



Rushmoor Borough Council

Biodiversity Duty Report

March 2026

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## 1. Purpose of the Biodiversity Duty Report

- 1.1 Our greenspaces provide a multitude of benefits to the local community of Rushmoor Borough. It is essential that these greenspaces are managed effectively to realise these benefits. Benefits can be large-scale nature based solutions such as maintaining our wetlands and waterways to prevent flooding; increasing urban tree coverage to deliver shade for our changing climate and help clean our air; even encouraging wildflowers for our pollinators through more sensitive mowing of our parks. Small scale activities can also be impactful and time spent in nature has been proven to improve mental health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 This Biodiversity Duty Report presents an opportunity to raise awareness of the natural environment within our Borough. It celebrates actions the Council have already taken and sets a suite of future practical actions that will be taken to conserve and enhance Rushmoor Borough's biodiversity. It is essential that consideration for these future practical actions are embedded within core decision making and strategic planning, across all Council functions. It also highlights the benefits to our local community of the numerous projects supported by the Council across the borough, encouraging ongoing support.
- 1.3 Production of this Biodiversity Duty Report is required by law. Public authorities who operate in England must consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is known as the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduced.
- 1.4 This means that Rushmoor Borough Council must:
  - Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
  - Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
  - Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives.
- 1.5 Rushmoor Borough Council published our 'Biodiversity Duty (First Consideration) Report' in January 2024. This report sets out our first 'consideration' and what we were doing to conserve and enhance biodiversity within our borough in order to comply with the new Duty. The First Consideration report identified 'actions taken to date' which we had implemented to conserve and enhance biodiversity in our Borough. It also set out 'future actions' which we would aim to take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the next reporting period.
- 1.6 This report therefore builds on the ambitions of the First Consideration Report to show progress against First Consideration 'Future Actions'; present additional actions taken and ongoing across the Council's functions; and identify further 'future actions' during the next reporting period.
- 1.7 The first reporting period ends no later than 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. The current Biodiversity Duty Report must be published within 12 weeks of the end of the first reporting period. After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5

years of the end date of the previous reporting period. The next Biodiversity Duty reporting period therefore ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2030.

## 2. Rushmoor Borough Council's Natural Environment

### About the Authority

- 2.1 Rushmoor Borough is relatively small (3,905 hectares), is highly urbanised and densely populated made up of two major settlements whose boundaries adjoin one another; Aldershot, in the south of the Borough (population: 36,321) and Farnborough, in the north of the Borough (population: 57,486).

