a high level of awareness of green space and ecology.</p>

Action 10.5	Map how development allocations fit in with the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure network to demonstrate how development could contribute towards facilitating wildlife corridors or stepping stones for habitat.	None	Ensure that new allocations that form part of the plan review include consideration of the Green and Blue Infrastructure network.
Action 10.6	Quantify losses and gains in biodiversity so that it is possible to monitor any changes effectively.	New software now captures BNG data that comes through the planning system	Request the support team at Mycelia to update the reporting function to better facilitate this
Action 10.7	Where appropriate seek opportunities for rewilding to restore habitats and facilitate nature recovery	Council land at Half Moon Bay is now being managed for biodiversity by the Memorial Forest charity Life for Life.	Seek opportunities for additional delivery of a habitat bank or for rewilding as Council initiative or in partnership with other organisations
Action 11.2	Identify opportunities for new wildflower meadows across the District.	Ongoing work by staff and with our volunteers for wildflower enhancement in sites on Council-owned land.	Ongoing work on Council land. Encourage use of wildflowers in development where location and scale make it feasible to manage.
Action 11.3	Explore opportunities for enhancements to be part of a Council habitat bank for BNG.	The preparation of a Council-owned habitat bank is underway.	Opportunities on other Council owned sites are generally limited by the small area and/or existing constraints including recreational uses, which will limit their viability as individual biodiversity gain sites. Investigate the possibility of combining individual sites into one management unit as a habitat bank. Explore the potential to acquire additional land for the delivery of another habitat bank to meet local needs through purchase or agreement.

OBJECTIVE 4: Embed Biodiversity in Leadership and Decision Making

Action No	Action required	Progress up to Jan 2026	Future Actions (post Jan 26)
Action 6.8	Promote projects delivered by the Council relating to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	The UGGLE Lane rejuvenation project was promoted widely and has led to a new Friends group which runs communal composting on site.	Increase biodiversity items in communications strategy.
Action 6.10	Utilise opportunities to link into promotional work being undertaken by the Climate Change Hub to raise awareness of the ecological emergency.	The ecological emergency is now included in almost every instance when speaking about the climate emergency and vice versa The Climate and Nature Strategy is an excellent example of this	Create a Biodiversity Hub similar to the operations of the Climate Hub with champions for biodiversity within different departments and with wide cascade to staff.
Action 12.1	The Council to update its Tree Policy in due course.	None	Incorporate an updated tree policy into the local plan review. Investigate our internal policies for management of our own trees and assess whether improvements are warranted.
Action 13.1	Update the Procurement Strategy to include reference to the Ecological Emergency.		

Action 13.2	Include actions within the Procurement Strategy which ensure opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the district are considered. This could be through procuring goods, works and services that are sustainably sourced; and selecting suppliers that use environmentally friendly production methods and materials that are not harmful to the environment or biodiversity.	The Council has taken actions towards sustainability through its Climate action agenda, e.g. avoiding single use plastics such as bottled water and plastic cups at events.	Include actions and track implementation within the Services Business Plans
Action 14.1	Include a requirement to consider the impacts of a decision on biodiversity within the reporting structure of the Council	None	Create new decision-making tool to span council operations which takes account of not only biodiversity, but also related concerns such as climate. Ensure that prior to any decision to sell, let or develop Council land the existing value of the land for biodiversity is assessed together with its potential for enhancement and nature recovery and that this is taken into account in decision-making.
Action 15.1	Ensure that opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity are also identified through the future Climate Change Action Plan	The plan has since been changed to the: 'Climate and Nature Strategy' in order to better incorporate biodiversity	Complete and publish the Climate and Nature strategy
Action 15.2	Officers with biodiversity interests also to attend Climate Change Hub, and officers with climate interests also to attend biodiversity hub	None	Establish the biodiversity hub

Action 15.3	Ensure that climate resilience is considered when implementing any planting schemes or nature enhancements	None	Identify appropriate guidance on climate sensitive planting schemes and provide training/guidance to grounds teams and developers
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OBJECTIVE 5: Promote Education and Awareness

