

Biodiversity Duty Report 2026 - 2031

Nuneaton and Bedworth
Borough Council

Biodiversity Duty Report

2026 - 2031

Author and Version information

Name Planning Policy Team

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1.0 Introduction and Legal Context

1.1 Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduces. This means that public authorities must:

- Consider what can be done to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on those considerations.
- Act to deliver those policies and achieve your objectives¹.

1.2 Local authorities (excluding parish councils) must write and publish a biodiversity report. For local authorities and local planning authorities, the end date of the first reporting period should be no later than 1 January 2026. After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) must publish all reports within 12 weeks of the reporting period end date.

1.3 The biodiversity report must include:

- a summary of the actions NBBC has taken to comply with the biodiversity duty.
- the policies and objectives NBBC has set to meet the Council's biodiversity duty.
- the actions NBBC has completed, either alone or in partnership with others, which benefit biodiversity.
- An explanation of how NBBC has taken account of local nature recovery strategies, protected site strategies and species conservation strategies.

¹ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2025). Guidance – Complying with the biodiversity duty. [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#)
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- How NBBC plans to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period (five years).
- The actions NBBC has carried out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations.
- Details of biodiversity net gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans NBBC has approved.
- Detail of how NBBC plans to meet biodiversity net gain obligations in the next reporting period.
- Any other information NBBC considers appropriate.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth is one of five Boroughs/districts within Warwickshire. It is the smallest in size, at 7,895 hectares, but has the third largest population at 134,200 (2021)². Largely urban in character, the Borough has two market towns - Nuneaton and Bedworth, as well as the large village of Bulkington to the east of Bedworth. Several smaller settlements are located in the south of the Borough between Bedworth and Coventry.
- 2.2 The Borough is located between Coventry and Hinckley, and benefits from good road links. There are over 500 hectares of accessible green space in the Borough, including notable parks such as Riversley Park, Miners Welfare Park and Whittleford Park, all of which are destination Parks serving the whole Borough. A number of smaller community and local parks also serve the open space needs of local communities.
- 2.3 Nuneaton and Bedworth has six sites with statutory protection and 94 local or potential local wildlife sites³:
- 3 Local Nature Reserves
 - 2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - 1 Special Area of Conservation
 - 52 Local Wildlife Sites
 - 42 potential Local Wildlife Sites.

² Office for National Statistics (2023). How life has changed in Nuneaton and Bedworth: Census 2021. [How life has changed in Nuneaton and Bedworth: Census 2021.](#)

³ Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (2025) State of Habitats Report [State of Habitats Report](#) Biodiversity Duty Report 2026 - 2031

3.0 Biodiversity Baseline in Nuneaton and Bedworth

- 3.1 NBBC has invested in ensuring a comprehensive biodiversity baseline through primarily recent reports completed in November 2024. The Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is currently being prepared by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and is anticipated to be adopted by WCC by Spring 2026.
- 3.2 NBBC has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with WCC's Ecology Team to provide scrutiny on Planning Applications. The SLA outlines the ecological and biodiversity support that WCC will provide to NBBC across various planning stages. This includes providing advice on ecological matters during policy development, as well as providing pre-application ecological advice. WCC will provide consultation responses on certain submitted planning applications and may also assist with planning appeals where their ecological advice is needed in the determination of a particular appeal.
- 3.3 NBBC has implemented the Verna Mycelia software to support with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The software has assisted the Local Planning Authority with the data challenges of implementing mandatory BNG and assists the authority with processing applications from the validation and assessment stages, through to site monitoring and reporting.
- 3.4 A Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy ("the Strategy") was published by WCC in August 2024 on behalf of the local authorities within the Warwickshire Housing Market Area. The Strategy covers the disciplines of landscape, biodiversity and accessibility, each of which contributes to Green Infrastructure (GI). GI is a network of green spaces and water environments that sustains the ecosystems needed for a good quality of life. The Strategy is a culmination of mapping, research and discussions with stakeholders, it considers how the authority can deliver high quality green and blue infrastructure in the right places based on the sub-regional priorities working in partnership with landowners, businesses and communities. It helps to guide the protection, enhancement, creation and maintenance of GI across the County.
- 3.5 The Natural Capital Assessment Partnership were commissioned by the County, Coventry and Solihull to prepare a comprehensive overview of

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the habitats and biodiversity within the region. Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull's State of Habitats Report 2025 plays a key role in providing local ecological data for the County. The findings of the report revealed that Nuneaton and Bedworth is heavily urbanised, with the study showing 20% of the Borough is covered by grassland and marsh and 8% covered by woodland and scrub habitats. This report will form a key part of the evidence base to help shape for environmental policies within the next local plan.

- 3.6 WCC is the Responsible Authority in the development of the Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (WLNRS). The WLNRS is due to be recommended for adoption by WCC in April 2026. If adopted, the WLNRS will play a crucial role in addressing urgent environmental challenges such as flood management, climate adaptation, and air and water quality by promoting nature-based solutions. It underscores the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems in achieving broader environmental goals. Developed collaboratively with local authorities, government agencies, environmental groups, landowners, farmers and communities, the strategy targets habitat degradation, species loss and climate change. It identifies priority habitats and species, sets clear objectives to enhance biodiversity and habitat quality, and aims to create a resilient, well-connected landscape that benefits wildlife, people, and local livelihoods.