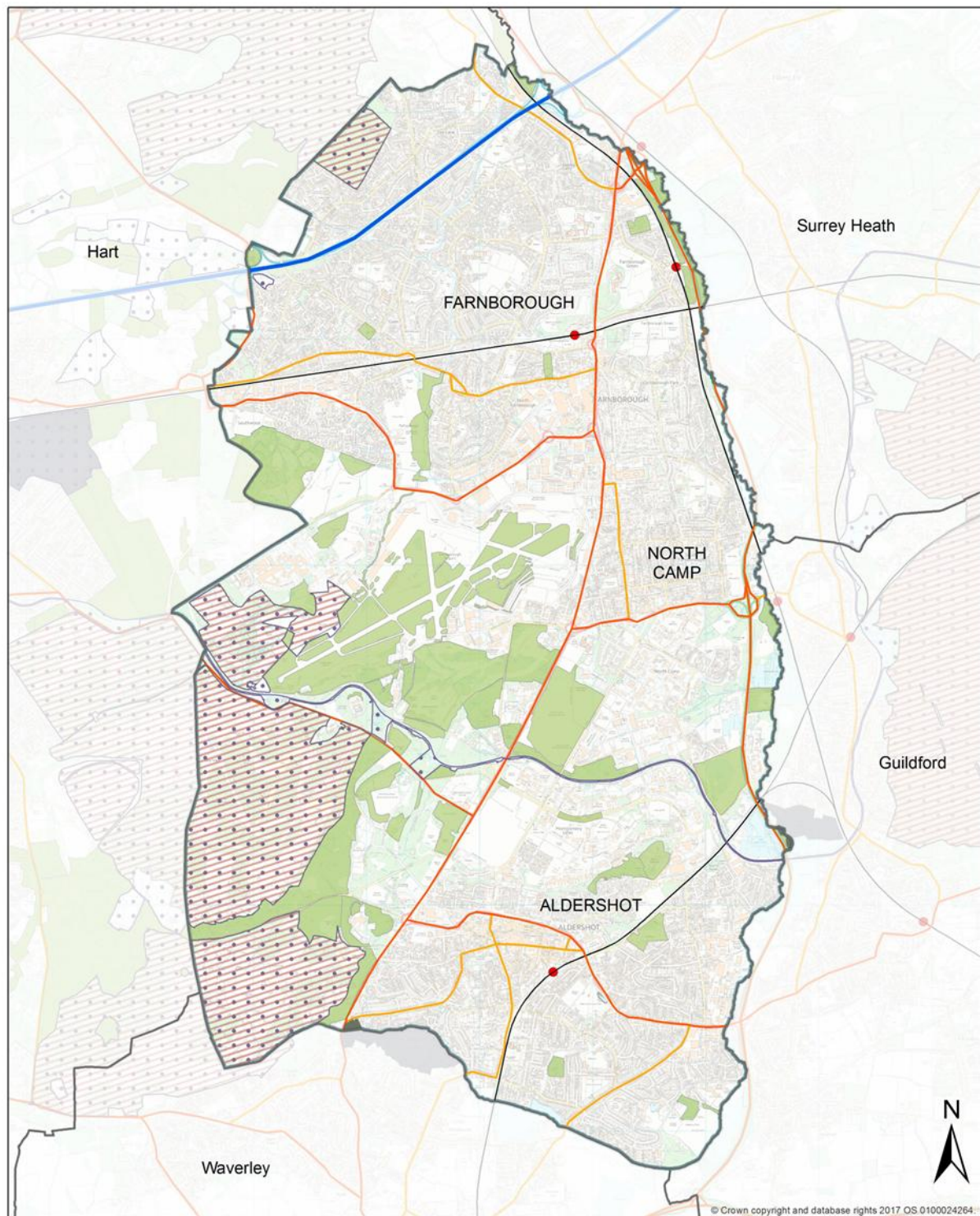
### Land and Protected Sites

- 2.2 While the northern and eastern parts of the Borough are mainly urban in character, the west includes large tracts of protected green space. The Borough is bounded in the east by a combination of the Blackwater Valley Relief Road A331 and the River Blackwater. The west of the Borough includes international, national or local nature conservation designations.
- 2.3 Special Protection Areas (SPA) are sites of international importance which form the UK's national site network protected by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is a geographically complex SPA partially located within Rushmoor Borough and also within adjoining Councils across three Counties. This SPA is protected for its important population of three rare ground nesting birds - Woodlark, Nightjar and Dartford Warbler – and the heathland habitats that support them.
- 2.4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated due to the special interest of their flora, fauna, geological, geomorphological or physiographical features. The five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Borough area:
- Bourley and Long Valley SSSI
  - Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Meadows SSSI
  - Eelmoor Marsh SSSI
  - Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSI
  - Basingstoke Canal SSSI
- 2.5 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are statutorily protected local sites, designated by local authorities for their special natural interest, educational value and the access to nature that they offer. There is one Local Nature Reserve relevant to this report, Rowhill Copse Local Nature Reserve. Although this site is situated outside the Borough on the southern boundary within neighbouring Waverley Borough, it is managed by Rushmoor Borough Council.
- 2.6 Local Wildlife Sites, also known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Hampshire, are sites of County Importance for wildlife. Rushmoor has 38 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), formally selected by panel to agreed

criteria, for their important habitats and species. SINCs have additional protection within the planning process, under Local Plan Policy NE4 – Biodiversity.

- 2.7 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs – see below for details) are maintained as publicly accessible open space in perpetuity. These sites are designed for both recreational visitors and wildlife. They form some of the largest public open spaces in Rushmoor.
- 2.8 Management plans have been published for the following flagship open greenspace sites within Rushmoor: Rowhill Nature Reserve, Queen Elizabeth Park, Southwood Woodlands, Southwood Country Park (Interim).
- 2.9 The green spaces in the urban area, and the green corridors that link them, also provide a valuable amenity that benefits biodiversity and provides recreational opportunities. The Blackwater River corridor, the Cove Brook and the Basingstoke Canal are particularly important wildlife corridors.

Figure 1: Habitats Protected by Law and Policy in Rushmoor



### 3. Rushmoor Objectives, Policies and Published Strategies that Benefit Biodiversity

#### Local Plan

- 3.1 The Council adopted the Rushmoor Local Plan on 21 February 2019. The Local Plan provides the overarching spatial strategy for Rushmoor, guiding the location, scale and type of future development to 2032, as well as providing detailed development management policies.
- 3.2 In light of significant revisions to the planning process proposed by this current Government, it is expected that the new Local Plan will be in place before the end of the next reporting period for this Biodiversity Duty Report. The new Local Plan will have regards to the aims and ambitions of this Biodiversity Report.