Action No	Action required	Progress up to Jan 2026	Future Actions (post Jan 26)
Action 6.4	Develop internal guidance to support BNG delivery in planning decisions.	Biodiversity officer supports Development Management on BNG, advised on software to facilitate efficient operation of BNG. Provides briefing on BNG issues and review of applications.	Continue current action, through Biodiversity Hub. Continue participation in PAS BNG forum.
Action 6.5	Develop external guidance to support applicants in delivering BNG when submitting a planning application.	Biodiversity Net Gain Planning Advice ArcGIS storyboard published, Available May 2024. Expand/revise using best practice material from other LPAs and mesh with planning validation guidance.	Develop Council fee structure for BNG agreements and monitoring.
Actions 7.1 & 8.3	Identify biodiversity champions across each service.	Biodiversity Duty contributors have been identified. These and others will be encouraged to share ideas and experiences through the biodiversity hub.	No change to current action

Actions 7.2 & 8.4	Establish a biodiversity hub to exchange ideas and promote best practice across all services of the Council.	None	Due to start in 2026.
Actions 7.3 & 8.2	Ensure Biodiversity continues to be specifically referenced in a Member Portfolio.	ongoing	ongoing and ensure this continues during local government reorganisation process
Action 8.1	Increase awareness of the declared Ecological Emergency both internally and externally.	The climate emergency is now referenced frequently during all climate or biodiversity related events, workshops, or workstreams	Develop a communications strategy for biodiversity
Action 8.6	Develop Officer and Member training on the Ecological Emergency.	Biodiversity net gain training has been supplied to both the DM team and members	Provide regular training update opportunities, present basic ecology training at corporate induction to help new staff recognise how the work of their department interacts with biodiversity
Action 8.7	Utilise opportunities to link into promotional work being undertaken by the Climate Change Hub to raise awareness of the Ecological Emergency.	Participated in Soils Policy Workshop, research and development project with Lancaster University, to develop soils policy to conserve carbon in soils and reduce impacts on biodiversity from badly managed soils. Engaged with a diverse group of stakeholders.	Incorporate stronger soils policy in the Local Plan and implement this through development management.
Action 15.4	Increase awareness of the biodiversity emergency declaration both internally and externally to the same level of awareness achieved for the climate emergency.		

Action 15.5	Increase awareness internally of the predicted impacts of the climate emergency on the environment	Have introduced climate awareness into the corporate induction training, including aspects on its impact on the environment	
Actions 8.5 & 15.6	Develop a Biodiversity Story Board similar to the Council's Climate Change Story Board to enhance awareness of the biodiversity emergency declaration and ensure that future actions and strategies are easily accessible to the public to participate in and monitor.	Story Board was completed.	Review and update

OBJECTIVE 6: Promote and support projects that deliver enhancements in Biodiversity

Action No	Action required	Progress up to Jan 2026	Future Actions (post Jan 26)
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Action 8.8	Promote projects delivered by the Council relating to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	The Uggle Lane rejuvenation project was promoted widely and there's now a friend's group set up which runs the communal composting on site	Create and implement comms strategy for biodiversity
Action 17.2	Undertake another publicity drive to identify opportunities for further planting as part of the Council's Million Trees project	None	No change to current action
Action 17.3	Identify opportunities to work with local schools to identify opportunities for further tree planting as part of the Million Trees project.	None	No change to current action
Action 17.4	Promote the dual benefits of the Million Trees project in relation to both the climate emergency declaration and the ecological emergency declaration.	None	No change to current action
Action 18.1	Investigate opportunities for further Life for Life projects across the District.	A new site at Half Moon Bay was opened in 2025 and is being managed for biodiversity. Several sites are currently being investigated for future memorial forests	No change to current action

Actions 18.2 & 19.2	Investigate BNG opportunities to sell units from new habitat creation.	It has been established that the Council has internal demand for BNG units Consent has been gained internally for the creation of a habitat bank and work is underway to get a site formally registered.	Consider the potential to purchase land for the purpose of creation of a habitat bank.
Action: 19.1	Investigate opportunities to work with the local community in creating and managing new habitats.		
Action 19.3	Investigate the designation of Hermitage Field as a Local Nature Reserve.	None	No change to current action
Action 19.4	Investigate the formal designation of land at Middleton nature reserve and surrounding area as a Local Nature Reserve.	NEW ACTION	NEW ACTION
Action 20.1	Promote the enhancement of biodiversity across the District's allotments through the promotion of wildlife friendly planting, the creation of wildlife corners and exploring approaches to restricting the use of pesticides and herbicides, helping to support biodiversity and the delivery of pesticide and herbicide free food.	Allotment review published by Food Futures.	Assess rules and guidance for all council-owned allotments. The Council is currently working with the Environment Agency and United Utilities on the potential to include SUDs features within allotments at Cork Road, to reduce the rate of runoff into Burrow Beck, reduce flood risks and incorporate features to benefit biodiversity in the allotments.

