

Biodiversity Duty Report

Actions taken for Biodiversity between
July 2023 and January 2026



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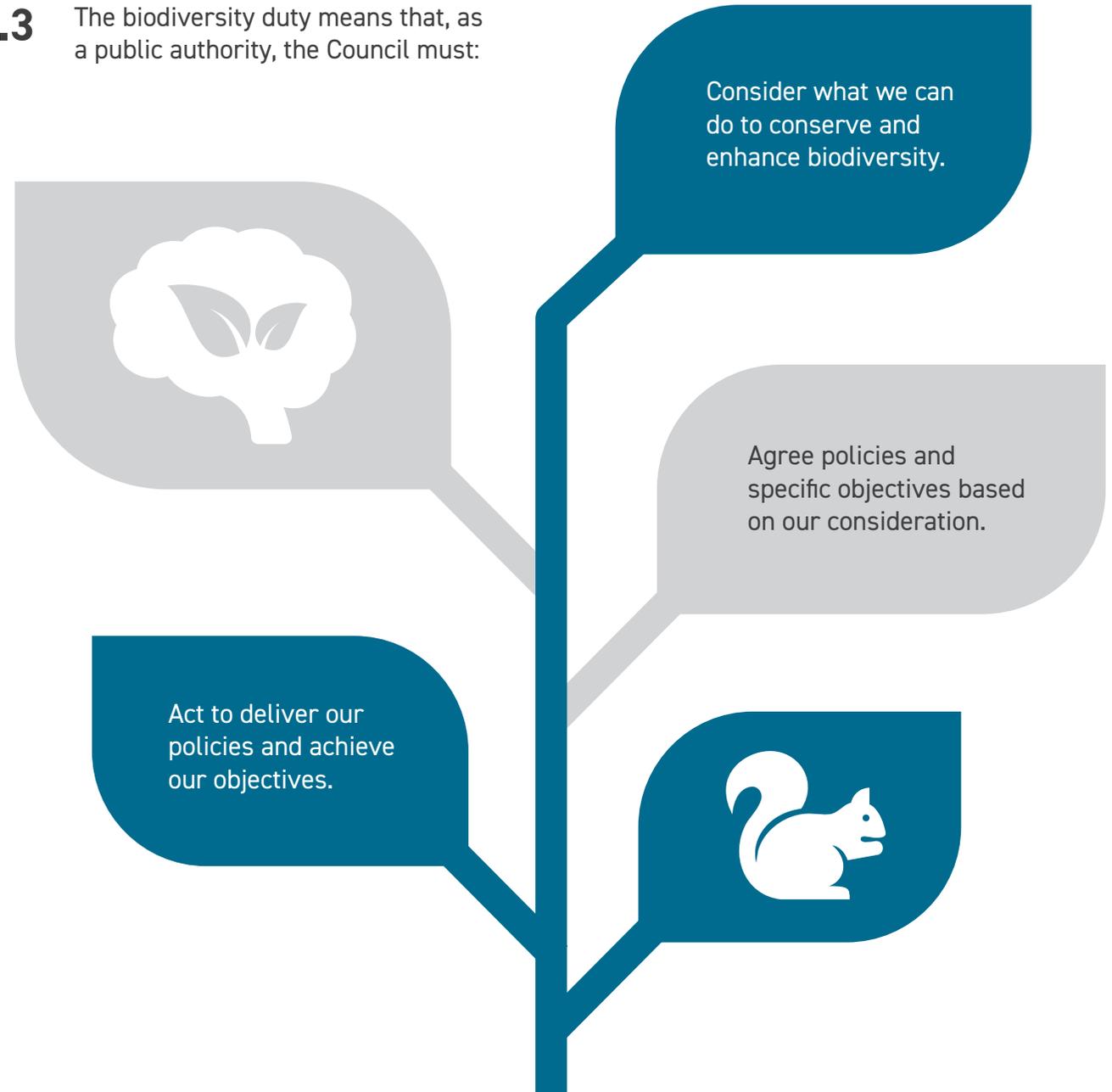
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document details the actions taken by Havant Borough Council in meeting the 'biodiversity duty' resulting from the Environment Act 2021 during the period July 2023 to January 2026 and covers the formal requirement for a report to be produced covering 12 February 2024 and 1 January 2026.

1.2 The biodiversity duty is a legal responsibility that requires Havant Borough Council to consider, agree, implement and report on its actions for biodiversity. The purpose of this document is to raise awareness of the biodiversity duty, to detail the actions that Havant Borough Council has taken and will take, and to explore the key issues and opportunities for Havant Borough Council related to complying with the duty in the future.

1.3 The biodiversity duty means that, as a public authority, the Council must:



1.4 The Government produced guidance for Local Planning Authorities on meeting the biodiversity duty on 17 May 2023. This is a new obligation for Havant Borough Council, although there will be many current and planned activities that contribute to our compliance with the duty as the environment is a key part of our Corporate Strategy.

1.5 The actions carried out by Local Planning Authorities for biodiversity will contribute to the achievement of national goals and targets on biodiversity. The [Environmental Improvement Plan](#), published in January 2023, sets out government plans for significantly improving the natural environment:

1.6 By 2030, the government has committed to:

Halt the decline in species abundance



Protect 30% of UK land



1.7 By 2042, the government has committed to:

Increase species abundance by at least 10% from 2030, surpassing 2022 levels



Restore 75% of our 1 million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their long term wildlife value



Reduce the risk of species extinction



Restore or create at least 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife rich habitats



1.8 An amendment to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) Section 40 Duty, provided for in the Environment Act 2021, extends the biodiversity duty on public authorities to include the enhancement of biodiversity alongside conservation by way of creating ‘the general biodiversity objective’. The general biodiversity objective means ‘the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England through the exercise of functions’. This is achieved by a revised Section 40 of the NERC Act, including new provisions, which are now in force.

- Section 40(1)) ‘A public authority which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective’.
- ‘After that consideration the authority must (unless it concludes there is no new action it can properly take)—
 - a) determine such policies and specific objectives as it considers appropriate for taking action to further the general biodiversity objective, and
 - b) take such action as it considers appropriate, in the light of those policies and objectives, to further that objective’.

1.9 Further information on how LPAs must comply with the general biodiversity duty is available within two key sets of government guidance:

- [Complying with the biodiversity duty.](#)
- [Reporting your biodiversity duty actions.](#)



2. HAVANT'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Havant's Biodiversity

2.1 Havant Borough is a small planning authority area situated in the south-east corner of Hampshire that despite its size and the continuing pressures from urban development, punches above its weight in terms of biodiversity. Although one of the most densely developed parts of the southern UK and with a landscape that has undergone profound changes in the last century, it contains some of the most important habitats and species in the south of the United Kingdom:

Our ancient woodlands, trees and hedgerows support rare mammals such as Hazel Dormice and bats.

Every winter, tens of thousands of migratory birds arrive in the Borough, providing one of the best wildlife spectacles to be seen in the UK.

Havant's coastline is of international importance and contains some of the finest examples of coastal habitats in England.

Our coast also provides nesting sites for hundreds of seabirds, and staging posts for birds from across the globe.

There are areas of species-rich grassland, and clear chalk streams.



2.2 Havant Borough is a special place, and its economic future is underpinned by its natural environment and the many benefits it brings to residents and visitors alike. The Council has a fundamental role in helping to protect, enhance and promote that biodiversity.

2.3 Havant Borough shows a varied and complex landscape. Whilst the Borough has been significantly affected by post-1945 development, with many areas of habitat lost, it still retains elements of the former historic landscape and differences in land use history and underlying geology mean that there is still a rich natural heritage.

2.4 The northern part of the Borough is characterised by gently undulating land with surviving remnants of the former Forest of Bere wooded landscape such as The Queen's Inclosure in Cowplain and Hollybank Wood near Westbourne. The soils here are largely silty clays, are often waterlogged and slightly acidic. This area also contains some of the last remaining fragments of former open heathland and common land.

2.5 The prominent chalk ridge of Portsdown Hill just enters the west of the Borough near Widley. The geology here is freely draining and supports the Borough's only extensive area of species-rich chalk downland. The Borough's chalk streams emerge at the base of this ridge and flow south into Chichester and Langstone Harbours.

2.6 The southern part of the mainland Borough forms a broad, flat coastal plain with soils derived from ancient river deposit sands, silts and clays. The area contains the best agricultural soils in the Borough, and despite the substantial urban development of the late 20th century, productive farmland still persists between Havant and Emsworth. The Borough's chalk streams - the Brockhampton, Rider's and Hermitage Streams, the Lavant Brook, River Ems and various unnamed watercourses - cross the plain before entering the harbours.

2.7 Hayling Island is a true island, separated from the mainland by a narrow tidal channel, and is surrounded by Chichester and Langstone Harbours. The Island is still predominantly rural in character despite the growth of residential and recreational development in the 20th century and contains an extensive network of small arable and pasture fields, hedgerows and some woodland.

2.8 The underlying geology is predominantly chalk in the north and sandy and silty clays in the south. Hayling Island contains a remarkable variety of important coastal habitats.



Havant's Ecological Network

2.9 The complex landscape and social history of the Borough has led to today's patchwork of natural, semi-natural and highly modified habitats. This patchwork of habitats forms an ecological network.

2.10 The Borough's natural heritage – its ecological network – is made up of formally protected sites, habitats and species as well as areas that are not afforded legal protection, but which nonetheless contribute to the overall network:

- Protected Sites – international, national and local.
- Priority Habitats.
- Protected and Notable Species.
- Other habitats.

2.11 Further information on the landscape, habitats, species and protected sites in the borough can be found in our [Biodiversity Strategy](#).

