

# Biodiversity Duty Report 2025

## Mid Devon District Council

### Contents

Foreword.....	3
Background .....	4
Outcomes.....	5
Policies that support the action plan.....	5
Action taken through the Local Planning Authority function .....	5
Place-making and Coordinated Local Plan Delivery .....	7
Action outside the Local Planning Authority function .....	9
Boosting Nature in Green Spaces .....	9
Tree planting .....	10
Promoting nature conservation .....	10
Partnership working with Blackdown Hills National Landscape (BHNL).....	10
Partnership working with Grand Western Canal.....	11
Joint actions to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).....	11
Contributions to support Devon Local Nature Partnership (LNP).....	11
Ecological Awareness and Knowledge.....	12
Goals and activity being developed, considered or prepared by the Council .....	12
The next 5 years.....	12
Policy Framework and Action Plan .....	13

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## Foreword

### A Joined-Up Approach

Restoring nature is complicated and challenging. So, naturally, the Council's duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity does not belong to any single team - rather, it is shared across our organisation and woven across what we do.

We set out aims for each policy remit in our plans, and this document reports on all of those goals and shares an overview of activities, which are often joint efforts from our teams and partners.

This year we are pleased to report that our new approach to tracking biodiversity net gain (BNG) through local planning decisions means over 180 sites will gain biodiversity improvement. We have also secured 4 biodiversity habitat banks. Mid Devon is currently surpassing the minimum 10% BNG delivery required through development management within this district. We continue to strengthen our work with communities and collaboration with other Local Authorities through a new Blackdown Hills National Landscape Partnership Plan, including the Connecting the Culm initiative to reduce flooding and improve river water quality.

Aspirational activity includes increasing engagement around climate change, building on and supporting local community work, which supports delivery of our Climate and Biodiversity Action Plans. Inspired by Mid Devon's landscapes and wildlife, we look for more opportunities to share learning from successes such as brilliant soils management, by engaging more farmers with ambitions to achieve nature recovery and nature-based solutions. Slowing the flow of rivers will help to defend property from storm water whilst improving water quality for the benefit of wildlife and people.

In the forthcoming year we look forward to acting on the adopted Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy and we will seek to become even more holistic and systemic in our approach, as we work together to protect and restore Mid Devon's biodiversity.

Councillor Natasha Bradshaw

Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

## Background

The Council's 'biodiversity duty' is a statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats and species)<sup>1</sup>. The aim is to provide for the enhancement or improvement of biodiversity, not just its maintenance in its current state. The Council must also [report on its biodiversity duty actions](#) in accordance with Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) [guidance](#).

### Joined-up delivery of the Council's actions

Responsibility to deliver on the general biodiversity duty is shared across all Council operations, so the goals in its action plan relate to the roles of all Policy Development Groups (PDGs) and the statutory role and function of the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

Thus, action and policy development is split into two separate streams. Either:

- a. matters within the Council's statutory Planning Policy making process and the statutory powers as a Local Planning Authority (LPA), largely governed and prescribed by national policy and through the work of the Forward Planning and Development Management teams, or;
- b. items outside those functions, such as the Council's land, housing and estates management and its wider corporate operations.

The Council's *Biodiversity Duty Policy Framework and Action Plan* (action plan) was put in place following a first consideration, action plan development and formal approval. The action plan's purpose is to enable and inform implementation, decision-making and policy development.

### The reporting period

The Council's action plan was developed with elected members and staff teams during 2024; therefore, this report covers activities from 2024 and 2025. After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period, as required by Defra.

### Report content

This report covers: outcomes and actions taken to comply with the duty; how we plan to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period; actions to address Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations; BNG results (resulting); how BNG obligations will be met in the next reporting period.

We also cover Council actions and partnership working to benefit nature and people, such as around community engagement and Devon's Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The enhanced biodiversity duty, set out by the Environment Act 2021 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) as amended.

## Outcomes

### Policies that support the action plan

Corporate Plan priorities 1.4 and 1.5, shown below, relate to the biodiversity duty.

