

Biodiversity Action Plan for 2025 to 2026

Oxfordshire County Council



The Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 ('the plan') has been prepared to outline the actions to be undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in 2025 to fulfil the biodiversity duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as strengthened by the Environment Act 2021. The actions referred to in this report were initially identified and outlined in the Biodiversity Duty Initial Considerations Report and this plan follows on from the actions undertaken in 2024.

This report includes;

- a summary of the actions OCC will undertake to comply with the biodiversity duty; and
- the actions OCC will carry out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations.

A report of actions implemented will be produced at the end of 2025, including reporting on the following headline performance measures.

Nature Positive Council	Headline Performance Indicator
Council skills, tools and culture	Number of volunteers hours working on biodiversity action for OCC
	Number of staff with up to date biodiversity training
	Number of FTE biodiversity and green infrastructure staff employed
Managing land to improve biodiversity	Area of OCC landholding under nature conservation-led management
	Number of occasions pesticides or herbicides used
	Number of occasions peat, or peat-grown plants, purchased
Biodiversity net gain	
All Planning Applications	%(non-exempt) permissions delivering 10% BNG
	% BNG onsite
	% BNG offsite
	% BNG from statutory credits
	Total areas/lengths of habitats secured in Oxfordshire
	Total areas/lengths of habitats secured outside Oxfordshire
	% BNG delivering LNRS actions
	Area of irreplaceable habitat lost
Our own planning applications and projects coming forward outside of the planning system	% Reg 3 planning applications delivering 20% BNG
	% BNG onsite
	% BNG offsite
	% BNG from statutory credits
	Total areas/lengths of habitats secured in Oxfordshire
	Total areas/lengths of habitats secured outside Oxfordshire
	% BNG delivering LNRS actions
	Area of irreplaceable habitat lost
A Natural Capital Approach	% projects requiring changes in land-use informed by natural capital assessment
	Amount invested in nature-based solutions
	% OCC developments where EBNT or other natural capital assessment undertaken
Oxfordshire-wide Nature Recovery	
(LNRS monitoring and reporting will be developed separately)	Amount invested in organisations who enable nature recovery in Oxfordshire

	% Local Wildlife Sites in Oxfordshire in positive management
Biodiversity Awareness	
	Number of visits to OCC natural environment webpages
Access to Nature for All	
	Area of publicly accessible greenspace on Council landholdings
	Area of publicly accessible greenspace on Council landholdings meeting Green Flag criteria and/or designated as a Local Nature Reserve or Local Wildlife Site.

Oxfordshire County Council Biodiversity Action Plan: priority actions 2025 to 2026

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
Nature Positive Council							
1	Develop a biodiversity footprint for OCC	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.1	-	Increased understanding of current OCC biodiversity baseline	Increased resilience to climate change and decreased negative impact on climate change	Sustainable Supply Chain Officer	
2	Undertake an audit to ensure up-to-date environmental data is integrated appropriately into systems and applications of all OCC service areas and address where necessary	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.2 and	% OCC service areas with up-to-date environmental data input into their systems and applications	Provision of biological records to help inform the impacts of decisions on biodiversity	Biodiversity conservation and enhancement resulting from informed decisions will aid climate resilience	GIS team	
3	Include clauses around conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within standard wording for contracts	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.3		Reduced impact of supply chain on biodiversity	Increased resilience to climate change and decreased negative impact on climate change	Sustainable Supply Chain Officer	
4	Integrate biodiversity conservation and enhancement within Doughnut Economics Collective assessment tool	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.4		Biodiversity is embedded into decision-making, ensuring the impacts are understood and appropriate	Increased resilience to climate change and reduced impact on climate change ,	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	

Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
			avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement integrated			
5	Develop and implement an internal communication and engagement plan including development of biodiversity champions, and tailored biodiversity and landscape training for officers and Councillors	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.5, 3.4	<p>% OCC service areas that have completed their relevant training module</p> <p>Number of biodiversity champions and number of OCC services represented</p> <p>Number of team meetings of each service area attended by L&NR Team</p> <p>Number of Councillors briefed on biodiversity and landscape duties.</p>	<p>Awareness and knowledge of biodiversity increased both internally at OCC</p> <p>Increased resilience to climate change, reduced impact on climate change and increased access to nature as result of greater awareness</p>	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	Number of staff with up-to-date biodiversity training
6	Increase in-house ecological staff and volunteer capacity	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.5	Number of volunteers recruited	<p>Increased capacity within the Landscape and Nature Recovery team, leading to</p> <p>Increased resilience to climate change, reduced impact on climate change</p>	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	Number of volunteers hours on biodiversity action for OCC

Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure	
		Number of FTE biodiversity staff employed	increased frequency of actions that maintain and enhance biodiversity	and increased access to nature		Number of FTE biodiversity staff employed	
7	Implement OCC's management plans, policies and strategies regarding carbon and circular economy,	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.5	-	Climate mitigation measures that reduce the Council's carbon footprint, limiting global warming, benefit biodiversity by reducing the potential impacts of climate change. Moving OCC towards a circular economy will reduce use of natural resources, pollution and support natural regeneration, benefitting biodiversity.	Increased resilience to climate change and reduced impact on climate change	Zero Carbon Council Manager / Team Leader – Waste Strategy and Circular Economy	-
8	Through review of Property Strategy identify opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Councils' property portfolio	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.5	-	Impacts on biodiversity reduced and opportunity areas to enhance biodiversity implemented	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature for sites publicly accessible	Property and Estates Operational Manager	

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
9	Develop Biodiversity KPIs across all relevant service areas of OCC	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.5	% of OCC service areas with biodiversity KPIs	Performance in relation to biodiversity conservation and enhancement quantified and tracked allowing for biodiversity gains to be achieved and to inform effectiveness of actions	Increased resilience to climate change	Environment and Heritage Operational Manager / Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	
10	Continue to develop a Habitat Banking Vehicle for provision of high-integrity BNG on OCC landholdings,	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.6 Action 18 of the Climate Adaptation Road Map	Habitat Banking Vehicle established and operational; number of BNG units available on OCC landholdings	Increased area of OCC landholding under management for nature conservation	Climate adaptation, climate resilience and improved access for nature through design and prioritisation of sites	Property and Estates Operational Manager	
11	Continue to monitor and report on the ecological condition of all designated wildlife sites under the responsibility of OCC and input them into positive conservation management including Local Wildlife Sites, District Wildlife Sites and Road Verge Nature Reserves	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.6	% of designated wildlife sites owned or partially owned by OCC baseline surveyed % of designated wildlife sites owned or partially owned by OCC in good ecological condition and in	The condition of sites with high biodiversity value is understood across the county. The biodiversity value of these sites is maintained and increased	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature for sites publicly accessible	Highway Operations Manager / Property and Estates Operational Manager / Biodiversity Officer	Area of OCC landholding under nature conservation-led management

Action		Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
			appropriate management				
			% RVNRs with data less than 5 years old				
			% of RVNRs in good ecological condition and in appropriate management				
			Number of RVNR sites put into active management per year (target is 6)				
12	Continue to assess and implement submissions received for proposals for alternative road verge management and road verge nature reserves	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.6	Number of sites proposed designated as sites of alternative management	The biodiversity value of road verges will be maintained and increased	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature	Highway Operations Manager / Biodiversity Officer	Area of OCC landholding under nature conservation-led management
13	Update the tree policy to maximise biodiversity as far as possible	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.6	-	Tree planting in the best locations will maintain and increase biodiversity value	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature	Tree Service Manager / Senior Biodiversity Officer	
14	Audit use of pesticides and herbicides across OCC	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.7 Circular Economy Theme: Regenerate	Number of occasions pesticides or herbicides applied	Reduction in loss of biodiversity caused by,	Increased numbers of pollinators	Biodiversity Officer	Number of occasions pesticides or herbicides applied