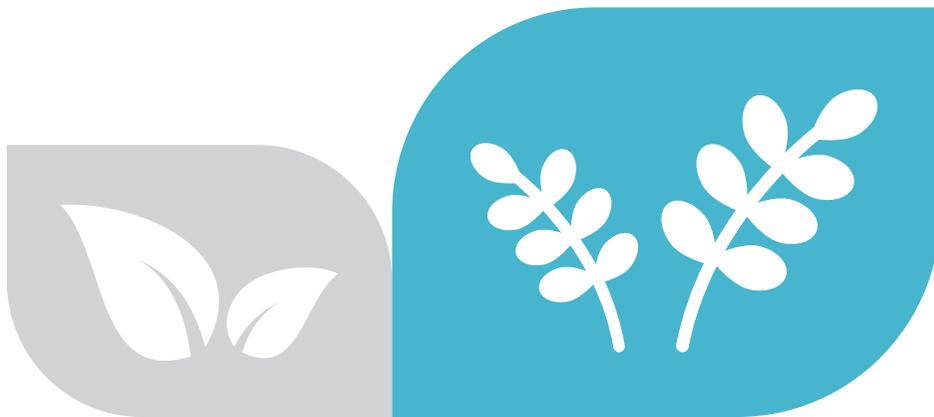


Table 1:
Designated sites in Havant Borough as of December 2025

Designation	Site Name	Area (ha) within borough
SAC	Solent Maritime	2,269.34
SPA	Chichester and Langstone Harbours	2,429.96
Ramsar	Chichester and Langstone Harbours	2,429.96
SPA	Solent and Dorset Coast	125.57
SSSI	Chichester Harbour	1,005.77
SSSI	Langstone Harbour	1,424.19
SSSI	Sinah Common	242.75
SSSI	Warblington Meadow	3.87
LNR	Brook Meadow (Emsworth)	3.35
LNR	Farlington Marshes	1.26
LNR	Gutner Point	68.99
LNR	Hayling Billy	42.02
LNR	Hazleton Common LNR	1.39
LNR	Sandy Point	18.32
LNR	The Kench, Hayling Island	6.04
LNR	West Hayling	76.23
SINC	109 in total	345
RVEI	1	0.05

3. COUNCIL STRUCTURE AND DECISIONS

- 3.1** The following section explores the key structural decisions for biodiversity taken by Havant Borough Council in the period July 2023 to January 2026. In summary: how has the Council itself changed in order to address its biodiversity duty?

Appointment of Principal Ecologist

- 3.2** In July 2023 Havant Borough Council appointed its own Principal Ecologist. This was the first time that the Council has employed its own in-house ecologist, appointed to promote biodiversity within the Council itself and the borough more widely. The Council had previously secured ecological advice from Hampshire County Council and this was generally limited to assisting with planning consultations and the development of planning policy. The new Principal Ecologist has a much broader remit.

The decision to increase the level of resourcing around ecology was directly in response to the Environment Act, the increased responsibility and focus on the environment at a national and local level, and the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain.



3.3 Sitting in the Planning Policy Team within the wider Growth and Place Directorate, the Principal Ecologist's role is wide-ranging and includes:

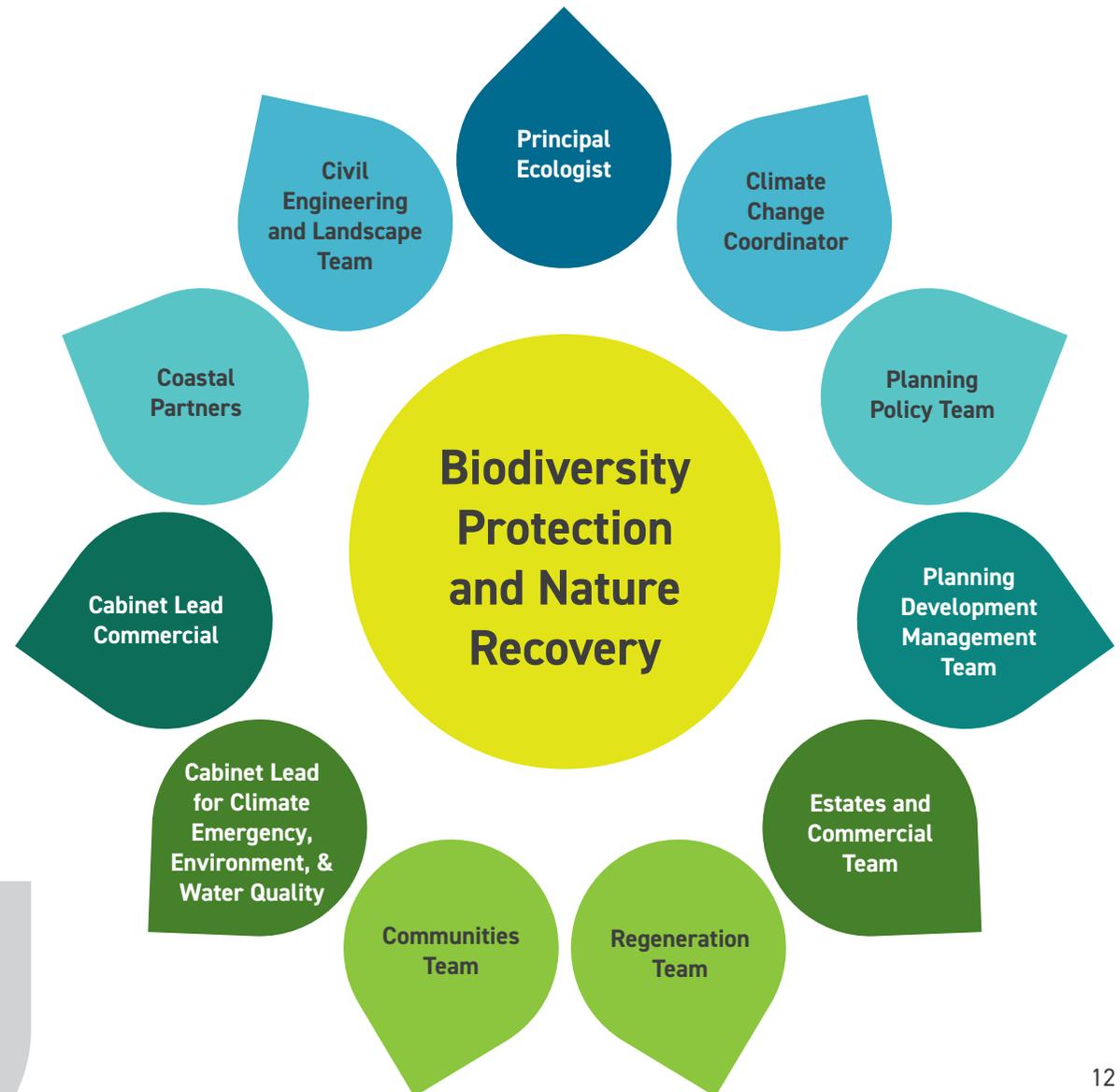
- Delivering a new Biodiversity Strategy.
- Consultee on planning applications.
- Developing environmental planning policy.
- Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- Advising on land management.
- Promoting biodiversity on Council land.
- Informing decision-makers about biodiversity issues.
- Providing technical support for Council development and regeneration schemes.
- Engaging with key community and organisational partners.
- Representing the Council in key stakeholder groups.
- Delivering in-house biodiversity training.
- Reporting on biodiversity duty actions.



3.4 The Principal Ecologist does not work alone but is part of a Council-wide team of officers and Councillors, each of whom has a role to play in protecting and promoting biodiversity and delivering nature recovery.

3.5 The delivery of projects such as relaxed mowing and other land management improvements, the development of new planning policies and strategies, and technical assessments to inform planning and development all require specialist input from Council officers as well as Council decision makers.

Figure 1:
Action for biodiversity at the Council is a collaborative process



Biodiversity Strategy

3.6 In January 2025 the Council published its [Biodiversity Strategy](#), replacing the previous strategy from 2019. The 2025 Biodiversity Strategy is a fundamental review of biodiversity in Havant Borough, highlighting our exceptional natural environment, the many challenges it faces, and the many opportunities for promoting and enhancing biodiversity. The Strategy includes a set of actions that the Council is committed to delivering. Details of the Council's progress in meeting the actions from the Biodiversity Strategy are provided in [Table 8](#) on pages 59–62.



3.7 The Biodiversity Strategy is a core Council document and provides a framework for action that will influence all the Council's functions.



Climate Strategy and Action Plan

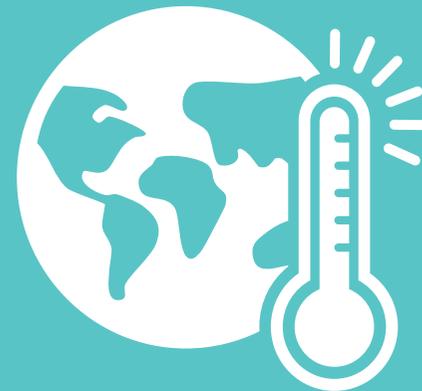
3.8 Also in January 2025, the Council published its [Havant Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2030](#). This strategy sits alongside and complements the Biodiversity Strategy. The strategy identifies the threats to biodiversity from a changing climate and provides a framework that includes measures for incorporating biodiversity into climate change thinking and action. Key measures that will benefit biodiversity include:

- Promotion of climate change adaptation measures, including natural flood management and coastal habitat creation.
- Spreading awareness, education and training opportunities.
- Climate Change and Environment Panel.
- Civic Plaza Greenspace Project.
- Greener Park Management Strategy.



Havant Tree and Woodland Strategy

3.9 In 2026 the Council will publish a new Tree and Woodland Strategy. Besides setting out the Council's approach to protecting and managing the borough's tree stock and woodlands, the strategy will detail expectations for biodiversity protection and enhancement.





3.10 The formal governance and decision-making regarding biodiversity work is primarily taken through the Council's Cabinet, notably the adoption of the Biodiversity Strategy.

3.11 For several years, a Cabinet Liaison Panel has operated, focused on climate change and environmental workstreams. This meets regularly to discuss and shape the Council's strategic approach to the environment and the implementation of adopted strategies. The panel is chaired by the relevant Cabinet Lead.

- 3.12** In December 2025 the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) for Hampshire](#) was launched and covers the Havant Borough area. Two years in the making, the LNRS is a new framework for nature recovery in Hampshire and is a key thread of the Environment Act 2021. The LNRS must be taken into consideration in planning decisions and more widely and therefore has real force: the Council's new Local Plan and its natural environment policies are closely aligned to the LNRS.
- 3.13** Alongside other local planning authorities, the County Council, statutory agencies, non-governmental bodies, and community partners, the Council was involved in shaping the LNRS. Through regular workshops, meetings and consultations the Council's Principal Ecologist and other colleagues were involved in drafting the LNRS, providing technical input, ensuring that Havant Borough's natural assets were given due prominence, and securing meaningful and deliverable actions for nature recovery across the borough and beyond. The challenge now for the Council and its partners is to ensure that the LNRS helps to deliver nature recovery.



3.14 Following a Full Council meeting on 18 June 2025, Councillors passed a motion to declare a [nature emergency](#) as it recognised the local, national and international pressures placed on flora, fauna and habitats. This follows an earlier declaration of a Climate Emergency.