4.0 Related Strategies and Policies

- 4.1 The following section of this report sets out how existing policies and strategies for NBBC contribute towards meeting the strengthened biodiversity duty. The Council have identified opportunities to update policies/strategies to further emphasise actions to increase biodiversity.

Corporate Plan

- 4.2 The Corporate Plan sets out the vision for the Borough between 2025 and 2029, with one of the four corporate priorities being 'Green Spaces and Environment – protecting our natural environment, improving air quality and creating sustainable communities.' One of the key objectives of this priority is to 'explore opportunities to promote, protect and enhance biodiversity within the Borough.'

Borough Plan Review and associated Evidence Base

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- 4.3 The Borough Plan Review sets the framework for sustainable development across the Borough. The Council adopted the Borough Plan Review (2021-2039) on 10 December 2025, and work has commenced on scoping and preparing the evidence base to inform an immediate review, which will be known as a new Local Plan, under the new plan making system. The Borough Plan Review includes policies, such as Policy NE1 – Green and Blue Infrastructure, Policy NE2 – Open Space and Policy NE3 – Ecology, Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Local Nature Recovery that safeguard green spaces, promote ecological networks and require biodiversity considerations in planning decisions.
- 4.4 The evidence base underpinning the review includes evidence base studies which identify opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity and integrate biodiversity enhancements into future growth areas. These studies have informed the strategy to enhance and protect the natural environment and informed the policy formulation and supporting text within Policy NE3 – Ecology, Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Local Nature Recovery. These evidence base studies include:
- Warwickshire County Council, Grassland Connectivity (2015)
 - Warwickshire County Council, Hedgerow Connectivity (2015)
 - Warwickshire County Council, Local Wildlife Sites (2023)
 - Warwickshire County Council, Phase 1 Distinctiveness (2015)
 - Warwickshire County Council, Phase 1 habitats (2015)
 - Warwickshire County Council, Woodlands Connectivity (2015)
 - Habitat Biodiversity Audit Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull (2022)
 - Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Ecology and Geodiversity Assessments

Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 4.5 As outlined in Section 3, the Sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a vision for a connected network of green spaces, waterways and natural assets across the Borough. It prioritises improving access to nature, enhancing ecosystem services and supporting wildlife corridors. The strategy helps to identify any gaps in provision which can then be addressed to ensure all communities have access to green spaces.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

- 4.6 The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was published by WCC in April 2016. It covers five local authorities including NBBC. It provides an overview and assessment of local flood risk in Warwickshire and how WCC will manage and reduce local flood risk. The strategy provides evidence which underpins Policy NE4 – Managing flood risk and water quality of the Borough Plan Review, to ensure that development is directed away from areas of highest flood risk where possible and support the use of sustainable drainage systems.

WCC Waste Core Strategy Adopted Local Plan 2013-2028

- 4.7 The Waste Core Strategy encourages waste reduction. Reuse and recycling, reducing pressure on natural resources and landfill sites. Therefore, supporting biodiversity by minimising land take and pollution risks. For Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, the Waste Core Strategy provides a strategic framework that supports local biodiversity objectives by promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling across the Borough.

Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 4.8 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new mandatory system of strategies under the Environment Act 2021. They apply to certain geographical areas, ensuring that opportunities to recover nature are joined up. They are primarily aimed at landowners, farmers, local authorities & environmental groups. Their purpose is to:
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature;
 - establish priorities; and
 - map proposals for specific actions to drive nature’s recovery and wider environmental benefits.
- 4.9 The LNRS goes further than other policies already at play in Warwickshire by bringing together landscape scale, multifaceted approaches focused on preserving, conserving and enhancing nature and meeting other environmental objectives such as climate change, flood mitigation and improved air and water quality.
- 4.10 The draft LNRS was consulted on between 20 September and 2 November 2025 and is due to be recommended for adoption by WCC in February 2026. The strategy adopted in the LNRS aims to reverse biodiversity decline and integrate nature into our everyday lives. The emphasis is on conserving, enhancing and connecting habitats for ecological resilience. It identifies key priority habitats and species and

maps locations within the Borough where ecological action offers the greatest impact. If adopted by WCC, the LNRS will become a key strategic framework for biodiversity delivery, shaping how nature recovery is planned, prioritised and delivered across the borough. It will provide a clear evidence based map showing where biodiversity should be protected, where enhancement and restoration should be focused and how sites and corridors within the Borough link to the wider Warwickshire nature recovery network.