1.4 We will ensure that biodiversity is increased across the district.

*We will develop and implement our Biodiversity Duty Action Plan across all Council services. Through the planning system, we will encourage developers to exceed the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, working with local communities where possible, in order to bring real enhancement to nature and landscapes across the district.*

1.5 We will value and protect Mid Devon's natural and built environment

*We will work with our communities to address environmental damage and will look to prosecute those who cause harm through fly-tipping or littering on public land. We will also challenge those who fail to mitigate environmental impact, liaising with other statutory bodies as required to bring about change. We recognise the importance of the natural and built environment and will work to protect our cultural heritage.*

### Action taken through the Local Planning Authority function

The national requirement for most new development to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% of the original land condition, was introduced in 2024.

In response to this, Mid Devon has approved 2 biodiversity habitat banks within the district (both of which are currently delivered on site). There are a further 2 sites awaiting the conclusion of respective S.106 agreements. These provide an opportunity for development to acquire BNG units (credits), both within the district and further afield ([records show](#) e.g. units allocated to developments across a wide distribution from Cornwall to Waltham Forest). As such, BNG improvements within Mid Devon are currently supporting development in excess of our own requirements resulting in greater than 10% BNG delivery required through development management within this district.

The Planning team records the number of Consents with BNG secured (and enforcement of action for nature).

During 2024/25 Mid Devon increased its planning enforcement resource - enabling it to serve enforcement notices / prosecute landowners and developers that are undertaking unauthorised development - to protect landscape and heritage interests. Until the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024/25, Mid Devon had maintained an appropriate level of housing supply,

which allows it to afford full weight to Local Plan policies. Thereafter, and at the point the adopted Local Plan became 5 years old, the Planning Authority has had to work to national housing targets significantly above those set out within the Adopted Local Plan. This has reduced the weight afforded to the most relevant policies within the Adopted Local Plan (i.e. those relating to housing supply) however, other policies remain relevant to the determination of planning proposals, including for protected landscapes and nature conservation sites. The obligations to deliver a 10% net gain in BNG will, because of the increased housing requirement, increase the amount of BNG that will be delivered within Mid Devon.

### BNG results (resulting)

For 2025, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) have recorded 187 planning applications which resulted in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) or Biodiversity Mitigation / Enhancement. The numbers of applications were broken down as follows:

- 59 Applications have resulted in the securing of BNG
- 157 Applications where Biodiversity Mitigation / Enhancement was secured.

Of the above, there were 29 applications where both BNG and Biodiversity Mitigation / Enhancement measures were secured.

In addition to the above, 2 BNG Habitat Banks have been created at Puddington and Higher Ayshford Farm, Westleigh and as at 2025, we had a further 2 proposed BNG Habitat Bank applications which have been resolved to be supported subject to Section 106 agreements whereby the LPA would be the monitoring authority.

### County Ecologist support

Throughout 2025, Devon County Council's (DCC) Natural Environment Team supported the LPA by providing ecological comment and advice on 211 formal consultations, delivering staff training on BNG and bats in buildings, and running fortnightly surgeries to assist with ongoing BNG and ecology queries. The Ecologist team also undertook high-level ecological assessments of 62 potential site allocations for the Local Plan (HELAA) and supported the monitoring of existing habitat banks alongside the potential creation of others. Overall, the Service Level Agreement has proved to be a highly effective and will continue in 2026.

### Coordinated effort

Actions being developed, prepared or implemented by the Council have involved cross-team working between specialists and planners in addition to partnership working. These include:

- a) Consideration of the potential to enhance conservation status for key areas, and liaison with managers of special sites such as Local Nature Reserves.

- b) Consideration of natural heritage features in relation to review of cultural heritage conservation areas.
- c) Whilst the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been in preparation, we have been actively involved as the Supporting Authority, to help shape the LNRS format, and to ensure clarity on the LNRS role with regard to Planning.
- d) Partnership working with Blackdown Hills National Landscape (BHNL) such as close cooperation to support the BHNL Management Plan.
- e) Masterplanning and coordinated delivery of development schemes, with integration of open spaces, and other green infrastructure.