*Table 1: Biodiversity Objectives and Policies for Rushmoor Borough Council*

| Objectives   | Relevant Information  |
|--|---|
| Sustainability Appraisal Objectives:<br>Objective 6<br>Objective 8<br>Objective 20 | <p><u>Key Challenge (10)</u>: Protection and enhancement of important natural environmental assets.</p> <p><u>Role of Local Plan</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To guide development away from sensitive locations.</li> <li>▪ To ensure that development maintains and enhances the quality and character of the natural environment to achieve net gains for biodiversity.</li> <li>▪ To protect and enhance urban green spaces and green infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ To mitigate the recreational impact associated with net new residential development in the Borough on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.</li> </ul> |
| Strategic Objectives   | <p>I: To conserve and enhance the Borough's built, historic and natural environment, including heritage assets, areas of ecological value and the water environment.</p> <p>J: To reduce the Borough's contribution to the causes of climate change and to minimise the impacts of climate change on the Borough through a combination of mitigation and adaptation measures.</p>   |
| Policies   | Policy Text   |
| Policy NE1 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area                           | New development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), including all net new dwellings, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. The mechanism for delivering this policy is set out in the Council's Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (2014), supported by the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework prepared by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership.   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>Residential development that would result in a net gain of units will not be permitted within 400 m of the SPA boundary unless, in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with Natural England, an appropriate assessment demonstrates that there will be no adverse effect on the SPA.</p> <p>In all instances where mitigation measures are applicable, as set out in the Delivery Framework, the following standards will apply, unless an evidence-based alternative strategy has been agreed with Natural England:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A minimum of 8 ha of SANG land (after discounting to account for current access and capacity) should be provided in perpetuity per 1,000 new occupants, either through contributions towards the provision of SANG identified by the Borough Council, or through on-site SANG, agreed with Natural England; and</li> <li>b) Contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring measures.</li> </ol>   |
| <p>Policy NE2 - Green Infrastructure</p> | <p>A diverse network of accessible, multi-functional green infrastructure across the Borough will be protected and enhanced for its biodiversity, economic, recreational, accessibility, health and landscape value by ensuring that development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Does not result in a loss, fragmentation or significant impact on the function of the green infrastructure network;</li> <li>2) Provides green infrastructure features within the development site or, where this is not feasible, makes appropriate contributions towards other strategic enhancement, restoration and creation projects where the proposal will result in additional pressure on the green infrastructure network;</li> <li>3) Maximises opportunities for improvement to the green infrastructure network, including restoration of fragmented parts of the network.</li> </ol> <p>Development proposals will only be permitted where they do not have a significant adverse impact on the essentially open character of Important Open Areas, as shown on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Development proposals within or adjoining green corridors, as shown on the Policies Map, will be expected to enhance their landscape and amenity value.</p> |
| <p>Policy NE4 – Biodiversity</p>         | <p>Development proposals will be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity and/ or geodiversity resulting from a development can be avoided or, if that is not possible, adequately mitigated such that it can be clearly demonstrated that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There will be no adverse effect on the conservation status of priority species;</li> <li>2) There will be no adverse effect on the integrity of designated and proposed European designated sites;</li> <li>3) There will be no adverse effect to nationally designated sites;</li> <li>4) There will be no adverse effect to locally designated sites;</li> </ol>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>5) There will be no loss or deterioration of a priority habitat type, including irreplaceable habitats; and</p> <p>6) There will be no adverse effect to the integrity of linkages between designated sites and priority habitats.</p> <p>The weight given to the protection of nature conservation interests will depend on the international, national or local significance and any designation or protection applying to the site, habitat or species concerned.</p> <p>Where development proposals do not comply with the above, they will only be permitted if it has been demonstrated clearly that there is an overriding public need for the proposal which outweighs the need to safeguard biodiversity and/or geodiversity, and there is no satisfactory alternative with fewer or no harmful impacts. In such cases, as a last resort, compensatory measures will be secured to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and, where possible, provide a net gain.</p> <p>Development proposals should seek to secure opportunities to enhance biodiversity and include proportionate measures to contribute, where possible, to a net gain in biodiversity, through creation, restoration, enhancement and management of habitats and features, including measures that help to link key habitats. The Council will seek to protect, maintain and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and geological resources, in association with partners, through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Supporting a programme of survey of habitats and species, and designation of 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation';</li> <li>2) Seeking the inclusion of measures which protect and strengthen populations of protected and target species and contribute to the habitat restoration targets identified in the Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan;</li> <li>3) Seeking the inclusion of measures to protect and enhance local watercourses, including the River Blackwater, Cove Brook and Basingstoke Canal, and their tributaries;</li> <li>4) Maintaining a Borough-wide network of local wildlife sites and wildlife corridors between areas of natural greenspace to prevent the fragmentation of existing habitats;</li> <li>5) Supporting measures to increase local understanding of the importance of biodiversity in the Borough; and</li> <li>6) Working in partnership to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity at the landscape scale.</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

## Local Strategies

### Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.3 Rushmoor adopted a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2024. An SPD supports national planning policy guidance and provides further best practice guidance to support delivery of policies in the Rushmoor Local Plan. The SPD ensures that planning applicants and their advisors are aware of their responsibilities and work in accordance with best practice to take account of biodiversity as part of the development process.

3.4 The SPD also provides guidance to applicants on:

- Biodiversity Checklists – where protected habitats or species may be present at a development site, subject to further consideration and the supporting documentation that may be required
- Guidance on best practice approaches to ecological survey and assessment
- A hazard prevention checklist for implementation on development sites during construction and operation.
- Identifying and incorporating opportunities to enhance biodiversity on development sites.

3.5 It also sets out Rushmoor’s expectations of how planning applicants should meet the national requirement for a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain on new developments.