3.15 As part of the nature emergency motion, Councillors also approved supporting work to embed nature recovery, adopting nature-based solutions where viable, supporting habitat restoration, improving river health, promoting best practice and expanding opportunities for residents to access the borough's natural assets.

3.16 The declaration is an important signal that the Council takes the nature emergency seriously and that measures to protect and enhance the natural environment will shape decision-making.



3.17 In September 2023 the Council voted to endorse the [Motion for the Ocean](#), a declaration of the urgent need for ocean recovery, recognising its importance in the fight against climate change. The Motion for the Ocean was developed by marine experts supported by the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group in recognition that our ocean and climate are in a state of emergency.

3.18 The Council has set out a number of key action pledges:

Ensure that the Climate & Environment Panel receives regular updates on any actions and projects that will assist ocean recovery around the Borough.

Promote closer working between the Havant Borough Council and local marine organisations and embed interventions in the Local Plan to support ocean recovery.

Where opportunity allows, grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in Havant borough with our schools and local colleges.

Add ocean recovery to the work the council is doing as part of its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

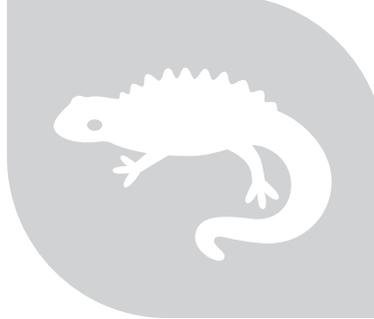
Influence the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to support ocean recovery.

Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable "blue economy" that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.

Write to the Government asking them to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030.

4. MANAGING COUNCIL LAND

- 4.1** The Council owns or manages significant areas of land across the borough, and Council land offers huge opportunities for encouraging biodiversity and access to nature. Many of these sites are of high value for biodiversity whereas others are less valuable but have potential. Council officers across several teams have been working on how to manage Council land better for biodiversity, as well as ensuring that high value sites are protected from harm.



Many Council sites have often conflicting needs such as biodiversity and recreation, and one of the key challenges is to ensure that continued public enjoyment does not impact biodiversity.



Relaxed Mowing

- 4.2** A key objective for the Council since 2023 has been to trial a different approach to grass management. Titled '[relaxed mowing](#)', this represents a new approach to managing areas of grassland under the Council's control and builds upon and expands a previous 'No Mow May' scheme.
- 4.3** Starting in 2024, a total of eleven Council grassland sites have been subject to bespoke mowing regimes designed to promote plant species diversity. All sites have been left unmown between April and September and surveys have been carried out to identify each plant species growing. The purpose of the relaxed mowing areas is to see which plant species are present and if this different management approach results in more plant species over time. Greater plant species diversity will generally mean higher diversity of insects and other animals, thereby enhancing an area's general biodiversity.
- 4.4** Different parts of the borough have different soils, and so the range of wild plants and other species present will also differ. These differences in vegetation add to the local distinctiveness or character of the various parts of the borough.
- 4.5** Another key objective of the relaxed mowing scheme is to promote access to and enjoyment of biodiversity: by providing purposefully managed parcels of wildflower rich grassland it is hoped that this will provide attractive areas for people to enjoy and experience nature.
- 4.6** It is hoped that relaxed mowing can be greatly expanded across the borough and the Council will be undertaking consultation on new areas in 2026. The ideal is to have a network of relaxed mow sites across the borough, thereby providing a mosaic of locally distinct, nature-rich areas in the heart of local communities that deliver real biodiversity benefits and easy access to nature.



4.7 A total of nine sites were chosen for the trial in 2024. These were:

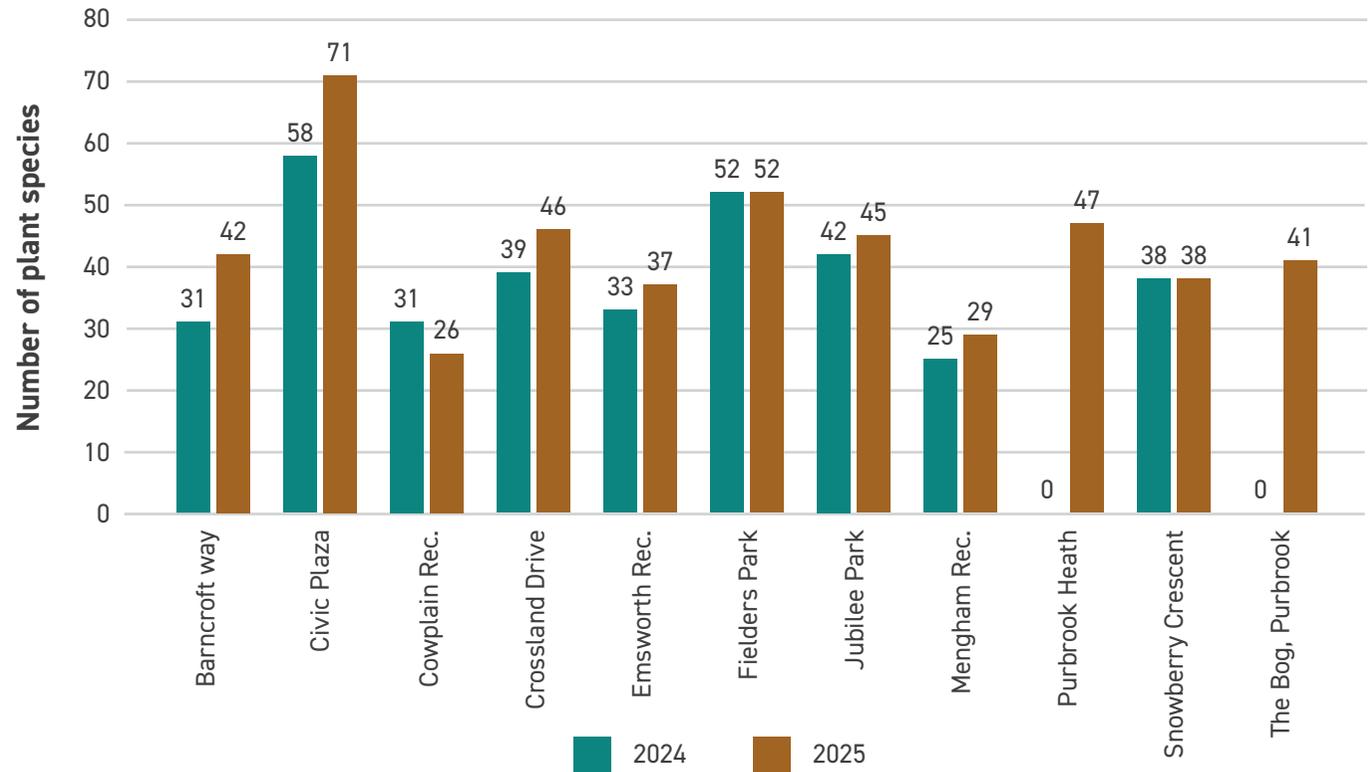
- Barncroft Way
- Havant Civic Plaza
- Cowplain Recreation Ground
- Crossland Drive
- Emsworth Recreation Ground
- Fielders Park
- Jubilee Park
- Mengham Recreation Ground
- Snowberry Crescent

4.8 In 2025 a further two sites were added:

- Purbrook Heath
- The Bog, Purbrook

4.9 Figure 2 to the right shows the results of the eleven trial sites as measured by the number of different plant species recorded. For the majority of sites there was an increase in plant species diversity between years, demonstrating that the relaxed mowing approach is a successful way of increasing biodiversity.

Figure 2:
Plant species totals for relaxed mow sites in 2024 and 2025



Hayling Oyster Beds

4.10 Hayling Oyster Beds (the North-west Hayling Local Nature Reserve) is a Council-owned site at the north-western corner of Hayling Island and is a globally important hub for migratory birds and a mosaic of rare coastal habitats. The Oyster Beds is also a hub for people, with superb opportunities for accessing nature. The site is a gateway to Hayling Island and to Langstone Harbour and the wider Solent seascape. The site is, however, suffering from neglect and is in urgent need of attention.

4.11 The Council is working with key partners – the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Langstone Harbour Board, Coastal Partners, and Hampshire County Council – to reinvigorate the site through an ambitious restoration plan. The Council is working on funding bids for initial ground investigations as well as planning for new and enhanced coastal habitats (including bird nesting habitat) and improved public access infrastructure.

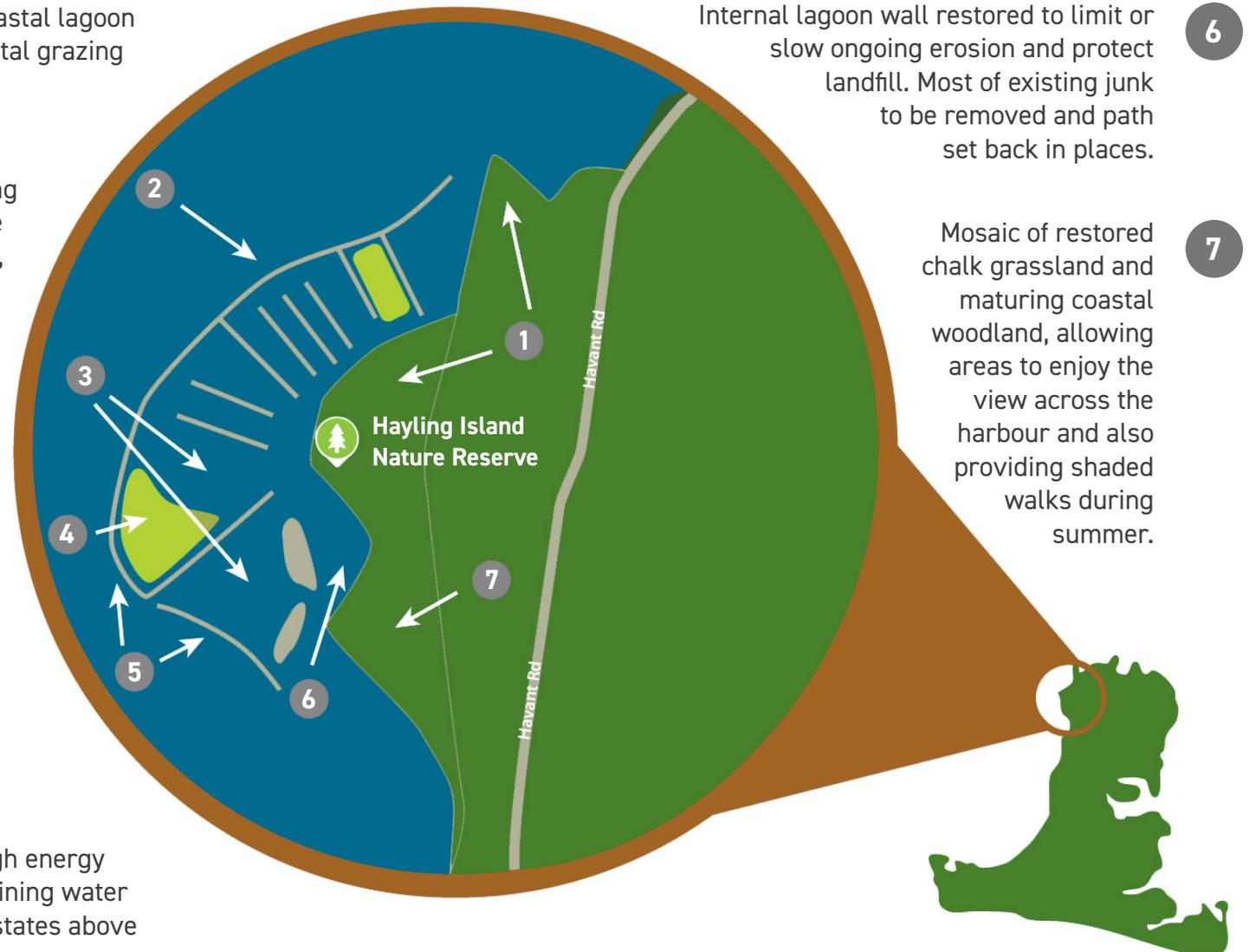
4.12 The plan is for the Oyster Beds to be an actively managed, flagship coastal nature reserve, continuing to support internationally important breeding seabird populations, thousands of wintering shorebirds, rich coastal shingle and saltmarsh, and superb access and viewing facilities for visitors.