### Place-making and Coordinated Local Plan Delivery

The East Cullompton / Phase 1 Culm Garden Village masterplan is landscape led and seeks to ensure ecological connectivity through green and blue corridors through the site with an ecological as well as amenity function and this is being seen in the plans submitted with planning applications. These corridors will eventually link to country parks to the north and south of the Culm Garden Village as later phases are allocated.

The Council has worked to address the impact of the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (EUE), a strategic urban extension in the adopted Local Plan, with environmental enhancement measures. Ecological connectivity will be conserved between existing habitats by carefully designed features such as garden layout, hedgerows and public green spaces.

### Example: large trees planted to enhance Blundell's Road, Tiverton.



Figure 1 - Councillors Steve Keable and Les Cruwys plant a Hornbeam.

New trees that are great for nature, wellbeing, air quality and cooling have been planted along Blundell's Road, as part of achieving the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (EUE), funded thanks to the Council's climate and sustainability budget.

The trees planted were large standards, a mix of Large Leaf Lime, English Oak, Turkish Hazel, Hornbeam and Liquid Amber. These were chosen for their significant ecological value and biodiversity benefits. The street scene team will provide aftercare to ensure the long-term health and vitality of the newly planted trees.

Chosen for their adaptability to climate change and their power to support biodiversity, they will grace the neighbourhood for many years to come, and follow work to improve safety for everyone who travels this eastern stretch of the road.

The final tree, a hornbeam, was planted by Councillor Steve Keable and Councillor Les Cruwys on Wednesday 4 December 2024, with

officers from Mid Devon District Council and Devon County Council in attendance.

Cllr Steven Keable, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration said:

"The completion of this stage of the traffic calming measures, alongside the planting of 9 broadleaf trees, will improve safety for all road users while enhancing the environment. Blundell's Road is a vital connection into the town centre, and these improvements will make a meaningful difference to everyone who lives, works, and travels here."

The area has seen significant enhancement of the pedestrian footpath and creation of a cycle way on the north side of Blundell's Road, creating a safer, more welcoming space for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Action outside the Local Planning Authority function

Activities and decisions implemented by the Council



Figure 2 - Lesser Stitchwort growing in an unmown zone. ©2025 Jason P Ball

### Boosting Nature in Green Spaces

Mid Devon District Council manages a wide range of Open Spaces - formal parks, playing fields, play areas, general open spaces, cemeteries and closed churchyards. Where possible, we are improving habitats to benefit biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

We have reduced the frequency of grass cutting to the minimum level that still allows reasonable recreational use of open spaces. (Frequency of cutting on most open spaces reduced by 40% since 2017.) Suitable sites have been removed from routine grass cutting and are maintained on a Conservation Regime, where cutting only takes place once or twice a year.

To benefit flora and fauna, some sites receive minimal intervention. Where safe to do so we will leave standing deadwood, a crucial habitat for invertebrates.

Mid Devon no longer plants annual bedding plants and has moved towards the use of herbaceous or woody species attractive to pollinator insects. Mid Devon does not use peat-based products. Green material produced from pruning is chipped and re-used as mulch wherever possible.

## Tree planting

During the 2024-2025 season the Council planted 172 large standards in green spaces with funding from the [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#), thanks to a Trees for Cities partnership bid. This was additional to the 9 large standards planted along Blundell's Road in Tiverton. Large standards equate to circa 10 saplings, so this was the equivalent of 1,810 small trees planted.

## Promoting nature conservation

We work with local groups and members of the public on conservation projects. This includes planting community orchards e.g. on Housing land and coordinating effort with tenants on projects such as 'wild' zones, hedgehog highways and wildflower areas.

The council helps to promote and encourage local nature conservation projects such as the [Tidcombe Fen volunteer work parties](#), and [Tivvy Tree Team](#) who help to care for the Tiverton Community Orchard (council land) and engage the community in tree care and planting around the Tiverton area.

We enabled volunteers in the Crediton area to establish the [Mid Devon Tree Warden Group](#) in 2024, working closely with Crediton Town Council, and we hope to expand the initiative to other localities. We have a good and developing relationship with Sustainable Crediton for community gardens and green spaces with wildlife conservation areas, wildflowers and pollinator zones looked after by the [Crediton Pollinator Group](#), also whip planting and the Crediton woodlands group.