5.0 Actions Taken (2024-2026)

5.1 The table below sets out the actions taken by the Council that benefit biodiversity.

Service Area / Theme	Actions Taken
Council Strategies	The Council adopted its Corporate Plan 2025 – 2029. Green Spaces and Environment is identified as one of the five key themes with specific priorities including exploring opportunities to promote, protect and enhance biodiversity in the Borough listed.
Planning Policy	<p>The Borough Plan Review (2021-2039) adopted 10th December 2025 includes policies relating to biodiversity.</p> <p>There is also a commitment to commence work on the new Local Plan following adoption of the Borough Plan Review (2021-2039).</p>
Development Control	<p>The Development Control team have been continuing to secure mandatory 10% BNG on all relevant planning applications.</p> <p>The Development Control team have invested in BNG specific software to assist in the validation of applications, store BNG metrics, identify whether trading rules have been met, and to assist with BNG monitoring and reporting.</p> <p>BNG training has been undertaken by the team.</p>
Parks and Greenspace	Implemented habitat enhancement and connectivity projects in key parks, including

	wildflower meadow creation, utilising funds secured through biodiversity offsetting. Planted native trees and hedgerows to improve connectivity.
	Managed existing wildlife habitat areas to sustain and enhance habitat value – through ground maintenance contract works and Conservation Volunteers group activity.
Climate Change and Sustainability	Delivered green infrastructure improvements as part of regeneration projects such as Transforming Nuneaton to enhance urban diversity.
Transport	Support sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality by the promotion of a cycle to work scheme and flexible working (work from home & office).
Waste	Implemented separate paper recycling bins which are now located throughout the Council’s offices.

6.0 Future Actions (2026-2031)

6.1 The table below sets out the proposed future actions that the Council will endeavour to take to benefit biodiversity.

Future Actions	Comments
Sustainable Urban Drainage and Climate Resilience	Sustainable drainage policy actions to reduce flood risk and support biodiversity.
Biodiversity Net Gain Implementation	Ensure biodiversity net gain is delivered and maintained across developments with monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in place. Continue delivery of legacy biodiversity offset habitat creation schemes where NBBC Parks has agreed to act as an offset provider for past developments.
Wildlife Habitats	Ongoing management of existing wildlife habitats within NBBC greenspace sites and designated Local Wildlife Sites.

Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan	A draft Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan has been consulted on. It includes measures to integrate biodiversity into climate change adaptation. It is anticipated that further work will be undertaken following the consultation prior to a report being presented to Cabinet.
Review and Update Assessments	Carry out periodic reviews and updates of strategies / policies in relation to biodiversity including the Open Space Assessment and GI Strategy to ensure data accuracy against population trends, projections and delivery priorities.
Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (WLNRS) Development and Coordination	Potential adoption of the Warwickshire LNRS by WCC. NBBC to align local policies and projects with LNRS priorities for habitat creation and connectivity.
Climate Change Officer Post	Explore the potential to create a Climate Change Officer Post.
Introduce Biodiversity in Procurement Polices	Ensure council contracts such as grounds maintenance seek to include biodiversity friendly practices. Seek to reduce printing hard copies of documents where possible.
Introduce Biodiversity in Corporate Reports	Explore whether corporate business plans and corporate report templates can be updated to include a section requiring the author of the report to advise decision makers on how the project or recommendation will address the statutory biodiversity duty.
Nature Recovery Network	Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on behalf of Natural England are due to roll out a Nature Recovery Network Toolkit which will assist local authorities. NBBC will engage with PAS and explore the opportunity to be on the pilot scheme and utilise the network and toolkit going forward.

7.0 Biodiversity Net Gain Reporting

- 7.1 To meet BNG requirements, local planning authorities must ensure planning applications include key documentation: a statement on BNG conditions, a metric calculation showing biodiversity changes and scaled habitat plans. Officers also refer to national planning resources to support their approach and use specialist software to validate and assess BNG metrics and whether the trading rules have been satisfied.
- 7.2 At validation stage, Officers scrutinise planning applications to consider whether they are required to provide the 10% mandatory BNG based upon the application type and any claimed exemptions. For example, if an applicant claims exemption under the de-minimus threshold, the amount of on-site habitat and on-site linear habitats (such as hedgerows) will be measured to ensure the development is exempt.
- 7.3 When dealing with applications for self-build and custom housebuilding, Officers ensure that only proposals which are for 9 or less dwellings, on sites of 0.5 hectares or less, and consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 are eligible under the exemption. Officers also ensure that the dwellings delivered as self-build or custom build houses by securing occupation via a legal agreement. This is in line with recent appeal decisions issued by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 7.4 Officers received training in April 2025 covering legal frameworks, planning roles and BNG metrics. Officers have also been trained to understand BNG exemptions, how to deal with mandatory BNG Plan condition and how and when to secure BNG within legal agreements.
- 7.5 In line with government guidance, the Council does not apply the mandatory condition. Informative notes are used on Decision Notices to remind the developer or applicant of the requirement to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan via condition prior to the commencement of development. Additional conditions and/or legal agreements are also used on a case-by-case basis to secure maintenance arrangements.
- 7.6 At present, the Council has approved applications subject to the 10% mandatory BNG. However, no Biodiversity Gain Plans have been

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received for the Council to assess and discharge. The Council is not aware of any breaches in which works have started on a site prior to the condition being applied for and discharged.