Appendix C - Actions and Projects

Below is a list of actions undertaken within the reporting period up to Jan 2026 by the Lancaster City Council. Note that these actions are not the same as the ones outlined within the official Action Plan. They are instead linked to other council activities such as ongoing maintenance and improvement of the public realm, special projects, flood alleviation schemes and more. Where actions in the below table directly relate to those within the Action Plan, the relevant reference has been included in the SITE / AREA column.

SITE / AREA	ACTIONS DELIVERED	BENEFIT TYPE
Manor Crescent	1,821 plug plants – planted in October 2024 850 plugs + wildflower seed June 2025	Wildflower meadow enhancement; pollinator habitat
Hala Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	1,000 wetland plug plants planted Spring 2024 alongside the removal of balsam at the same time	Wetland restoration; invasive species control
The Roods & Croftlands, Warton	Plug planting sessions with volunteers (2024-25) Orchard trees (2024-25) Hedging (dogwood, cherry, birch, rowan, hazel) (2024-25)	Habitat connectivity; community engagement; woodland & hedgerow creation
Alexandra Park, West End Area	Sustainable planting schemes 2024 implemented -March 2025– September Wildflower sowing between September 2024-March 2025	Pollinator habitat; sustainable planting
More Music West End Area.	Sustainable planting scheme September 2024-March 2025	Pollinator and visual enhancement
Uggle Lane Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	85,358 native bulbs planted October 2024; New Friends group created to support community composting project wildflower seeds (2026 planned)	Large-scale bulb habitat creation; community partnership; soil improvement
Brantwood	750 wildflower plugs and seeds sown with volunteers and added since January 2024 including foxgloves, red clover, oxeye daisy, great burnet, woodruff, yarrow, red campion. Hedge + woodland seed mix added November 2025	Meadow & woodland creation; pollinator support

Greaves Park	New wildflower meadow 12 orchard trees Additional hedging bulb planting - November 2025 bug hotel introduced November 2025	Pollinator habitat; orchard expansion; habitat diversification
Dorrington Wood Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	Hedge planting	Woodland-edge habitat
Happy Mount Park	Sensory garden created 2024-25 Rose garden; Japanese garden planting – January 2024 Tree planting – January 2024; Two wildflower meadows created - 2024-25 10 Bird Boxes installed - June 2025 Coral Fungi seen for first time in October 2025	Multi-habitat creation; pollinator and sensory benefits
Regent Park	Bug house created with schools - 2024- 25 1 bird box installed 2025 Friends' Garden with pollinator plants – 2024-25 Annual meadow sowing – 2024-25	Education Pollinator planting Habitat maintenance
Miss Whalley's Field – Orchard Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	800 fruit trees planted 2024-25 Soil improvement Removal of weed mats New raised beds 2025-26 Understory planting 2025-26	Orchard restoration Soil biodiversity Food-bearing habitat
Miss Whalley's Field – Meadow	3,600 plugs planted 2025-26 annual cut-and-collect; species-rich grassland	Meadow restoration Orchid conservation Pollinator support
Miss Whalley's Field – Willow & Woodland	Willow coppicing Autumn 2024 used as dead hedges to encourage wildlife habitat. Bramble/ivy removal Autumn 2024	Woodland regeneration; refuge habitat; invasive species reduction
Lune Bank Gardens	New hawthorn hedging	Hedgerow habitat creation
Sunny Slopes Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	600 plugs planted in 2024 suitable for coastal areas and locally forged seeds donated. Additional wildflower seed added on a yearly basis – resown in 2025	Coastal meadow enhancement