We have supported the management group for the Charwell Wetlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR) at Bradninch. Officers advised on the LNR status and its importance on the Local Plan, as the volunteers considered their plans for future management.

We worked in partnership with Dart Valley farmers and landowners group on their November 2025 meeting, themed on regenerative farming, which featured the documentary film 'Six Inches of Soil' and a panel of soil experts. The group is forming a landscape-scale nature recovery project in the Dart catchment (a tributary of the River Exe) which has inspired a coordinated effort by landowners and land managers with support from volunteers, advisors and the Devon Wildlife Trust.

## Partnership working with Blackdown Hills National Landscape (BHNL)

The Council is a partner in the *Connecting the Culm* project, led by the BHNL. The project works with farmers and local communities on citizen science and nature-based solutions for climate adaptation and flood risks.

Nature-based solutions use natural processes and systems to tackle environmental challenges such as flooding, drought, and biodiversity loss. They offer a wide range of benefits to people and wildlife.

We have specifically funded engagement activities in 2025 and 2026 around the River Culm catchment, themed on climate change resilience and nature-based solutions to address risks such as drought and flooding.

### Partnership working with Grand Western Canal

Councillors and officers are involved in the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee. The canal is an ecologically important linear set of habitats valued by local communities and by visitors to Mid Devon, a notable wildlife corridor and a key feature in the Mid Devon landscape. We are involved in decisions around the site conservation such as the management plan (revised during 2025) and we support work to raise awareness of the canal's special qualities. The canal is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and as a County Wildlife Site; officers have also begun to investigate the potential to enhance protective status as part of the Local Plan process.

### Joint actions to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

We have been actively involved as one of the Supporting Authorities for [Devon's LNRS](#) during its development, to help inform and provide feedback to the Strategy team.

The Strategy will guide ecological recovery in Devon by mapping habitats, features and key species to identify opportunities and priorities to improve connectivity, diversity and abundance. Co-benefits to nature recovery include: climate change adaptation and mitigation; water quality; Natural Capital and ecosystem services; wellbeing.

[Online resources](#) aim to enable everyone to play a role in nature recovery. To help us all to appreciate, promote and join forces in action across Devon, communities and partners are encouraged to share their projects and case studies on the [delivery map](#). The Council has shared its green space management activities as part of that record.

The Council helped to promote the 2025 LNRS public consultation, and to facilitate participation e.g. the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change prompted a special working group of the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee to ensure joined-up approach about the canal. Devon County Council's (DCC) County Ecologist attended the meeting chaired by the Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

### Contributions to support Devon Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

Achievements of the Devon LNP support achievement of the biodiversity duty locally. Our contribution to the Devon LNP supports initiatives such as Devon Invasive Species Initiative (DISI), learning facilitated by the Network of Environmental Educators in Devon (NEED), Wild About Devon (WAD) supporting communities to take action for nature, including through the WAD grant, and celebrating those who do through the WAD Awards, Naturally Healthy, which includes the Naturally Healthy Forum.

## Ecological Awareness and Knowledge

Members of the planning and forward planning teams undertook a guided site visit to Tidcombe Fen SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) as part of continuing professional development. The workshop covered topics such as site designation, habitat conservation requirements, threats and impacts linked to local development, and the roles of the owners, management team and volunteers. Team members also undertook training about BNG and bats in buildings (noted earlier).

## Goals and activity being developed, considered or prepared by the Council

- Early-stage reviews of land management and opportunities to enhance nature.
- Teamwork between the forward planning team and the Climate and Sustainability Specialist to enable e.g. consideration of the potential to enhance conservation status for key areas.
- Team workshops and training on ecological awareness and nature-friendly management of Council assets.

## The next 5 years

Action and monitoring for the next 5 years to comply with the biodiversity duty and BNG obligations will centre around the Council's current Biodiversity Duty Policy Framework and Action Plan. Action plans will be reviewed after 2028 when Mid Devon District Council is to be replaced by a unitary authority through [local government reorganisation](#). Council actions will seek to support national and local strategies.