3.6 SPDs are a material consideration for consideration when determining a planning application.

[Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)

3.7 The Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy, adopted in July 2022, was written to support delivery of policy NE2 (Green Infrastructure). It assesses the Borough’s existing green infrastructure assets and network. This included an analysis of how the network currently functions by area, where assets were grouped by themes (including Biodiversity) to analyse how the different elements of green infrastructure functions offer different benefits across the area.

3.8 The overall aim of the Strategy is to:

- Identify existing Green Infrastructure assets and networks within and beyond the borough boundary;
- Identify areas where there are deficits in Green Infrastructure / opportunities to provide an improved / enhanced GI Network; and
- Identify potential Green Infrastructure projects that could be progressed by the Council and its partners.

3.9 A wide variety of individuals, groups and organisations, in addition to the Council have an important delivery role to play for the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Since July 2022, the national statutory and policy framework around planning policy has significantly changed with the introduction of legislative changes such as Biodiversity Net Gain and the Planning and Infrastructure Act and a revised National Planning Policy Framework.

3.10 In light of these national changes and in a context of financial constraints, the Council has reviewed the potential GI projects presented in the Strategy. Some of the projects are identified as overly ambitious and not currently deliverable. Other projects have been superseded by the publication of the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (see below).

- 3.11 The following Emerging Process Project has been significantly progressed: ‘PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project’.
- 3.12 Average tree canopy cover for all wards in Rushmoor is approximately 25.63% which compares favourably to the UK average canopy cover of approximately 16.1%. However, woodland and tree coverage across Rushmoor is very unequal, with the vast majority tree cover found on our Borough borders within statutorily protected sites. This is a great natural resource for residents who live close to these protected sites. However, some Wards are highly urban.
- 3.13 Forest Research have set a national canopy cover target of 20%. Five Wards within Rushmoor Borough fall below this 20% target. For residents in these more urban Wards, or those without private transport, our woodland resource is not readily accessible. Low levels of tree canopy cover is indicative of a depleted natural environment and low access to public open space. There is a clear overlap in Rushmoor Borough between areas of lower canopy cover and higher urban deprivation.
- 3.14 A project specification was developed to increase canopy cover through the planting of individual trees within an urban setting, in the Wards with lowest canopy cover. Funding was sourced from The Forestry Commission under the Urban Tree Challenge Fund. 20% project matched funding was secured from the Farnborough Airport Community and Environment Fund. The project planted 194 standard sized native trees of a range of different species appropriate for their location. All locations identified for planting are in grass verge / parkland locations within Rushmoor Borough Council Local Authority owned estate with full public access.
- 3.15 The trees were planted across two planting seasons in 2023 and 2024. Each newly planted tree also receives funding for 3 years watering and aftercare to ensure establishment. Project funded aftercare is due to complete Summer 2028.

#### Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- 3.16 Introduced by the Environment Act 2021, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a suite of 48 strategy for nature recovery, covering the whole of England with no gaps or overlaps. Each local nature recovery strategy will agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. The Strategy is a material consideration in planning, with local planning authorities being required to have regard to the Strategy when making decisions related to local plans and planning applications.
- 3.17 Rushmoor has worked closely with Hampshire County Council (the Responsible Authority for the Hampshire area) to produce an evidence-based, locally led and collaborative LNRS for the region. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire was published on 8 December 2025
- 3.18 The Hampshire LNRS provides a local habitat map of the most valuable areas for wildlife, identify opportunities to improve nature in the future through a written

statement of biodiversity priorities. The LNRS will provide a source of evidence for local planning authorities, helping these authorities understand locations important for conserving and enhancing biodiversity. LNRS priorities also help guide mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) delivery to achieve the most impact and value for nature.

#### Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy

3.19 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) has statutory protection from adverse impact under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended), protection under Saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and Policy NE1 of the Rushmoor Local Plan. Rushmoor Borough Council is one of 13 Local Council signatories to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework. The signatories, across three Counties, form the Joint Strategic Partnership Board. The Delivery Framework sets out the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board's (JSPB) recommendations on measures to enable the delivery of new residential dwellings in the vicinity of the SPA - without having a significant effect on the SPA as a whole. It focuses on avoiding the impact of recreation and urbanisation on the SPA habitat and protected birds. The Framework therefore provides a consistent methodology for delivery of impact avoidance and mitigation. This allows new residential housing can be brought forward in a manner that continues to protect the protected features of the SPA, across all affected Local Authorities. Key elements of the Delivery Framework are:

- A presumption against new residential development within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA boundary.
- Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to divert additional recreational pressure away from the TBH SPA.
- Provision of a range of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring measures (SAMM) to avoid displacing visitors from one part of the SPA to another, and to minimise the impact of visitors on the SPA.

3.20 Rushmoor publishes a Rushmoor Borough Council Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, which is updated annually in April. The Strategy sets out the local measures to be taken within Rushmoor to ensure compliance with the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework.

3.21 Of particular importance within Rushmoor are the suite of 'Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace' (SANG) sites created in line with the Delivery Framework and retained in perpetuity. These sites are designed to be publicly accessible greenspaces which attract recreational visitors and therefore reduce recreational visitor pressure within the SPA.