4.13 The Oyster Beds site is managed under an agreement between the Council and the RSPB. The Council continues to support the RSPB with managing the site, working together to deliver specific enhancement projects such as the recent recharge of shingle bird nesting islands. The Council acknowledges and greatly values this working relationship with such a key expert partner.



Figure 3:
Concept for restored coastal nature hub at Hayling Oyster Beds

- 1 Potential for additional brackish and coastal lagoon site on Hants CC reserve, allowing coastal grazing marsh and Avocet nesting areas.
- 2 New and restored islands modelled on the historic oyster farm bunds. Providing new and highly desirable habitat for the designated breeding and roosting birds, whilst providing a wildlife spectacle and restored cultural heritage.
- 3 Oyster growing areas, as part of the Solent Oyster restoration, utilising the site to grow new Solent Oysters for use in restoring and expanding reef across the entire Solent.
- 4 New saltmarsh, to provide feeding/roosting habitat, and also further limit wave energy during spring tides and storm surges. Created via BUDS, either from deepening lagoons as needed, or navigational dredging locally.
- 5 Enhanced lagoon perimeter, limiting high energy waves from the south west, and maintaining water within the restored lagoons at all tidal states above mean neap tide levels.



Internal lagoon wall restored to limit or slow ongoing erosion and protect landfill. Most of existing junk to be removed and path set back in places.

Mosaic of restored chalk grassland and maturing coastal woodland, allowing areas to enjoy the view across the harbour and also providing shaded walks during summer.

6

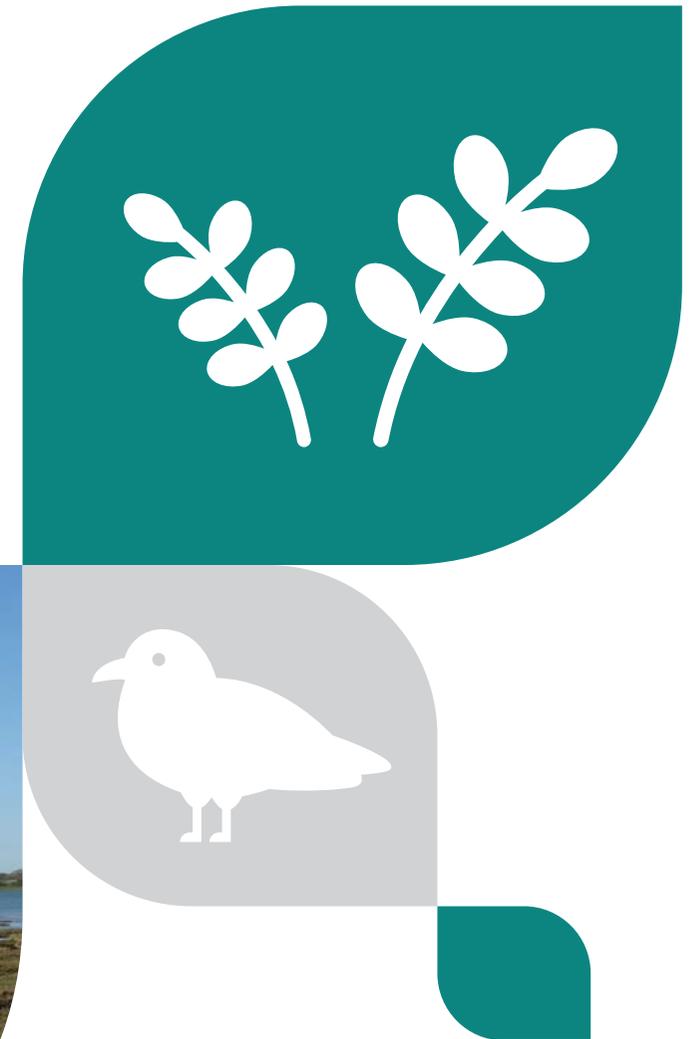
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North Common, Hayling Island

4.14 North Common on Hayling Island is another large Council-owned site that is rich in wildlife and has great recreational value to residents and visitors. The site contains areas of species-rich coastal grassland, scrub, saltmarsh and mudflat.

4.15 The extent of scrub on North Common has increased in recent years and so the Council is undertaking widespread scrub management works in 2026 and onwards. The purpose of this is to promote species-rich grassland and provide better public open space for quiet enjoyment. Local residents in Northney are being supported to help manage the site.

4.16 In 2026 the Council will be organising a BioBlitz at North Common. This is a day of intensive species recording using specialist experts and members of the public and will provide a detailed inventory of the range of plant and animal species occurring at the site. This information in turn will help the Council and the local community in managing the site.



Land Management Contract Review

- 4.17** The Council is currently reviewing land management contract arrangements and devising a new contractual framework for the future. This review involves embedding biodiversity and climate action measures within a revised contract, with the aim of providing greater clarity and flexibility on how Council land is to be managed to include biodiversity benefits.

Management Plans

- 4.18** The Council intends to produce detailed management plans for many of its landholdings, especially those where significant opportunities for biodiversity enhancement exist.

Managing Invasive Species

- 4.19** One of the many challenges of managing land in urban and suburban areas is dealing with invasive plant species. The Council continues to monitor species such as Japanese Knotweed, which is present on several Council sites. Treating these invasive species is a long-term and costly investment but is necessary to prevent impacts to native biodiversity, public enjoyment of open spaces, and infrastructure.





4.20 Evidence-based decision making is critical to nature recovery and the management of Council land, and the Council places great importance on having a sound evidence base for its decision making in relation to biodiversity.

- 4.21** Our key data partner is the [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre \(HBIC\)](#). HBIC is hosted by Hampshire County Council but operates independently. HBIC works to collate, manage and disseminate biological information across Hampshire. Data maintained by HBIC is comprehensive and covers designated sites, habitats and species. Data is supplied both by HBIC's own ecologists as well as various specialist species recording groups across the county.
- 4.22** The Council maintains an agreement with HBIC for the supply of biological data. The data are used to help inform planning decisions, planning policy and land management, ensuring that the Council's decisions and actions are based on the best available information.
- 4.23** Each year the Council requests surveys of certain sites – usually Council owned land – to ensure that any management decisions or impact assessments are based on up-to-date information.
- 4.24** HBIC also produces annual reports of biodiversity in the borough, detailing the extent of protected sites and certain habitats. Again, this data provides the Council with invaluable information on the state of biodiversity across the borough.

Local Designated Sites

4.25 HBIC administers the network of [Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation](#) (SINCs) across Hampshire. Of more than 4000 SINCs in Hampshire, 109 are within Havant Borough. SINCs can be designated for certain habitats or for populations of certain protected species. HBIC undertakes surveys of SINCs on a rolling basis. Most SINCs are in private ownership.

4.26 In the reporting period there has been one SINC loss. Camp Down Grassland Remnants SINC was deleted in 2024 due to a lack of management removing the site’s interest features. No SINCs have been gained in the reporting period ¹.

4.27 Some SINCs undergo major revisions – either a reduction or increase in area – following updated survey information. A small number of SINCs have undergone area changes in the reporting period: these are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2:
Amended SINCs in Havant Borough in period 2023–25

SINC name	Reason for Change	Old area (ha)	New area (ha)
Stakes Coppice Remnant 7	New survey or information	0.63	0.77
Stakes Coppice Remnant 6	Data correction/interpretation	0.28	0.33
Stakes Coppice Remnant 5	New survey or information	0.53	0.54
Stakes Coppice Remnant 4	New survey or information	0.63	1.27
London Road Fen	Lack of management	1.89	2.34
Langstone Mill Pond	New survey or information	0.98	1.48
Conigar Point Meadows	Positive management	6.12	8.24

1. It is expected that at least one new SINC – Stockheath Common – will be added in 2026/27.



4.28 In the reporting period, the Council has commissioned detailed botanical surveys by HBIC of a number of its SINC's and other landholdings. These surveys will assist the Council and others in managing the sites:

Table 3:
Sites subject to detailed botanical survey in period 2023-25

Site Name	Survey date
North Common and Saltmarsh SINC	2024 + 2025
North Common East SINC	2024 + 2025
West Hayling Local Nature Reserve (Hayling Oyster Beds)	2025
Beachlands SINC	2024
Beachlands East SINC	2024
Beachlands West SINC	2024
Purbrook Heath	2025
Hollybank Wood Grassland	2025
Broadmarsh SINC	2023
Broadmarsh East SINC	2023
Langstone Mill Pond SINC	2023
Stockheath Common	2023



Priority Habitats

4.29 The term Priority Habitats means habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006. Also called [Habitats of Principal Importance](#), these are considered to be the most important habitat types in England and require explicit protection in law.