Winchester Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	Woodland work with Friends Group to improve the woodland future wildflower meadow & bulb planting (2026) Plants incorporate to improve wetland/bog garden to attract wildlife such as dragon flies. Frogs, toads, bees and butterflies.	Woodland improvement; wetland habitat creation
Ryelands Park	Bulb planting 2025-26 herb garden 2024-25 Friends' garden 2024-25 bird seed farm planting 2024-25 9 cherry trees (2026) 15 Bird boxes installed 2025	Pollinator & bird habitat; food plants
Clay Pitts	Raised beds; tree planting; meadow creation; hedgerow whips 2024-25 and 2025-26	Mixed habitat creation; community partnership
Scotch Quarry	3 sunken beds planned for 2026	Habitat diversification
Storey Gardens	Composting using council woodchip – continuous	Sustainable land management
Heysham Village	Annual and perennial wildflower sowing – continuous	Meadow maintenance
Midland Wildflower Area	Annual sowing with perennial seeds - continuous	Meadow maintenance
Delamere Avenue	Annual/perennial wildflower sowing - continuous	Pollinator meadow
Arkholme Close	Annual plug planting - continuous	Pollinator support
Venus and Cupid	Wildflower Plug planting 2025-26	Meadow enhancement
Arnside & Silverdale	Habitat preparation for National Landscape planting	Landscape-scale collaboration
Lancaster Museum	Perennial & spring bulb planting in planters	Urban pollinator habitat
Marsh Community Centre	Herb planting and bulb planting with volunteers	Community food & pollinator plants
Quay Boxes (George & Dragon)	Herb replanting	Urban pollinator habitat
Torrisholme Triangle Action 15.3 – Climate resilience	Wildflower seeding replacing annual bedding	Reduced maintenance + pollinator habitat

Sir Simons Arcade Planter	Perennial planting	Sustainable urban planting
Sibsey Street	Wildflower bed re-seeding	Pollinator meadow
Captains Row	Wildflower area – continuous maintenance	Meadow creation
Newton	Wildflower area – continuous maintenance	Pollinator habitat
Lancaster Castle	Shrubs, bulbs, perennial planting – continuous maintenance	High-value pollinator site
Hermitage Field Community Meadows	6,800 plugs since 2024 (18,000 total since 2021) Seeded with brush harvested seed and barn sweeping from species rich hay and Coronation Meadow material 2024-25	Large-scale meadow creation; genetic diversity
Fenham Carr Meadow	600 donated plugs 2024-25 Seed from Hermitage Field donated 2024-25 / 2025-26	Meadow enhancement
Freemans Wood Meadow	750 plugs + seed including yellow rattle and eyebright 2024-25	Meadow creation
Hard Knott Rise	Managed using ecological survey; seeds only from site	Ecologically sensitive management
Kellet Land & Caton Road Verges	Sympathetic cutting regime site seed + yellow rattle added 2024-25/2025 - 26	Species-rich verge management
Keys Site (Ovangle Road)	Managed sympathetically without added seed	Protection of naturally rich habitat
Morecambe Promenade / Beaches	Drone Policy to include stricter controls over Morecambe Bay, including an assessment and conditions agreed before drone usage.	Reduce disturbance to birds on a SSSI site.
Hest Bank & Jenny Brown's Point Coastlines	Natural features installed under the Our Future Coast project to enhance nature and protect saltmarsh vegetation	Preventing coastal erosion and loss of intertidal ecological communities

Newton Beck	Nature-based flood protection installed	Improved health to watercourses, introduction of new habitats
Claver Hill	Nature-based flood protection installed	Improved health to watercourses, introduction of new habitats
Whitely Beck	Nature-based flood protection installed	Improved health to watercourses, introduction of new habitats
Morecambe Promenade	Working in partnership to deliver the Eden Morecambe project	Local education on biodiversity
District-wide	Launched the Community Wings project in partnership with other organisations	Pollinator-friendly cities
Internal to council	Prepared and adopted the Biodiversity Action Plan	Policy
Internal to council	Employed a biodiversity officer	Policy & wider support
Internal to council	Provided in-house training to DM officer on BNG	Training and education
Internal to council	In-house planning assessments of both minor and major applications with regard to biodiversity	Planning
Internal to council	Undertaken a habitat bank feasibility study for council-owned sites	Forward planning, BNG
Burrow Beck Solar Farm	Delivering above the required BNG units on council development with a view to using the excess as a habitat bank	Meadow, wildflowers, cost savings, BNG
Wider Lancashire Area	Contributed to the development of the LNRS through steering group and consultations	Policy

Lancaster, Wyre and Westmoorland & Furness Councils	Formed a partnership group to commission a survey of current visitor usage of the coast around Morecambe Bay	Data collection
Half Moon Bay	Opened a memorial forest in partnership with the charity Life for Life at Half Moon Bay in Heysham. Project will include tree planting, wildflower meadow establishment, and enhancement of neighbouring woodland	Woodland wildflower meadow, enhancement, woodland creation, public amenity
Arnsdale and Silverdale National Landscape	The national landscapes team have produced a nature-friendly management plan to help enhance local biodiversity. Currently pending final adoption.	Placemaking, biodiversity enhancement, land management practices
Lancaster Parks	Bird box making event was hosted in conjunction with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Birds, education
Lancaster Parks	Bat box making event was hosted in conjunction with Lancashire Wildlife trust and Lancaster Bat Group – bat boxes to go up in late winter 25/26	Bats, education
Lancaster Parks	Earwig hotel making events (two events) were hosted by the Lancaster City Council	Invertebrates, education
Internal to council	Provided in-house training on wildflower grassland management to public realm team	Wildflowers, grassland, public amenity
Local Plan	Attended Lancaster District Greenspaces Network meetings. Engaged with community group in a Call for local Greenspaces to inform the Local Plan	Engagement, policy, public amenity
Williamson Park	New requirement for all events undertaken to be sensitive to the disturbance lighting can cause to nesting birds and bats	Protection of wildlife within public spaces