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
		natural systems and reduce pollution		pesticides and herbicides.			
15	Audit use of peat across OCC	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.8	Number of occasions peat or peat-grown plants purchased	Reduction in loss of biodiversity caused by peat.	Increased resilience to climate change and decreased negative impact on climate change	Biodiversity Officer/Sustainable Supply Chain Officer	Number of occasions peat or peat-grown plants purchased
16	Collect and report on data relating to BNG secured through the planning process (statutory requirement)	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.10	% of BNG achieved per year	Biodiversity net gain data collated to inform future policy	Increased resilience to climate change through analysis of the data collected	Development Management Team / Senior Biodiversity Officer	% permissions delivering 10% BNG % BNG onsite % BNG offsite Total areas/lengths of habitats secured in Oxfordshire Total areas/lengths of habitats secured outside Oxfordshire % BNG delivering LNRS actions
17	Implement and track the delivery of >20% BNG gain when carrying out OCC's Reg3 developments, developments undertaken on OCC landholdings, projects undertaken by OCC not subject to planning control, or implemented under OCC's permitted development rights,	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.9, 1.10	% of BNG achieved per year	Increased biodiversity gains and reduced negative impacts resulting from actions undertaken by OCC. Legal compliance with the NERC Act 2006	Improved resilience of communities to climate change. Increased opportunities for residents to engage with nature	Major Infrastructure Projects Team/Development Control Team/Senior Biodiversity Officer	% Reg 3 permissions delivering 20% BNG % BNG onsite % BNG offsite Total areas/lengths of habitats secured in Oxfordshire

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
	which exceed minimum thresholds.			and Environment Act 2021. Reduced risk of failure to achieve BNG commitments due to impacts of climate change			Total areas/lengths of habitats secured outside Oxfordshire % BNG delivering LNRS actions
18	Complete a quantitative assessment of levels of change in biodiversity that restoration of minerals sites in Oxfordshire has secured in the past	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.11	-	Opportunities for conservation and enhancement for biodiversity through the minerals planning process will be better understood in context of mandatory BNG, resulting in an overall increase in biodiversity through informed Local Plan policy	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature for sites publicly accessible	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	
19	Develop detailed guidance on biodiversity in minerals and waste sites	Biodiversity Action Framework 1.11	-	Biodiversity maintained and enhanced to an appropriate standard on minerals sites	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature for sites publicly accessible	Senior Biodiversity Officer	
A Natural Capital Approach							
20	Provide internal training and guidance on assessing natural	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.1, 2.3	Number of OCC staff and Members		Ensure the best public value, considering the	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
	capital of land-use change proposals		receiving natural capital training.		scarcity of some natural resources and trade-offs between objectives.		
21	Undertake natural capital assessments of proposed land-use change	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.1	% projects requiring changes in land-use informed by natural capital assessment	The natural capital baseline and opportunity areas are understood, and how biodiversity enhancements can contribute to this	Increased resilience to climate change	Property and Estates Operational Manager/Senior Biodiversity Officer	% projects requiring changes in land-use informed by natural capital assessment
22	Continue to sign post the Flood Toolkit and identify natural flood management schemes within recommendations by the flood risk management team in Section 19 reports	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.2	Number of natural flood management schemes recommended by the flood risk management team and number implemented	Increased biodiversity value of areas where schemes are implemented	Increased climate resilience through improved flood defences and increased access to nature where natural flood management schemes are implemented	Flood Risk Management Operational Manager / Senior Biodiversity Officer	
23	Deliver at least 30% tree canopy provision on OCC schemes in line with tree policy	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.2	% Canopy cover on OCC schemes	Increased biodiversity and habitat connectivity	Improved natural shading of transport routes and urban areas, supporting climate adaptation. Improved air quality through	Tree Service Manager/Major Project Team	Total % canopy cover on OCC schemes

Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
				filtration of particulate matter		
24	Support a partner organisation to fund and deliver at least one Natural Flood Management scheme.	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.2 Action 24 of the Climate Adaptation Route Map	£XXX provided per year	The biodiversity value of habitats and species impacted by the scheme are maintained and increased where possible		Amount invested in nature-based solutions
25	Where appropriate, provide opportunities to improve people's access to nature and deliver climate adaptation when designing BNG.	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.3 Action 18 of the Climate Adaptation Road Map	% OCC developments where EBNT or other natural capital assessment demonstrates wider environmental benefits		Improved resilience of communities to climate change. Increased opportunities for residents to engage with nature	Major Infrastructure Projects Team % OCC developments where EBNT or other natural capital assessment demonstrates wider environmental benefits
26	Produce design guidelines for infrastructure and schools projects to ensure good design of BNG	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.4	-	Biodiversity maintained and enhanced to an appropriate standard for new school projects	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature including education opportunities for students	Senior Biodiversity Officer
27	Provide schools with information about opportunities available to support connecting pupils with nature	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.4	Number of communications with schools on biodiversity	Increased awareness will have indirect impact on	Increased awareness of the ecosystems	Children's and Family Services

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
				biodiversity through increasing public support for biodiversity action	services provided by nature.		
28	Set up internal systems and network of staff involved in planning and delivery of Green Infrastructure	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.5	Number of network events	Increased opportunities for joined-up delivery of green infrastructure identified	Increase in multi-functional benefits achieved through green infrastructure delivery	Landscape and Green Infrastructure Technical Lead	
29	Assess the feasibility and requirement for developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County	Biodiversity Action Framework 2.6 Action 21 of the Climate Adaptation Route Map	-	Opportunity areas for biodiversity enhancements will be understood and enhancement actions identified	Increased resilience to climate change and access to nature	Landscape and green infrastructure technical lead	
Oxfordshire-wide Nature Recovery							
30	Revise LNRS in light of public consultation and adopt and launch final strategy (statutory requirement)	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.1		Actions for biodiversity across Oxfordshire will be more effective	Multi-functional benefits better understood	Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project Manager	
31	Work with partners on a LNRS implementation plan for co-ordination of action	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.1.1		Actions for biodiversity across Oxfordshire will be more effective		Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project Manager	
32	Work in partnership to develop processes and systems to monitor LNRS delivery	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.1.2, 3.1.2		Actions for biodiversity across		Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project Manager	

Action		Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
				Oxfordshire will be more effective			
33	Develop a biodiversity climate impact assessment	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.1.3 Action 26 of the Climate Adaptation Route Map	-	The impacts of climate change on local biodiversity is better understood, allowing actions to be shaped to support climate resilience of the County's nature	Increased resilience to climate change and reduced impact on climate change	Climate Adaptation Officer	
34	Continue work with the OLNP, and OxLEP to support development of nature finance in Oxfordshire, and to attract nature finance towards delivery of LNRS priorities	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.1.4/3.1.5	<p>Number of projects identified in the Green Prospectus which deliver LNRS actions</p> <p>Attendance at 100 Together event</p> <p>Number of projects on OLNP crowdfunding platform</p> <p>Amount of OCC funding for Oxfordshire Conservation Investment Fund</p>	Increased funding will result in more project delivering LNRS actions	Increased resilience to climate change and reduced impact on climate change	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader/Head of Countryside and Waste	

	Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
35	Produce updated Lower Windrush Valley Project strategy	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.2	-	The project strategy employed helps ensure the project delivers against LNRS priorities maximising the effectiveness of the project regarding biodiversity	Increased resilience to climate change, identification of areas to facilitate climate adaptation and increased access to nature for site visitors and volunteers	Lower Windrush Valley and Green Infrastructure Projects Manager	
36	Continue to fund and support the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, National Landscapes and other organisations which enable LNRS delivery, and seek to provide longer term funding commitments	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.1.3/3.3	£XXX provided per year	Continued recording and provision of biological records to help inform the impacts of decisions on biodiversity. Continued actions that enhance the biodiversity of Oxfordshire, supporting delivery of the LNRS	Increased access to nature for volunteers and help in understanding of how species records are affected by climate change. Increased resilience to climate change, identification of areas to facilitate climate adaptation and increased access to nature across Oxfordshire through a wide variety of projects	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader	<p>Amount invested in organisations who enable nature recovery in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Number of partnership meetings attended by OCC</p> <p>Number of NL Management Plans, Nature Recovery Plans and Climate Adaptation plans with OCC input.</p>
37	Update the 'Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire' document	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.5	-	Appropriate biodiversity information	Increased resilience to climate change	Senior Biodiversity Officer in	

Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
			submitted in support of planning applications allowing positive actions for biodiversity to be achieved, including delivery of high integrity BNG which supports delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	and reduced impact on climate change	partnership with Districts and LNP	
38	Respond to Local plans consultations to promote policies that exceed minimum 10% biodiversity net gain requirement, embed the Oxfordshire BNG Principles, and support delivery of the LNRS	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.5	Number of Local Plan consultation responses incorporating recommendations. Number of Local Plans incorporating recommendations.	Increased biodiversity net gain across Oxfordshire's districts and a consistent approach in line with the Oxfordshire BNG Principles and delivery of the LNRS	Increased resilience to climate change, reduced impact on climate change and increased access to nature for publicly accessible sites	Senior Biodiversity Officer
39	Continue to fund and support the Oxfordshire Wildlife Sites Project, seek to provide longer term funding commitments	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.6	£XXX provided per year	Continued provision of free wildlife surveys and expert advice about conservation management will	Designation of new local wildlife sites will aid climate resilience. Monitoring of existing local wildlife sites will	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader / Senior Biodiversity Officer
						Amount invested in organisations who enable nature recovery in Oxfordshire

Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
			ensure sites of County importance are protected through the planning system and help support good management.	aid understanding of the effects of climate change and increase access to nature for those undertaking the monitoring		% Local Wildlife Sites in Oxfordshire in positive conservation management
40	Continue to support Community Action Groups across Oxfordshire	Biodiversity Action Framework 3.7	Continued actions that enhance the biodiversity of Oxfordshire and delivery of LNRS measures.	Increased education and inspiration of people	Team Leader Waste Strategy/ LNRS Project Manager	Amount invested in organisations who enable nature recovery in Oxfordshire
Biodiversity Awareness						
41	Develop and implement an external communication and engagement plan with partners	Biodiversity Action Framework 4.1	Increased actions taken by residents, communities, landowners and businesses in Oxfordshire, implementation of LNRS actions	Increased resilience to climate change, reduced impact on climate change and increased access to nature as result of greater awareness	LNRS Project Manager	
42	Review OCC natural environment webpages to ensure information is up-to-date and inspires people to take action	Biodiversity Action Framework 4.1	Number of visits to OCC natural environment webpages	Increased actions taken by residents, communities, landowners and businesses in Oxfordshire,	Increased resilience to climate change, reduced impact on climate change and increased access to nature	Landscape and Nature Recovery Team Leader Number of visits to OCC natural environment webpages

Action	Relevant Policies	Measure	Estimated impact on biodiversity	Estimated wider impacts	Officer lead	Performance Measure
			implementation of LNRS actions	as result of greater awareness		
Access to Nature for All						
43	Audit OCC landholdings to assess potential to provide accessible greenspace to Green Flag Award standard and/or designate as Local Nature Reserve or Local Wildlife Site	Biodiversity Action Framework 5.1	Improved biodiversity value of OCC landholdings	Improved health and wellbeing of communities resulting from increased contact with nature	Property and Estates Operational Manager/Senior Biodiversity Officer/Countryside Access Strategy Team Leader	Area of publicly accessible greenspace on Council landholdings meeting Green Flag criteria and/or designated as a Local Nature Reserve or Local Wildlife Site.