4.30 Annual monitoring of Priority Habitat areas by HBIC has resulted in the following gain/loss data for the reporting period. It is important to note that most gains and losses arise as a result of a habitat changing over time rather than habitat destruction – it may no longer meet priority habitat criteria, or it has now gained priority habitat status, or it may have changed from one priority habitat to another.

Table 4:
Priority Habitat Gains/Losses in period 2024-25



Priority Habitat	Gain/Loss	Details
Lowland Meadow	4ha gain	Gains at Copse Lane Fields, Warblington Farm, Broad Marsh East, Broadmarsh, and Tournerbury Farm Coastal Meadows.
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	7ha gain	Gains at Dunsbury Hill Wood, Stakes Coppice, Remnant 2, Simonds Hill North, Stakes Coppice Remnant 5, Stakes Coppice Remnant 4, Frank's Coppice, Cherry Tree Row Stakes Coppice Remnant 7, Stakes Coppice Remnant 6, and Newlease Coppice.
Wet Woodland	1ha loss	Losses at Langstone Mill Pond, Warblington Farm, and London Road Field.
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	8Ha loss	Losses at Southmoor Extension and Broadmarsh.
Coastal Saltmarsh	7ha gain	Gains at Long Marsh, Southmoor, and Warblington Farm.
Saline Lagoons	4ha gain	Gain at Southmoor.

Ancient Woodland

4.31 Between 2022 and 2024 HBIC undertook a review of woodland sites across Hampshire. The purpose of this project – helped with funding from Havant Borough Council – was to identify any woodlands under 2 hectares in size that should be included within Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory, a national database and map of England's ancient woodlands. Woodlands under 2Ha had not previously been included.

4.32 Published in 2025, the review 'discovered' an additional 47.72 hectares (Ha) of ancient woodland within the borough, representing a 32.24% increase in ancient woodland area (196.24 Ha up from 148.52 Ha). This further highlights how valuable the borough's woodlands are. Ancient woodland status means that these woodlands now receive additional legal protection.



5. PARTNERSHIPS

Organisational Partnerships

- 5.1** The Council cannot act alone in taking action for biodiversity and so a critical function is to maintain and expand partnerships with key stakeholders. The Council is therefore involved in numerous partnerships and other initiatives which together help to coordinate action for nature recovery and provide a stronger and more effective voice through collaborative working. Examples of the Council's involvement in key organisational partnerships and initiatives are shown in [Table 5](#) on pages 33–35.



Coastal Partners

5.2 [Coastal Partners](#) is an organisation managing coastal flood and erosion risk across five Local Planning Authorities in the eastern Solent area. Havant Borough Council hosts the Coastal Partners team of engineers, surveyors, project managers, environment and research experts at its Civic Plaza site. Coastal Partners undertake essential work for biodiversity across Havant Borough, carrying out biodiversity surveys, impact assessments and ensuring that biodiversity enhancements are embedded into all their coastal schemes. Council officers and Councillors work closely with Coastal Partners on schemes including coastal defence improvements, flood risk and coastal habitat creation and enhancement.

5.3 Coastal Partners deliver a 'fully combined, efficient and comprehensive coastal management service' that aims to 'reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion to people and the environment through the provision of innovative, economic and sustainable coastal defences'.

5.4 Coastal Partners works at a strategic level to deliver Shoreline Management Plans and Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management (CFERM) Strategies. Other work includes:

Undertaking regular management, inspection and maintenance of sea defences to ensure a safe standard of protection for our communities.

Engaging with local communities, organisations and business on all aspects of our work to ensure local people help to shape coastal management decisions.

Designing and implementing CFERM engineering schemes that improves the standard of flood and erosion protection.

Carrying out coastal monitoring and research to ensure we have the most accurate and up to date information to undertake our work.





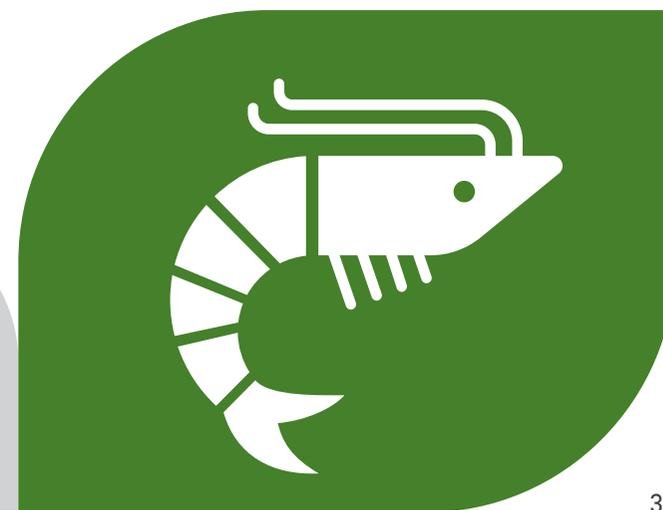
Table 5:
Details of organisational partnerships

Partnership	Overview
The Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH)	PfSH is a partnership of twelve local authorities around the Solent that aims to improve the environmental, cultural and economic performance of the South Hampshire area. PfSH has increasingly coordinated cross-boundary work of the South Hampshire authorities in responding to environmental workstreams, in particular nutrient neutrality and Bird Aware Solent.
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership	The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is one of 48 strategic local nature partnerships formed in England following publication of the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper. Their aim is to protect and improve the natural environment on land and at sea — creating bigger, better and more joined up places for nature.
Bird Aware Solent	Bird Aware Solent is a partnership of local authorities which helps safeguard the future of internationally protected wildfowl and wading birds. Run by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) through the Bird Aware Solent Revised Strategy, it sets out strategic mitigation measures to reduce the impact of recreational disturbance on bird populations. Developer contributions are collected by the Council to fund the work of the Bird Aware Solent team. Havant Borough Council supports the work of the Bird Aware Solent partnership through PfSH but also by sitting on the Board and contributing officer time to the work of the partnership.
Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)	HBIC carries out habitat surveys and brings together data from a number of key species recording groups, which supports the work of partner organisations. Data held by HBIC informs environmental assessment, land management and research. HBIC also manages the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) system in Hampshire on behalf of the local planning authorities. Havant Borough Council provides financial support to HBIC and works with HBIC to organise surveys of the Borough's SINCs and other habitats. The Council also sits on the HBIC Users Advisory Group, helping to review and shape HBIC's activities.
Solent Waders and Brent Geese Strategy and Steering Group	The Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy and Steering Group is a conservation partnership project, which aims to conserve the internationally important wildfowl and wading bird populations around the Solent coast. The strategy identifies the network of non-designated terrestrial sites in the Borough that support bird populations and protect them from the impacts of new development. The SWBGS Steering Group includes members from local authorities, Natural England, the RSPB, and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Havant's Principal Ecologist has been a Steering Group member since inception.

Partnership	Overview
Hampshire Forest Partnership	Launched by Hampshire County Council in 2022, the Hampshire Forest Partnership has been set up so communities can get involved in caring for Hampshire's woodlands and planting more trees.
Solent Forum	The Solent Forum is an independent partnership that provides advice on strategic issues which have implications for the Solent area. It acts as a source of advice and contact for local authorities and other organisations. Havant Borough Council is a member of the Forum's Natural Environment Group and Solent European Marine Sites group.
Langstone Harbour Board	The Langstone Harbour Board is the statutory Harbour authority, local lighthouse authority, and pilotage authority for Langstone Harbour. Primarily responsible for safety and navigation, it also has responsibilities for the conservation of the natural environment. HBC councillors and officers sit on the Board.
Three Harbours Partnership	The Three Harbours is a partnership of organisations working together to restore the landscape across the Three Harbours of Langstone, Chichester and Pagham focussing on water quality, biodiversity and carbon capture. The Partnership is working towards an integrated plan with partners, broader stakeholders and the public, that captures all the activity that is taking place and what we will do to accelerate nature restoration across the three harbours.
RSPB	The Council works in partnership with the RSPB at our Hayling Oyster Beds site. The site is subject to a management agreement between the Council and the RSPB, allowing them to carry out works to protect and enhance seabird nesting habitat.
Solent Seascape Project	The Solent Seascape Project's aim is to reconnect the Solent into a functioning seascape by improving the condition, scale and connectivity of oyster reef, seagrass meadow, saltmarsh and seabird nesting habitats using protection and restoration initiatives — creating a more resilient coastline, enhancing biodiversity and supporting the sustainable delivery of ecosystem benefits. Coastal Partners — hosted by the Council — are a key partner of the project. The project published its Solent State of Nature Report in 2025.



Partnership	Overview
<p>Tree Council</p>	<p>Havant Borough Council is a member of the Tree Council which promotes the planting, care, conservation and value of trees. Havant Borough Council supports to work of the Havant Tree Wardens, a network of around 35 Tree Wardens throughout the borough. The network is involved in the following activities: tree trails and publishing tree trail booklets, putting on tree exhibitions, guided tree walks, presentations, tree planting, seed collecting and planting projects with local primary schools, warning of threats to trees, and supporting the establishment of Tree Preservation Orders.</p>
<p>Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN)</p>	<p>The Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN) partnership is a long-term initiative to help respond to the increasing pressures on Chichester Harbour. The key objective is to protect, enhance and drive recovery of the natural environment within Chichester Harbour to help create a landscape more resilient to climate change. The aim is to increase biodiversity of these fragile coastal ecosystems, thereby maximising the benefits that society gains from the natural environment. Havant Borough Council is a key member of the CHaPRoN partnership.</p>
<p>Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Planning Authority Ecologists Group</p>	<p>Ecologists working within Local Planning Authorities in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight meet regularly to discuss biodiversity matters and share insights and practice.</p>





5.5 The Council has also been supporting other landowners to enhance biodiversity on their land. One example is the [reintroduction of an extinct plant species](#) on land at Sinah Common owned by Hayling Golf Club.

5.6 The plant – Cottonweed – was first recorded on Hayling Island in 1621. Natural England, working with the Rare British Plants Nursery, wanted to reintroduce the species to Hayling and other former locations in England. The Council was pleased to offer support and assistance to this ambitious nature recovery project.

5.7 The Council has also been advising Hayling Golf Club on the management of their land at Sinah Common, specifically around the removal of invasive non-native plant species.

- 5.8** In addition to these important organisational partnerships, the Council partners with local community groups to protect and enhance biodiversity. These groups are a much-valued, critical link between the Council, local communities, and our precious natural habitats. Many of the Council's sites are maintained solely by these groups. The Council provides logistical support to community groups and, where necessary, funding and training.
- 5.9** The Council's Principal Ecologist has also been involved in community engagement via in-person presentations on Havant's biodiversity, delivering several talks per year in 2024 and 2025. These events are an essential channel of communication between communities and the Council, helping to forge relationships and find ways of working together.
- 5.10** To accompany the launch of the Biodiversity Strategy and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the Council held a [photographic competition](#) in conjunction with The Spring arts centre. The competition was on the topic of biodiversity and climate and attracted several hundred submissions.



6. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

6.1 One of the key ways in which the Council can protect and enhance biodiversity is through planning policy. As a local planning authority, the Council must ensure that it publishes a Local Plan and that this includes a policy framework that recognises, protects and enhances the borough's natural assets as far as that is possible to do within the context of its planning functions.

6.2 In the reporting period the Council has been developing its Building a Better Future Local Plan, including a new framework of natural environment policies as well as other policies that include measures for biodiversity. Summarised details of the new policies with relevance to biodiversity are presented in Table 6.

6.3 In addition to the policies listed in the table, individual site allocations within the Local Plan include specific details of any environmental constraints and provide details of expected assessments and mitigation to accompany planning submissions.

Table 6:
List of natural environment policies within emerging Local Plan



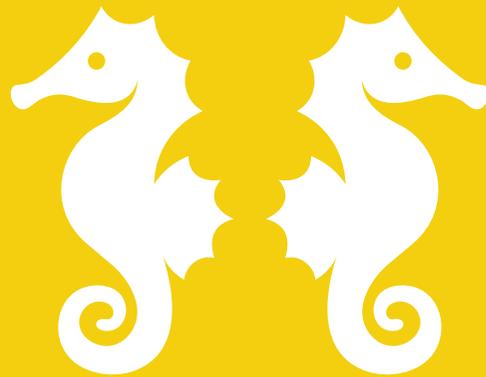
Policy	Details
Policy 19: Biodiversity Net Gain	Sets out expectations for delivery of BNG.
Policy 20: International and National Nature Conservation Sites	Details how International and National sites must be addressed in planning applications.
Policy 21: The Local Ecological Network	Details how local sites, priority habitats and other habitats must be considered in planning.
Policy 22: Recreation Disturbance on International Sites	Details how strategic mitigation for recreational impacts will be implemented.
Policy 23: Water Quality Effects on International Sites	Details how strategic mitigation for nutrient impacts will be implemented.
Policy 24: Protected & Notable Species	Details how protected and notable species should be considered in planning.
Policy 25: Solent wader and Brent Goose Strategy Sites	Details how strategic mitigation for wintering bird habitat will be implemented.
Policy 28: Development on the Coast	Details how coastal development must consider and protect biodiversity.
Policy 29: Designated Landscapes	Details protection measures for Chichester Harbour National Landscape and South Downs National Park.
Policy 31: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland	Details expectations for protection of trees, hedgerows and woodland and their biodiversity value.
Policy 49: Protecting Open Space	Includes biodiversity as a key factor in high quality open spaces.
Policy 50: Provision of Public Open Space in New Development	Includes requirements for biodiverse elements within new open space provision.

7. STRATEGIC ACTION

7.1 An essential thread of biodiversity protection in Havant Borough is the Council's support for and involvement in strategic level mitigation measures. The Council is currently a partner in three such strategic initiatives that together serve to protect the borough's internationally important coastal habitats and species and allow new development to proceed in accordance with the law.

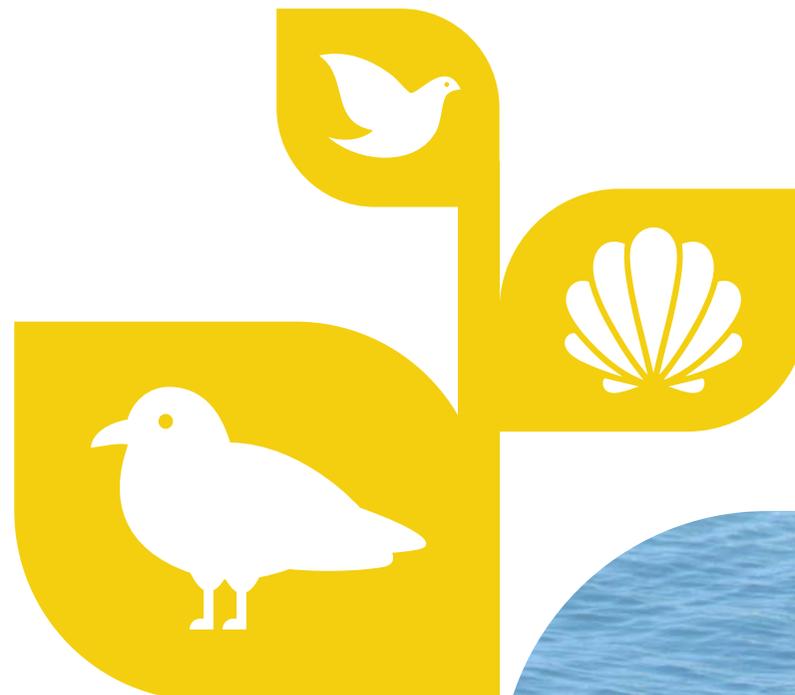


The Council continues to fully support these important initiatives.



7.2 [Bird Aware Solent](#) is a partnership of local authorities which helps safeguard the future of internationally protected wildfowl and wading birds. Run by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) through the [Bird Aware Solent Revised Strategy](#), it sets out strategic mitigation measures to reduce the impact of recreational disturbance on bird populations. Developer contributions are collected by the Council to fund the work of Bird Aware Solent.

7.3 The Council is a key active partner in the Bird Aware Solent Scheme. The Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy is a highly successful, award winning strategic mitigation initiative, helping to ensure that new development funds protection measures for our internationally important wintering and breeding coastal bird populations. Having a strategic mitigation solution in place means that there are clear and consistent expectations for developers and enables the Solent authorities to fulfil their planning and legal requirements without the need for lengthy individual assessments of impact.



Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy

7.4 Havant Borough is home to thousands of wintering coastal birds each year. These birds are one of the reasons why the Havant coastline is internationally protected within Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. The birds do not stay within the boundaries of these protected sites and use nearby farmland and grassland for feeding and roosting, particularly at high tide. The birds are also protected when they occur outside the protected sites – these areas are known as supporting habitat. Impacts such as new development and recreation can impact the birds through habitat loss and disturbance.

7.5 In recognition of these potential impacts, the [Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy](#) (SWBGS) was published in its first iteration in 2002. Initially concentrating just on Brent Geese in the eastern Solent, the strategy was extended to the whole Solent region in 2010 and included geese, other wildfowl, and wader species. Major revisions were carried out between 2016 and 2019 and again in 2024, responding to best practice, experience and research.



7.6 The purpose of the strategy is:

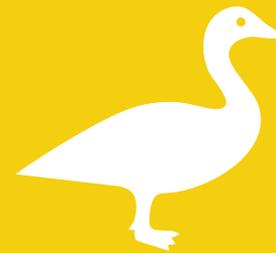
To identify the network of core areas that are regularly used and are of fundamental importance to over-wintering waterfowl across the Solent.



To provide a strategy that will ensure that the network of important sites is protected, whilst reducing the current uncertainty over site use, in order to better inform key coastal stakeholders.

7.7 The SWBGS has been instrumental in providing a consistent approach towards the consideration of SPA/Ramsar supporting habitat throughout the wider Solent area. The Council is fully supportive of, and helps to fund, the SWBGS. Havant's Principal Ecologist is a member of the SWBGS Steering Group.

To maintain a network of sites through better management and protection from development and recreational pressure, and to ensure that they will be resilient to the pressures of climate change and predicted sea level rise in the future.



7.8 Development is only acceptable if it meets the requirements of environmental protections set out in law. Part of the consideration of this is whether there would be a detrimental impact on the water quality of our protected coastline.

7.9 The water quality on our coast can be affected by excessive levels of nitrates which can come from a number of sources, including waste water from new housing developments. In order for development schemes to be permitted, they need to be 'nutrient neutral'. Development schemes which are not nutrient neutral cannot lawfully be granted planning permission.



Warblington Farm nutrient mitigation scheme



- 7.10** In response to the issue of nutrient impacts in the Solent, in 2020 the Council initiated a [Nutrient Mitigation Scheme](#) at its Warblington Farm site. This was the first such scheme nationally and the Council received the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) [Best Practice Innovation Award](#) in 2021 as well as winning the [natural environment category in the Planning Awards](#) in the same year.
- 7.11** The scheme enabled development to proceed whilst making sure that there would not be a detrimental impact on the protected harbours due to nutrient pollution. Innovative at the time, the fundamentals of the scheme have now been replicated across the Solent and elsewhere in the country as a model for this kind of environmental mitigation. The scheme itself was delivered in partnership with Natural England, The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, and Bird Aware Solent.
- 7.12** Today, phase 1 of the scheme remains in operation and allows developments of 15 dwellings or fewer to purchase nutrient mitigation credits and thereby ensure their proposals meet the legal requirements for nutrient neutrality.



8. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 8.1** [Biodiversity Net Gain \(BNG\)](#) is an approach to development that aims to address historic declines in biodiversity and ensure that new developments leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. BNG is a legal requirement in the Environment Act 2021 and Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 8.2** The Council has a key role in the administration and delivery of BNG in the borough. As well as assessing BNG submissions for planning applications, the Council collects data on the number of development applications that require BNG and those that do not. The Council also has a monitoring and enforcement role for BNG and collects monitoring fees from developers to ensure that BNG monitoring is fully resourced.



8.3 Since its introduction in spring 2024, Biodiversity Net Gain has seen a fundamental shift in the way that biodiversity is addressed in the planning system. With some exceptions, all new development must provide a minimum 10% gain in biodiversity units as measured by the [Statutory Biodiversity Metric](#) (this ensures consistency in the information provided). This means that most developers need to use specialist ecological support to ensure that habitats are assessed properly and options for on-site or off-site compensatory habitats are explored fully. BNG also requires developers to think about how to combine biodiversity, open space, landscaping and drainage.

8.4 The Local Planning Authority must review BNG assessments submitted by developers and has a legal duty to ensure that – where it applies – BNG is secured through planning conditions or legal agreements and that these are monitored and enforced.

8.5 The Council needs to record essential data on BNG such as the number of applications to which it applies, any exemptions claimed, and the areas of habitat lost and gained through the BNG process. The Council has invested in specialist software to help it collect and present this information.