FUTURE ACTIONS

Below is a list of actions due to be undertaken within the next reporting period up to Jan 2031 by the Lancaster City Council. Note that these actions are not the same as the ones outlined within the official Action Plan. They are instead linked to other council activities such as ongoing maintenance and improvement of the public realm, special projects, flood alleviation schemes and more.

FUTURE ACTION	SITE(S)	BENEFIT	TARGET DATE
Create/ new wildflower meadows (Action 11.2)	Winchester Sibsey St, Captains Row, Newton Estate Happy Mount Park Uggle Lane planned for 2026	Increased pollinator habitat; extended nectar sources	Spring- Autumn 2027-2028
Expand existing meadows	Heysham Village, Midland Meadow, Delamere Ave Sunny Slopes Regent Park	Strengthen meadow resilience; improve species richness	Annually
Plant 9 cherry trees	Ryelands Park	Increase canopy cover and urban biodiversity	Jan 2026
Add further orchard trees and understory planting	Miss Whalley's Field	Diversify orchard habitat; improve soil & microclimate	Ongoing 2025-2027
Improve already established Orchards	Happy Mount Park Ryelands Park Regent Park	Diversify orchard habitat	2028-2030
New hedgerow creation	Clay Pitts, Warton Roods , Lune Bank	Habitat connectivity; bird nesting sites	Winter 2025
Woodland understory enhancement	Miss Whalley's Field, Winchester	Increase woodland biodiversity and structure	2026
New hedgerow creation	Happy Mount Park	Habitat Connectivity Bird nesting	February 2026
Install wetland/bog garden	Winchester	Support amphibians, dragonflies, wetland flora	2026
Pond improvements and drainage	Happy Mount Park	Support amphibians, dragon flies	February 2026-27

Improve damp meadow areas	Miss Whalley's Field	Enhance water-edge species and wetland resilience	2025–2026
Establish new Friends Group	Uggle Lane, additional urban parks	Increase volunteer stewardship & longterm care	2025–2026
Expand school biodiversity programmes	Regent Park, Brantwood, Ryelands	Education, citizen science, pollinator support	Ongoing
Continue large-scale willow coppicing & dead hedges	Miss Whalley's Field	Increase structural habitat; refuge for wildlife	Each winter
Invasive species control	Hala, Miss Whalley's Field	Protect native flora; improve habitat quality	Ongoing
Expand composting hubs using council green waste	Uggle Lane, Storey Gardens	Improved soil health; reduced waste	2025–2026
Increase mulch and soil improvement measures	Orchards & new planting areas	Better establishment and plant resilience	Ongoing
Replace more annual beds with perennial displays	Town Hall beds, Happy Mount parks entrances	Reduced carbon footprint; improved pollinator value	2025–2027
Expand herb planters for community use	Marsh Community Centre Quay planters	Food plants for people & pollinators	2026-27
Develop site-specific management plans	All major parks + key biodiversity sites	More consistent longterm ecological improvement	2025–2027
Increase use of locally sourced seed	Meadows and verges	Protect local genetics & adaptability	Ongoing
Install bat friendly lighting on the canal in association with the Canal quarter development	Lancaster Canal	Increased moth and bat activity along the blue/green corridor	Dependent upon Canal quarter delivery
Carry out PEA of biodiversity on sites put forward for allocation in the local plan	Allocation Sites	Policy	Ongoing 2026

Assess BNG potential for sites put forward for allocation in the local plan	Allocation Sites	Policy	Ongoing 2026
Support landowners in the creation of habitat banks (particularly where this aligns with the LNRS)	District-wide	Biodiversity and ecological connectivity	Ongoing
Update the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy	Local Plan	Policy	Next plan period
Provide briefing notes on BNG for planning case officers	Internal council	Training and upskilling	Ongoing 2026