Providing national strategic context, England's [Environmental Improvement Plan \(EIP\) 2025](#) now includes [interim targets](#), published December 2025. The EIP recognises:

- that Nature enables, drives and protects economic growth, [supports stronger local economies, improves public health, builds climate resilience and enhances people's lives](#) (European Commission 2025)
- that [England is substantially nature-depleted](#) (State of Nature Partnership 2023)
- that nature-related risks such as soil health decline and ecological losses could [reduce UK GDP by up to 3% over the next decade](#) (Green Finance Institute 2024) and the World Economic Forum [ranks biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse as the third most severe global risk](#) (World Economic Forum 2022).

At the time of writing this report (to be submitted to Defra in March 2026) [Devon's LNRS](#) was due to achieve Defra-approved status very soon. The LNRS sets out priorities and opportunities for nature recovery that will inform Council actions and decision-making.

## Policy Framework and Action Plan

Mid Devon District Council's implementation and monitoring of its Statutory Duty for Biodiversity will focus on the following Biodiversity Duty Policy Framework and Action Plan. This contains aims, actions and goals for the Council and its partners.

Policy and practical actions are shown in tables below, for each policy / service remit.

### Policy Development Groups (PDG)

- f) Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group
- g) Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group
- h) Homes Policy Development Group
- i) Economy and Assets Policy Development Group
- j) Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group

Table 1 - Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
e1	Biodiversity Net Gain at 10% or above.				Please refer to the actions for the Local Planning Authority role.
e2	Shape / influence planning policy.		Not applicable.		The PDG seek to influence policy where appropriate via liaison with Planning and Policy Advisory Group (PPAG). <i>One potential metric is the number of policies influenced.</i>
e3a	Tree Policy and Strategy.	Strengthen tree policy. Develop a Tree Strategy e.g. to improve potential for greater tree cover.	Document in place.	2026	Task for new Tree Officer when in post (due to start March 2026).
e5	Active engagement with nature.	Engagement and partnership projects to help celebrate, boost and monitor biodiversity on Council owned land.	No. of events.		The Tree Officer helped set up Mid Devon Tree Warden Group. During 2025 Council spaces were a venue to 17 activities on sustainability, nature conservation, tree care and community orchard management.
e6	Partnership schemes to boost nature at landscape scale.	Seek to identify and enhance special sites, Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Country Parks.  Landscape scale enhancement projects e.g. woodland cover, connectivity, river valley schemes.	No. of sites by 2028.	1 new LNR / country park / special scheme.	Research on one site's potential designations has begun.

Table 2 - Community, People and Equalities PDG

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
c1	Review strategic grants to achieve biodiversity benefits.	This could include e.g. agreed results linked to a supported partner organisation or project.	Not applicable.		Next review due 2026.  Support includes a grant to the Grand Western Canal Country Park and Local Nature Reserve, and partnership working with the canal joint committee.
c2	Health and wellbeing benefits of nature.	Consider, monitor and promote the social and wellbeing benefits of nature engagement activities, green space, and ecological health.	Reporting in place.	2027	
c3	Co-benefits for nature and communities.	Consider and promote the social benefits of nature-based solutions for climate change e.g. natural flood management schemes, urban tree cover.	Not applicable.		Partnership work via Blackdown Hills National Landscape ('Connecting the Culm') launched community learning activities about climate resilience and nature-based solutions to flood risk and drought.