3.22 The following SANG sites are owned or managed by Rushmoor Borough Council for access to a broad range of local visitors: Southwood Woodlands, Southwood Country Park, and Rowhill Nature Reserve.

- 3.23 Wellesley Woods and Blandford Woods are bespoke SANG brought forward by private developers to facilitate specific development, managed in perpetuity for the recreational use of their local residents.
- 3.24 Rushmoor Borough Council also have agreements within adjacent councils for additional SANG provision. The Council continues to seek new sites to create further SANG in advance of any further associated housing stock in the borough being created and occupied.
- 3.25 To meet ever increasing national new build housing targets, it is expected that the new Rushmoor Local Plan will need to identify additional SANG provision in Rushmoor to facilitate this development. It is probable that alternative mechanisms for provision will also be necessary such as joint SANG with neighbouring districts.

### Planning and Development

- 3.26 Protected species and habitats are a material consideration within the planning process. Planning decisions therefore must consider potential adverse impacts of a development as part of the planning process in view of legal and policy obligations. Rushmoor Borough Council's Ecology Officer is embedded within the Planning Team and works closely with Development Management and Planning Policy colleagues to ensure that the Council has due regard to protected habitats and species.
- 3.27 Rushmoor have established robust procedures for implementing the statutory obligations of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Internal process documents ensure that BNG elements of planning applications are progressed in a clear and proportionate manner and that planning decisions are consistent and appropriately evidenced based. A suite of external-facing documentation has been published by the Council to ensure that applicants are aware of Rushmoor expectations regarding BNG. Documentation includes a BNG Monitoring Fee calculator with fees based on site size and complexity, and a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Form which enables the applicant to demonstrate site specific compliance and approach to BNG delivery.
- 3.28 Rushmoor Borough Council publish a Local Validation List (most recent, April 2025) to set out what documents need to be included within a valid planning application, including those relating to biodiversity net gain, protected habitats and protected species. The Local Validation List helps to clarify supporting documentation for protected sites and species and to therefore reduce potential delays.

## 4. Biodiversity Net Gain

### Introduction

- 4.1 Following the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Rushmoor Borough Council has integrated BNG into its planning framework. Our Rushmoor Borough Council Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), dated April 2024, includes guidance on BNG. The SPD sets out a clear process to planning applicants as to Rushmoor Borough Council best practice expectations and actions that planning applicants must take to ensure that applications comply with both national statutory obligations and local policy requirements.
- 4.2 In compliance with national legislation, all new developments in Rushmoor are required to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain. This mandate applies to both Major developments (effective from 12 February 2024) and Minor developments (effective from 2 April 2024).
- 4.3 To facilitate the application process, developers are required to submit a completed Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Form in accordance with Rushmoor's Local Planning Validation Requirements List. This form outlines measures to achieve BNG compliance for the proposed development including whether the applicant wishes to claim an exemption from statutory BNG obligations, evidence to support this and delivery of BNG onsite / offsite / statutory credits / combination of measures to achieve the 10% BNG. Failure to provide this information may result in the refusal to validate the planning application.
- 4.4 Developments subject to statutory conditions must demonstrate how their projects will meet national requirements, using the statutory biodiversity metric tools and these must be submitted with their planning application at the relevant stages.
- 4.5 The Council will seek evidence through the Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Form and evidence submitted by developers through BNG reports and statutory metric tools of how the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy has been followed. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric includes a spatial distance multiplier which incentivises implementation of the planning mitigation hierarchy. All applicants must have due regard to the biodiversity gain 'measures' and strategic significance of the published Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

### Data Recording and Mycelia

- 4.6 Rushmoor Borough Council use the software platform 'Uniform' to record planning application submissions and progress, including which cases are subject to BNG. The software is used to record minor and major cases, any sites which are exempt from BNG and the type of exemption, plus if the application was validated or not.

- 4.7 In addition to this, Rushmoor uses the software platform ‘Mycelia’, developed by Verna Earth, to record detail relating to BNG for individual planning permissions. assist with BNG applications and monitoring.
- 4.8 Mycelia is a cloud-based software platform designed to assist local planning authorities and ecologists in managing BNG requirements efficiently. It offers comprehensive support throughout the BNG process, including validation, assessment, monitoring, and reporting. The platform streamlines the evaluation of planning applications by facilitating digital submission for statutory biodiversity metrics and other supporting documents. Mycelia is tailored to meet the specific needs of Rushmoor Borough Council, providing tools to manage ecological data and ensure compliance with national BNG legislation and local policy obligations. By automating complex workflows and offering user-friendly interfaces, Mycelia enables planning teams to process and manage applications more quickly and accurately, thereby enhancing environmental outcomes and operational efficiency.
- 4.9 Mycelia supports long-term habitat monitoring over the mandated 30-year period.
- 4.10 Rushmoor Borough Council require payment of a monitoring fee for all developments which are required to deliver ‘significant’ onsite gains in full, or in part, to meet their minimum 10% biodiversity net gain statutory obligation. The monitoring fee is published for use by applicants to identify costs. The fee is set according to a calculator that has regards to both the number of biodiversity gain units needed for delivery and the ecological difficulty of delivery. The monitoring fee is paid in full and upfront. The fee therefore covers costs for Rushmoor Borough Council to monitor effective delivery of the net gain in accordance with a set reporting schedule. The fee is also intended to cover the costs of purchase of Mycelia software to facilitate the monitoring and report regime.