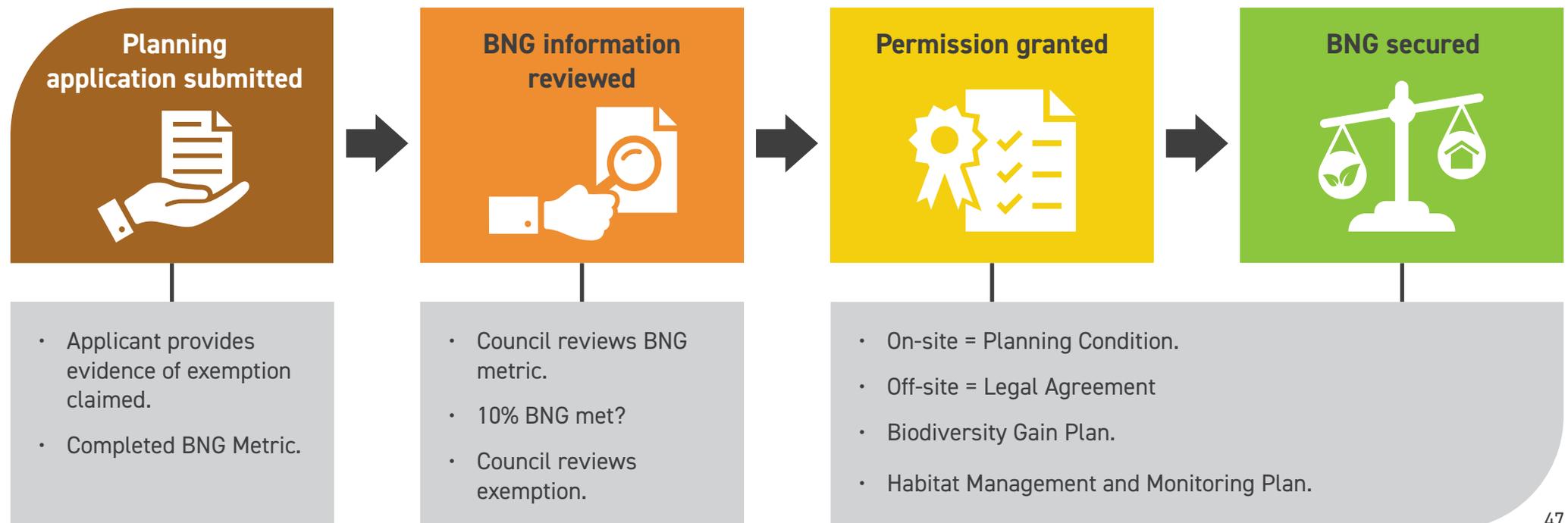
8.6 Figure 4 below simplifies the BNG process for planning. In summary, at the application stage an applicant must declare if their proposal is eligible for BNG or not. If not, evidence must be provided of any claimed exemption, and the Council will then decide if the exemption is valid. BNG exemptions are:

- Householder applications.
- De minimis – the extent of habitat affected is less than 25m2.
- Self- and Custom-build applications.
- Retrospective applications.

8.7 If no exemptions apply, BNG is required. The application must include a baseline calculation of biodiversity using the Statutory BNG Metric.

8.8 If BNG information is acceptable, permission is granted. A [Biodiversity Gain Plan](#) and [Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan](#) must be submitted before development can commence.

Figure 4:
BNG in Planning process



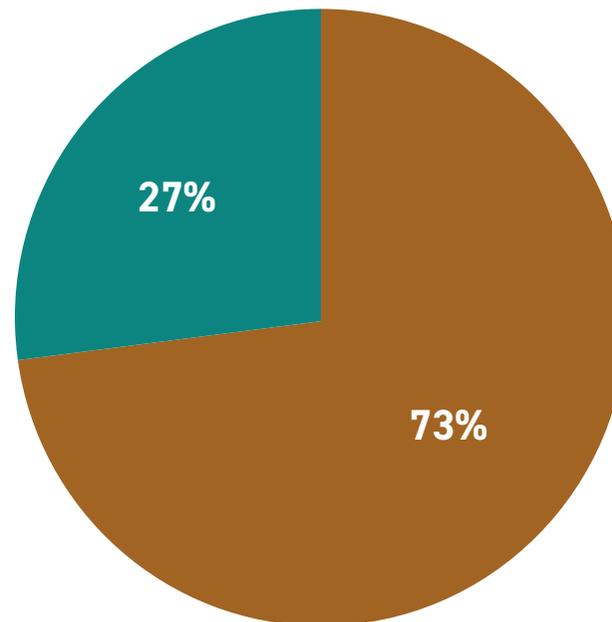
8.9 Table 7 and Figure 5 presents summarised BNG information collected for all received development applications by the Council between February 2024 and January 2026 to which BNG would apply.

Table 7:
Details of planning application subject to BNG between February 2024 and January 2026

Planning applications	Number
Applications eligible for BNG	133
Applications not exempt	36
Exemptions claimed (total)	97
De minimis exemptions	84
Retrospective exemptions	3
Self/custom build exemptions	9
Householder exemptions	1

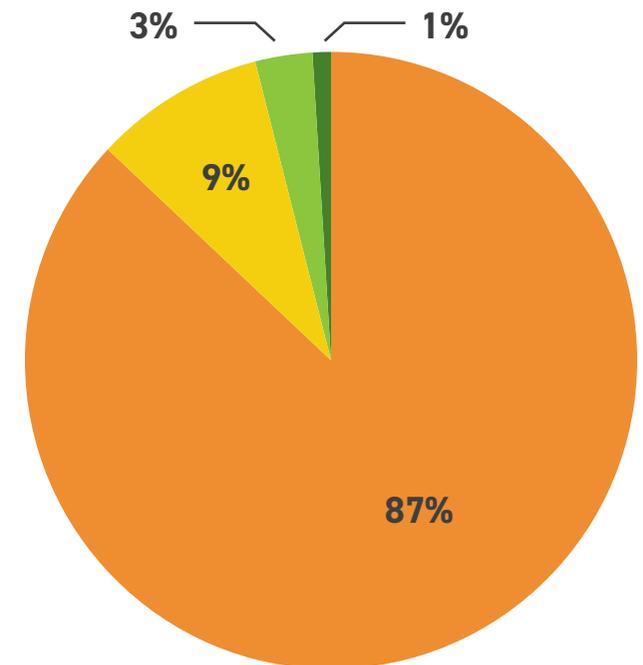
Figure 5:
Proportion of exempt/not exempt application and types of exemptions

Number of exempt/not exempt BNG applications



Exempt Not Exempt

Types of BNG exemptions



De minimis Self/Custom Build
Retrospective Householder

- 8.10** The Council is investigating opportunities for BNG on its own land and is working with Coastal Partners to undertake essential baseline surveys of three large Council landholdings: Warblington Farm, Hollybank Wood Grassland, and North Common.
- 8.11** These baseline surveys will identify which habitats are currently present and then investigate any potential for habitat enhancements or creation. Where there are such opportunities the Council may wish to provide BNG units for sale to the general BNG market or use BNG units to support its own development projects. Further sites may be chosen for BNG baseline assessments in future.
- 8.12** Delivering BNG on Council land is not simple. BNG must be secured through the planning system, and the Council is not legally able to act as both planning authority and landowner. The Council is investigating options for providing BNG on its own land. This could be through agreements with adjacent planning authorities, through a Conservation Covenant with a third-party organisation, through the leasing of land, or through a separate arm's length company within the Council.
- 8.13** BNG is a potential transformative route to securing long-term funding for biodiversity enhancement on Council land, delivering nature recovery alongside public access to nature. The Council will continue to investigate opportunities for BNG delivery on Council land.



9. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Meeting the Biodiversity Duty

9.1 The Council is committed to furthering the general biodiversity objective and intends to comply fully with its obligations under the biodiversity duty.

9.2 The Council must by law produce another biodiversity duty report within 5 years of the end of the current reporting period i.e. by January 2031. However, the Council will aim to produce annual update biodiversity duty reports.



9.3 The Council – on its own and with its partners – is already doing much to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity across the borough but recognises that there are many more opportunities for doing more.

9.4 There are several obvious areas where the general biodiversity objective could be furthered through relatively simple actions: some examples are given below:



The Biodiversity Strategy will be reviewed and updated as necessary, to ensure that it remains up-to-date and valid. It will incorporate the latest biodiversity data as well as updates on any biodiversity initiatives carried out in the borough.

Strategic measures

9.5 The Council is fully committed to continuing to review, develop and implement our various strategies such as the Biodiversity Strategy, and our strategic partnerships such as Bird Aware Solent and the SWBGS.

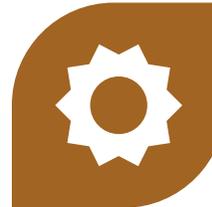
The council will continue to work collaboratively with partners to ensure that strategic mitigation schemes are robust and delivering for biodiversity.

Develop and implement the new Local Plan

- 9.6** Work to produce the new local plan continues, with a process of constant review to ensure that the plan reflects the latest national policy and planning guidance as well as representations from the public, partners and private bodies. Wherever possible, the plan will ensure that biodiversity protection and nature recovery are integral to and threaded throughout the plan.

Develop our approach to management of Council land

- 9.7** Work is ongoing to develop and refine the Council's approach to land management. Discussions are ongoing with the Council's delivery partner Norse South East, and the Council is working towards taking all land management services in-house over the next few years. This will allow greater control and flexibility for the Council.



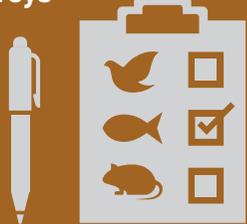
Harnessing Communities

9.8 An active network of community groups is essential to delivering ambitions for biodiversity protection and nature recovery and the Council could be more proactive in encouraging and supporting local communities.

9.9 The Council will do more to develop and support community groups, especially where there are opportunities for managing Council land. The Council recognises that community involvement is a fundamental positive action, benefitting not only the Council but also local communities in terms of promoting physical activity, educational opportunities, access and social cohesion.



9.10 The Council will continue to investigate, develop and implement multi-benefit measures for community involvement on Council land, such as:

<p>Adoption of greenspace management by communities</p> 	<p>Site Biodiversity champions</p> 	<p>Dedicated native wildflower plots</p> 	<p>Local seed collection, swapping and use</p> 	<p>Native plant propagation</p> 
<p>Green hay collection and use</p> 	<p>Scythe meadow management and training</p> 	<p>Dedicated orchard or fruit plots on allotments</p> 	<p>BioBlitz wildlife surveys</p> 	<p>Ponds</p> 
<p>Community events</p> 	<p>Interpretive media</p> 	<p>Presentations to community groups</p> 	<p>Guided walks</p> 	<p>Wildflower identification training</p> 

Measuring Social Value

9.11 The Council is actively working on measuring the many social value benefits of its landholdings. There is abundant scientific evidence that access to nature leads to all kinds of positive health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes across all age groups. Improving access to nature and wild places improves equity especially for economically, socially, or physically disadvantaged groups. Providing access to diverse, nature-rich green spaces within the heart of local communities promotes social interaction, community cohesion, physical activity, educational opportunities, and sustainable, safe travel. There is also evidence that access to local green spaces leads to economic benefits including increased house prices.