Table 3 - Homes PDG

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
h1	Tenant engagement projects to help celebrate, boost and monitor biodiversity on Mid Devon Housing land.	Activities or events. Communications (e.g. leaflet, social media) about maintenance of grounds and properties, in relation to wildlife.	Engagement numbers in each scheme. Number of schemes.	Annual summary to PDG. At least 3 sites or communities engaged per year.	Hosted an event 'green homes, sustainable living in social housing'– exploring environmentally friendly housing and living practices. Mid Devon in Bloom competition for tenants, including best wildlife or sustainable garden. Regular biodiversity articles in tenant newsletters. Recruited 1 tenant as a Sustainability Representative, with recruitment for further reps ongoing.
h2	Add enhancement targets into estate and asset strategy	Enhancement features and management practices e.g. roost bricks, mowing regimes, bird and bat boxes, planting.	No. of features / installations.	Plan to be in place 2026.	Wildflowers planted in Bradninch, bug hotels to soon be added. Bird boxes to be added in Crediton, wildflowers alongside hedgehog homes and feed continue to be provided in Willand, dwarf fruit trees planted in Tiverton and plans in place for wildflower patch in spring 2026 in Tiverton.
h3	Ecological awareness	Provide a foundation of ecology training for key staff.	No. of training sessions.	At least 1 ecology workshop per year.	This goal has been achieved through informal on-the-job learning when coordinating community nature projects. An additional formal workshop is to be organised.

Table 4 - Economy and Assets PDG

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
ea1	Promote sustainable local food systems.	Regenerative / positive and low impact production innovations.	Not applicable.		Build on partnership work and SPF/REPF support for local food producers.
ea2	Support innovation and investment opportunities that enhance biodiversity across Mid Devon landscapes, neighbourhoods and built assets.	Promote environmental land management partnerships and grants. Promote local investment in urban green space. Promote green schemes with co-benefits for nature such as restorative landscape enhancement, farm diversification, active travel and ecotourism.	TBC Unlikely that MDDC would lead on this.	TBC	<p>Supported a Regenerative Agriculture initiative with REPF/SPF funding. Promoted farm grants available and free <a href="#">Water Wise advice</a> for Creedy and West Exe catchment. Promoted Creedy and Culm crayfish projects and Environment Agency work in those catchments to address river pollution.</p> <p>Joint work to support awareness of soils and regenerative farming as part of nature recovery e.g. a joint event with Dart Valley farmers in November 2025.</p> <p>Partnership work via Blackdown Hills National Landscape (BHNL) launched 'Connecting the Culm' community learning activities about climate resilience and nature-based solutions to flood risk and drought. BHNL researched and showcased nature-based solutions as investment</p>

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
					opportunities with valuable benefits e.g. to rail infrastructure resilience.
ea3	Promote investment in Natural Capital and resource conservation.	Recognise, encourage and monitor the economic benefits of e.g. natural flood management schemes, habitat carbon capture / banking and biodiversity banking.	Not applicable.		Unlikely that MDDC would lead.
ea4	Council estate and asset management	Build biodiversity enhancement targets into estate and asset management strategy.	Plan in place.	2026	Targets to be embedded in the new (2026) asset management plans for Property Services.  The Housing team is setting itself annual targets for site enhancement such as through its programme of community nature projects.
ea5	Regeneration to boost nature.	MDDC major regeneration bids to include habitat gains and ecologically informed design.	Actions in major bids.		Consideration being given on how to enhance existing scheme to deliver additional benefits.

Table 5 - Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement PDG

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action / Aim</b>	<b>Goals / measures of success</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>PROGRESS NOTES</b>
s1	Mowing regimes	Monitor the effects of conservation management and mowing regimes (less cutting) in cemeteries and green spaces.		Increase the number and variety of plant and invertebrate species present on these areas	Baseline study is required, of areas managed for conservation and for the more frequently mown areas.
s2	Optimise land management plans	Review land management plans to ensure gains.	Review document.	2026	To be done. Can be linked to and influenced by ecological awareness workshops to help the buy-in (sense of ownership of these gains).
s3	Legacy policy	Develop a policy to conserve gains achieved e.g. if land management is passed to another party / partner.	Policy in place.	2025	Aim in place within this action plan. Policy not yet in place, but as a number of Parishes are in dialogue with the Council about land transfer there is potential for commitments within agreements.
s4	Ecological awareness	Provide a foundation of ecology training for key staff.	Number of training sessions.	At least 1 ecology workshop per year.	During 2026 the team will use toolbox talks with grounds maintenance operatives to contribute to / facilitate ecological awareness.
s5	Enhance nature on Council property.	Build biodiversity enhancement targets into estate and asset management strategy.	Plan in place.	2027	To be done.