## Training

- 4.11 Training has been delivered to relevant officers working within the planning function, as to how to have regards to the statutory obligations of BNG and Rushmoor local policy approaches to delivery, within the planning process. Training is delivered to Council Members of the Planning Committee on a cyclical basis and when required, to ensure Members appropriately have regard to BNG and Environment Act legislation and guidance when taking planning decisions.
- 4.12 Rushmoor’s Ecology Officer has produced a process document to help guide planning officers at Rushmoor through the BNG process. It outlines the step-by-step process for determining whether a site is exempt, whether the development can follow the small sites or full statutory metric, guides the officer the different stages of documents needed for validation and approval and explains how to handle special circumstances such as irreplaceable habitats or deliberate habitat degradation. The process document consolidates statutory obligations and government guidance into a process of practical implementation.

4.13 The document includes information on Biodiversity Gain Plans (BGPs) and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMPs), through to off-site gains and long-term ecological monitoring. It addresses legal mechanisms like Section 106 agreements and monitoring fees and there are instructions on using Mycelia for case management. The guidance is supported by templates, appendices, and references to national standards to help all parties (applicants, planners, ecologists, and legal teams) navigate and enforce BNG obligations effectively.

### Current BNG Cases at Rushmoor and Statistics

4.14 Government guidance sets recommendations for quantified Biodiversity Net Gain data that could be included within a Biodiversity Duty Report. It is recommended to include, where possible:

- The number of biodiversity gain plans approved.
- The split between on-site and off-site gains and statutory credits.
- The net gain in number of units and average percentage gain across approved biodiversity gain plans.

4.15 The Mycelia software enables greater interrogation of technical data through automation. Mycelia has helped to compile the following data:

*Table 2: Number of Eligible Planning Permissions Granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Requiring Biodiversity Net Gain*

| Consented Applications Requiring Net Gains   | Number | Proportion (%) |
|--|--------|----------------|
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period   | 6      | Not applicable |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through on-site units only   | 3      | 50.00          |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through off-site units only  | 1      | 16.67          |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through statutory credits only   | 0      | 0.00           |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site and off-site units                    | 0      | 0.00           |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site units and statutory credits           | 2      | 33.33          |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of off-site units and statutory credits          | 0      | 0.00           |
| Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site, off-site units and statutory credits | 0      | 0.00           |

*Table 3: Overall Expected Gains and Losses from Biodiversity Gain Plans Approved during the Reporting Period*

| <b>Overall Expected Gains and Losses</b>   | <b>Area Habitat</b> | <b>Hedgerow</b> | <b>Watercourse</b> |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Total number of pre-development biodiversity units approved on-site                    | 2.60                | 0.51            | 0.00               |
| Total number of post-development biodiversity units approved on-site                   | 3.08                | 0.67            | 0.00               |
| Total net unit change in biodiversity units, on-site                                   | 0.48                | 0.16            | 0.00               |
| Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, on-site                           | 18.63               | 31.22           | 0.00               |
| Total number of baseline biodiversity units approved off-site                          | 0.00                | 0.00            | 0.00               |
| Total number of post-intervention biodiversity units approved off-site                 | 0.06                | 0.00            | 0.00               |
| Total net unit change in biodiversity units, off-site                                  | 0.06                | 0.00            | 0.00               |
| Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, off-site                          | 0.00                | 0.00            | 0.00               |
| Total number of biodiversity units offset using statutory credits                      | 0.03                | 0.00            | 0.00               |
| Total net unit change in biodiversity units (including any units offset using credits) | 0.57                | 0.16            | 0.00               |
| Average percentage (%) change (including statutory credits)                            | 21.82               | 31.22           | 0.00               |

*Table 4: Number of Biodiversity Gain Sites and Biodiversity Units Delivered*

| <b>Location of Off-Site Biodiversity Units</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>Proportion (%)</b> |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|
| Number of off-site biodiversity units located inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site                         | 0.06         | 100.00                |
| Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside LPA or NCA of impact site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA | 0.00         | 0.00                  |
| Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside of LPA or NCA of impact site and neighbouring LPA or NCA  | 0.00         | 0.00                  |