Balancing Access with Biodiversity

- 9.12** Havant's exceptional natural environment is a huge asset to the Council and to the borough's economy, helping to attract tens of thousands of visitors each year. Natural spaces also provide invaluable health and wellbeing and activity benefits. Some areas – especially our coastline – have to balance substantial recreational pressure with sensitive habitats and species.
- 9.13** Increased footfall, dogs, off-road bicycles, litter and waste, and vandalism all result in impacts to sensitive habitats and species.

Water Quality and Quantity

- 9.14** In common with much of the UK, the borough's freshwater habitats and marine environment are in poor ecological and chemical condition following decades of pollution, abstraction and physical modification of watercourses. In addition, a changing climate adds pressure to our water environment.

Climate Change

- 9.15** A changing climate brings with it many pressures on biodiversity. In coming years, we can expect changes in weather patterns such as more intensive rainfall, extended droughts, higher temperatures and more intense storm events. These climatic factors will result in new pressures on our habitats and species, and we will undoubtedly see changes in the flora and fauna of our borough as new species are able to gain a foothold, and others can no longer persist.



9.16 Planned Local Government reorganisation will change the face of councils across Hampshire in the coming years. Whilst the outcome of any reorganisation is currently unknown, the area covered by Havant Borough Council will still include its range of natural habitats and species and will still face the same challenges that it does at present.



Whatever the outcome, the rich biodiversity of Havant will need protecting and promoting, and local government will need to deliver nature recovery.

- 9.17** In December 2025, the Planning and Infrastructure Act (2025) received Royal Assent and is now law. A key part of this Act is the [Nature Restoration Fund](#) (NRF).
- 9.18** The NRF introduces a new way for housing and infrastructure developers to meet their environmental responsibilities where their projects affect protected sites or species. Natural England will deliver the NRF through [Environmental Delivery Plans](#) (EDPs). Each EDP will cover a specific area and outline a package of conservation measures that will address one or more impacts of development on a protected site or species. Where an EDP is in place, developers can make a payment into the NRF to meet their environmental responsibilities.
- 9.19** Havant Borough will be situated within EDPs for nutrient mitigation and for Great Crested Newt mitigation. For nutrient mitigation, there is an existing process in place (that includes the Council's Warblington Farm Scheme) so no significant changes to the status quo are expected.
- 9.20** As EDPs develop and expand, there may be significant benefits in terms of funding availability for large-scale environmental restoration projects within Havant Borough.



Table 8:
Biodiversity Strategy Actions progress

Biodiversity Strategy Action	Progress
<p>ACTION 1: The Council recognises the biodiversity crisis that has developed over the last century and is committed to nature recovery. The Council will embed consideration of biodiversity throughout all of its functions and activities in line with the Biodiversity Duty, recognising that this requires a step change in the way the Council operates.</p>	<p>Appointment of Principal Ecologist in July 2023. Biodiversity Strategy published in January 2025. Nature Emergency declared in June 2025.</p>
<p>ACTION 2: The Council will continue to support HBIC in mapping and monitoring priority and other habitats, and protected and notable species, to ensure that decision making and land management are based on the best available evidence.</p>	<p>Council continues to financially support HBIC and make best use of HBIC data to inform planning decisions and land management.</p>
<p>ACTION 3: The Council will ensure that the presence of statutory and non-statutory designated sites, priority habitats, and protected and notable species is acknowledged within planning policy and across all the Council's functions and activities.</p>	<p>Emerging Local Plan Policies 19–25 to ensure that protection for sites, habitats and species is embedded in planning policy.</p>
<p>ACTION 4: The Council will maintain its support for existing partnerships and initiatives relating to the conservation and restoration of biodiversity and will seek new opportunities to expand its network of partners and projects.</p>	<p>Council continues to support and engage with formal partnerships. New partnership agreement with RSPB being developed.</p>
<p>ACTION 5: The Council's Local Plan will include policy consistent with the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.</p>	<p>Emerging new Local Plan Policy 19 demonstrates that the Council will implement Biodiversity Net Gain. Policies 19, 21 and 24 will be fully consistent with Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>
<p>ACTION 6: The Council will investigate opportunities for managing its land to improve woodland quality and connectivity.</p>	<p>New Tree and Woodland Strategy under development and will include opportunities for improving woodland quality and connectivity.</p>



Biodiversity Strategy Action	Progress
<p>ACTION 7: The Council to trial changes to amenity grassland management within its control, working alongside community groups to deliver biodiversity benefits where possible. The Council will also continue to engage with partners to explore opportunities on grassland habitats that are not under its direct control.</p>	<p>Relaxed mowing trial commenced 2024 and continuing. Work underway to expand scheme.</p>
<p>ACTION 8: In conjunction with Natural England, the Council to review the management of protected sites under its ownership or control and ensure that opportunities for grassland enhancement are pursued.</p>	<p>Council continues to work with Natural England around management of several sites including Sinah Common SSSI, Hayling Oyster Beds, and North Common.</p>
<p>ACTION 9: The Council will investigate opportunities for managing its land to improve wetland quality and connectivity.</p>	<p>Opportunities being explored for wetland creation and improvements to quality and connectivity e.g. at Warblington Farm, The Bog, Purbrook.</p>
<p>ACTION 10: The Council will continue to engage with national guidance and advice on nutrient mitigation and ensure that planning policy is in accordance with the latest guidance.</p>	<p>Nutrient position under constant review based on government advice. Warblington Mitigation Scheme continuing to deliver nutrient mitigation across the borough. New Local Plan policy 23 addresses nutrients and water quality.</p>
<p>ACTION 11: The Council to continue to work with and support existing partners and seek to expand partnerships in order to restore and enhance coastal habitats and species.</p>	<p>Council is continuing to work closely with existing partners through established partnership groups. Appointment of Principal Ecologist has enabled greater engagement on technical issues.</p>
<p>ACTION 12: The Council will continue to embed the protection of coastal habitats and species within its planning policies and will continue its support of strategic mitigation measures such as Bird Aware Solent, the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy and nutrient mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Financial and technical support for strategic mitigation measures continues and these embedded in new Local Plan policies 20, 22 and 25.</p>
<p>ACTION 13: Opportunities for 'greening the grey' should be considered and incorporated into relevant projects, plans and strategies, in order to embed biodiversity throughout the urban/suburban environment (which would also have wider benefits such as improving health and well-being and helping to adapt to climate change). Examples include public realm soft landscaping and development landscape design and will include Council-led regeneration schemes.</p>	<p>Principal Ecologist working closely with urban drainage expert colleague to explore opportunities for sustainable drainage and natural flood management solutions on Council land. Engagement with Southern Water in 2025 to explore widespread water capacity and quality solutions across the borough.</p>

Biodiversity Strategy Action	Progress
<p>ACTION 14: Planning policy will require that new development incorporates features for wildlife and recognises green infrastructure as essential infrastructure, such as open spaces, green roofs and walls, integral bird and bat boxes, and suitable native-led planting.</p>	<p>New Local Plan policy 24 requires that all development includes bat roost units and bird nest boxes. Policy 21 requires that existing vegetation is retained wherever possible on new development sites, and that landscaping is led by appropriate native plantings.</p>
<p>ACTION 15: The Council will consult and engage with local communities to help identify opportunities to improve the biodiversity value of their parks and green spaces. This could include investigating the resources needed and public appetite for changing grass cutting regimes, in line with best practice. In accordance with the UK government's commitment to protect 30% of the UK's land by 2030 for nature and biodiversity, the Council could also aim to manage at least 30% of its land holding for biodiversity.</p>	<p>The Council continues to engage with local community groups who help manage Council land. In 2026 the Council will engage over proposals to expand the relaxed mowing scheme. As plans for nature recovery on larger landholdings develop, the Council will consult residents to gauge views.</p>
<p>ACTION 16: The Council to develop biodiversity-focused management plans for all its sites, following best practice guidance and drawing on local consultation and engagement, and establish a process for implementing, monitoring and updating these.</p>	<p>No widespread progress to date. Some detailed progress made on certain larger sites e.g. Hayling Oyster Beds and North Common.</p>
<p>ACTION 17: The Council to investigate minimising its pesticide usage and/or going pesticide free in some areas. This could be done alongside a public consultation to raise awareness and gather residents' views on the matter.</p>	<p>Pesticide and herbicide usage policy currently under review, to be finalised in 2026.</p>
<p>ACTION 18: The Council will work with its partners to promote and support nature friendly land management.</p>	<p>A key thread of existing partnership working is how to ensure that land is managed in a nature friendly way. The Council is looking in detail at its own land at Warblington Farm and how that is managed, is reviewing how it manages its open spaces, and supports ongoing strategic partnership work on catchment-scale land management to improve water quality.</p>
<p>ACTION 19: The Council will undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan, including an assessment of the potential impacts of atmospheric pollution on protected sites.</p>	<p>HRA of Local Plan complete except for air quality impacts. Air quality assessment and HRA currently out to tender.</p>

Biodiversity Strategy Action	Progress
<p>ACTION 20: The Council will continue to be guided by the best available evidence and guidance in relation to nutrient mitigation.</p>	<p>Specialist officers at the Council continue to ensure that Council policy and action is informed by the latest advice on nutrient mitigation, working alongside key partners.</p>
<p>ACTION 21: The Council to adopt BNG planning policy and guidance for minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. This will ensure that eligible development achieves a minimum 10% BNG and that BNG is guided by the LNRS and any local requirements, prioritising locally relevant BNG.</p>	<p>BNG already live and Council is assessing and administering BNG submissions. New Local Plan policy 19 addresses BNG and requires that a minimum 10% BNG is expected for all eligible development.</p>
<p>ACTION 22: The Council to continue to investigate opportunities for BNG on its own land holdings.</p>	<p>Baseline BNG surveys underway on three large Council landholdings: Warblington Farm, North Common, and Hollybank Wood Grassland. Council engaging with Hampshire Wildlife Trust and other planning authorities to explore BNG delivery on Council land.</p>