Table 6 - Local Planning Authority role

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
p1	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) at 10% or above.	Require and enforce mandatory BNG at 10% or above, where possible, for eligible developments.	Number of Consents with BNG secured.	All eligible cases. (Annual total.)	<p>For 2025, the LPA recorded 187 planning applications which secured BNG or ecological Mitigation / Enhancement. Numbers as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 59 resulted in securing BNG</li> <li>• 157 secured ecological Mitigation / Enhancement</li> </ul> <p>Of the above, 29 planning applications secured both BNG and Mitigation / Enhancement measures.</p>
p2	Policy to support BNG.	Develop local policy to support BNG, such as to enable biodiversity banking, and enforcement.	Policy content.	Policies in place by 2027 / via Local Plan process.	<p>Preparation of new local plan has commenced. This will need to have regard to a proposed new 'rules based' National Planning Policy Framework. Develop local policy to support BNG where this is justified and satisfies national planning policy, identify suitable sites for biodiversity banking.</p> <p>Enforcement is undertaken through the Development Management function.</p>
p3	Ecology checklist for developments.	Optimise checklist effectiveness for scoping ecological issues.	Checklist in place to raise	Use 2025 data collected via	Build on the ecological elements of the checklist introduced by the climate

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
			ecological matters.	checklists to help devise monitoring goals.	emergency interim planning policy statement (2023 resource).
p4	County Ecologist provision.	Measure impacts / celebrate success of the Ecology Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Devon County Council.	Not applicable.		SLA in place with Devon County Council. Annual summary notes by DCC Ecologist provided in the body of this report. Ecological advice on 211 cases in 2025.
p5	Non-BNG gains	Seek / require ecological gains for cases not subject to mandatory BNG legislation.	No. of non-BNG cases with gains conditioned	Monitor 2025 data; use that to inform a target.	Development Management seek to track all cases where mitigation and enhancement are agreed / secured by Conditions.
p6	Planning service ecology targets	Devise strategic targets to achieve district gains such as % tree cover, key features e.g. swift roost bricks, wildlife road crossings, dark zones, landscapes permeable to wildlife movement.	Not applicable.		Targets will relate to strategic drivers such as species strategies and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Progress targets to be reviewed with LNRS in place.
p7	Wider obligations such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Reinforce policy and practice around delivering the NERC Act duty and new Environment Act obligations such as LNRS.	Not applicable.		We will identify and implement delivery mechanisms; potential to use the Local Plan review to enable policy. Devon County Council is the "Responsible Authority" for the LNRS; Mid Devon District Council is a "Supporting Authority".

No.	Action / Aim	Goals / measures of success	Metric	Target	PROGRESS NOTES
p8	Report on Biodiversity Duty compliance and achievements	Delivery on BNG. Progress on Actions (including this action plan). How other strategies have been considered e.g. species, protected sites, LNRS. Future aims.	Report to be published.	To comply with reporting requirements as set out by Defra. Frequency of every 5 years or sooner.	Figures shown in this report. BNG delivery will be recorded by Natural England. Activity and continuing professional development (CPD) in support of team awareness and understanding have included: 1 site visit and 1 on-site workshop.
p9	Explore BNG policy	Evaluate the potential and viability of Mid Devon BNG policy above the national 10% minimum. This might be policy to realise specific uplift aims rather than blanket % habitat unit targets. Such as ecological enhancement for priority species; or priority factors e.g. disturbance, connectivity or climate adaptation.	Not applicable.		<p>A matter to be investigated through the preparation of the new Local Plan. (A matter that cannot be pursued outside the plan-making process.) The scope to set a local standard for BNG in excess of the statutory net gain requirement will be subject to National Planning Policy.</p> <p><a href="#">The consultation draft new National Planning Policy Framework</a> (page 87) states in "N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards" that "Development plans should only set local standards for biodiversity net gain which are in excess of the statutory requirement where this is for specific site allocations, and is fully justified and deliverable. Any such requirements should not extend to categories of development which are exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain."</p>