*Table 5: Composition of Gains Split by Area Habitat Type*

| <b>Habitat Type - Area</b> | <b>Total Biodiversity Units at Baseline</b> | <b>Total Hectares at Baseline</b> | <b>Total Biodiversity Units Post-Development</b> | <b>Total Hectares Post-Development</b> | <b>Net Change in Biodiversity Units</b> | <b>Net Change in Hectares</b> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Cropland                   | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Grassland                  | 0.05  | 0.03                              | 0.17   | 0.05                                   | 0.12                                    | 0.02                          |
| Heathland and Shrub        | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.29   | 0.07                                   | 0.29                                    | 0.07                          |
| Lakes                      | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Sparsely Vegetated Land    | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Urban                      | 0.56  | 2.31                              | 0.33   | 2.21                                   | -0.23                                   | -0.09                         |
| Wetland                    | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Woodland and Forest        | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Intertidal Sediment        | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Coastal Saltmarsh          | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Rocky Shore                | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Coastal Lagoons            | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Intertidal Hard Structures | 0.00  | 0.00                              | 0.00   | 0.00                                   | 0.00                                    | 0.00                          |
| Watercourse Footprint      | Not applicable                              | 0.00                              | Not applicable                                   | 0.00                                   | Not applicable                          | 0.00                          |
| Individual Trees           | 1.99  | 0.45                              | 2.35   | 0.62                                   | 0.36                                    | 0.17                          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>2.60</b>                                 | <b>2.78</b>                       | <b>3.14</b>                                      | <b>2.95</b>                            | <b>0.54</b>                             | <b>0.17</b>                   |

*Table 6: Composition of Gains Split by Hedgerow and Line of Trees Type*

| <b>Habitat Type - Hedgerows and Lines of Trees</b>                      | <b>Total Biodiversity Units at Baseline</b> | <b>Total Kilometres at Baseline</b> | <b>Total Biodiversity Units Post-Development</b> | <b>Total Kilometres Post-Development</b> | <b>Net Change in Biodiversity Units</b> | <b>Net Change in Kilometres</b> |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Species-Rich Native Hedgerow with Trees - associated with Bank or Ditch | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Species-Rich Native Hedgerow with Trees                                 | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Species-Rich Native Hedgerow - associated with Bank or Ditch            | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Native Hedgerow with Trees - associated with Bank or Ditch              | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Species-Rich Native Hedgerow  | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Native Hedgerow - associated with Bank or Ditch                         | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Native Hedgerow with Trees  | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Ecologically Valuable Line of Trees                                     | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |
| Ecologically Valuable Line of Trees - associated with Bank or Ditch     | 0.00  | 0.00                                | 0.00   | 0.00                                     | 0.00                                    | 0.00                            |

| Habitat Type - Hedgerows and Lines of Trees   | Total Biodiversity Units at Baseline | Total Kilometres at Baseline | Total Biodiversity Units Post-Development | Total Kilometres Post-Development | Net Change in Biodiversity Units | Net Change in Kilometres |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Native Hedgerow                               | 0.00                                 | 0.00                         | 0.00                                      | 0.00                              | 0.00                             | 0.00                     |
| Line of Trees                                 | 0.00                                 | 0.00                         | 0.00                                      | 0.00                              | 0.00                             | 0.00                     |
| Line of Trees - associated with Bank or Ditch | 0.00                                 | 0.00                         | 0.00                                      | 0.00                              | 0.00                             | 0.00                     |
| Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow            | 0.51                                 | 0.51                         | 0.67                                      | 0.68                              | 0.16                             | 0.17                     |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>0.51</b>                          | <b>0.51</b>                  | <b>0.67</b>                               | <b>0.68</b>                       | <b>0.16</b>                      | <b>0.17</b>              |

4.16 No Biodiversity Gain Plans so far received or approved, result in an adverse effect on irreplaceable habitats. No bespoke compensation plans have therefore been submitted or approved.

4.17 No Biodiversity Gain Plans so far received or approved, result in a loss or deterioration of watercourses. No planning application submissions have therefore involved the watercourse elements of the statutory metric.

4.18 All Biodiversity Gain Plans submitted to, and approved by, Rushmoor Borough Council are at the early stages of implementation at time of writing. No Biodiversity Gain Plans are therefore yet required to submit formal monitoring plans in accordance with their monitoring schedule.

## 5. Progress towards Biodiversity Duty Report First Consideration Actions

- 5.1 The Biodiversity Duty Report (First Consideration) Report published January 2024 included a suite of proposed actions in the next reporting period, identified in this current Biodiversity Duty Report as the two year period from January 2024 to January 2026.
- 5.2 The following table presents Actions identified in the First Consideration Report and progress taken towards delivery. Context for delivery of these actions is provided in commentary in this report, above.

*Table 7: Actions Identified in the First Consideration Report and Progress Taken towards Delivery*

| Action   | First Consideration Timeframe for Delivery   | Progress towards Delivery in January 2026   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>We will ensure our local policies and strategies conserve and enhance biodiversity (including preparation for BNG)</b>  |  |   |
| Adoption of our Biodiversity SPD to ensure external bodies and individuals are aware of their responsibilities and work in accordance with best practice   | The Biodiversity SPD will be adopted early 2024  | Adopted as scheduled.   |
| Progress GI Strategy Project PP3 – A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-Site Scoping Project and set up a costed Habitat Bank   | The Habitat Bank will be launched early 2024. The Biodiversity SPD and supporting Habitat Procedure Note will be adopted early 2024. | Legislative changes within the Planning and Infrastructure Act are expected to significantly impact scale and demand for the purchase of compensatory Biodiversity Units by local developers from a Council owned and managed Habitat Bank.<br><br>Potential restructures arising from Local Government Reorganisation may also influence supply of Units from other sources and habitat bank governance. |
| Progress GI project PP6 - Review of Potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Sites (including consideration of how ecological enhancement / BNG may form part of the Greenspace's value) | Project expected to start in 2024 to support the preparation of a new Local Plan.  | New potential SANG site identified.   |

| Action  | First Consideration Timeframe for Delivery  | Progress towards Delivery in January 2026  |
|---|---|--|
|   |   | <p>We are in active conversation with Surrey County Council to form an agreement for use of land contiguous with, but not within Rushmoor Borough Council. We are gathering evidence regarding current usage and accessibility. The evidence will establish whether this land can meet Natural England SANG guidelines and therefore provide suitable alternative natural greenspace for the residents of new development within Rushmoor Borough.</p> |
| <p>Progress GI Project PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project through funding bids to Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund (FACEF) &amp; Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF), as well as an extension to GI Project PP6</p>  | <p>Funding bids were successful. We are now project planning for the planting of a total of 194 new trees, of native species, within an urban environment. Planting and three years aftercare is to be delivered from this winter (2023) until 2028</p> | <p>All trees planted and aftercare underway in accordance with grant funding. New trees are establishing.</p>  |
| <p>Green Infrastructure Project GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project. Partnership working with the Environment Agency to deliver long term improvements to help delivery Water Framework Directive (WFD) Condition and longer-term management of the Cove Brook SINC, of County Importance for wildlife.</p> | <p>Delivery of this project is scheduled for implementation in September / October 2024.</p>  | <p>Funding for this project has been secured.</p> <p>Delivery in 2024 was not able to progress due delays while third party works were completed within the same geographical location – delay in completion of Esso pipeline works and unexpected urgent Environment Agency works to reprofile the flood bund.</p>  |

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| Action  | First Consideration Timeframe for Delivery   | Progress towards Delivery in January 2026   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Review internal Councils processes to ensure that our own functions have appropriate level of training for officers and members and have regard to ecology and work in accordance with statutory and policy obligations and best practice</p>  | <p>Adoption of revised standard planning conditions and informatives and the Local Validation List which will be reviewed to ensure they meet current protected species and habitats statutory obligations as well as the National Planning Policy Framework planning tests. To be progressed and agreed in 2024 (subject to changes to national policy)</p> | <p>Revised standard planning conditions and informatives have been rolled out to all Development Management staff. Staff have received training on usage. Conditions and informatives comply with legislative and policy obligations. Ecological best practice guidance is embedded.</p> <p>Documentation will be subject to review to ensure that it reflects legislative and policy changes.</p> <p>Local Validation List (list of document requirements for each type of planning application) was reviewed and updated. Adopted as revised April 2025. Revised list takes account of legislative and policy amendments and include Biodiversity Net Gain obligations.</p> |
| <p>Ensure all relevant officers working within the planning function are appropriately trained in how to embed BNG within the planning process. Deliver relevant training to Council Members to ensure that planning decisions appropriately have regard to BNG and Environment Act legislation and guidance.</p> | <p>Training ongoing</p>  | <p>Training delivered. Training to both Officers and Council Members continues to be delivered both formally and informally, as need arises and in response to practical experience of delivery and changes in best practice guidance</p>   |
| <p>Review approach to biodiversity as part of the preparation of a new Local Plan.</p>  | <p>Expected to commence work in 2024/2025. Subject to timescales associated with planning reforms.</p>   | <p>As Local Plan preparation progresses, we will seek to embed biodiversity across all functions including climate change mitigation / adaptation, design codes, flood mitigation, access to greenspace.</p>  |

| Action  | First Consideration Timeframe for Delivery  | Progress towards Delivery in January 2026   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>We will manage our land to improve biodiversity</b>  |   |   |
| Provision of management plans, appropriately costed and with delivery timeframes and responsibilities for our flagship open greenspace sites.   | New Management Plans for Southwood Woodlands and Southwood Country Park scheduled for development and publish within 2024/25  | We work closely with our partners in site management delivery – the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership ranger team. We formally work in accordance with management plans and costed Service Level Agreements. We work informally through regular conversation, site walkovers and real-time amendments to management plans. This allow flexibility to react to environmental change. |
| Funding of regular SINC surveys to inform SINC management (via Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC))  | Ongoing programme of survey with secure funding.  | Service Level Agreement renewed. Suite of SINCS scheduled for survey to be confirmed in Spring 2026 for survey spring – autumn 2026.  |
| <b>We will consider external relevant strategies</b>  |   |   |
| We will actively engage with Natural England as they develop species conservation strategies and protected sites strategies.  | Responses to formal consultation will be undertaken in a timely manner. Opportunities will be sought for partnership working.   | At time of publishing, no formal strategies have been proposed for consultation, or published by DEFRA.   |
| Active engagement with development and implementation of LNRS through involvement with Hampshire County Council and other relevant partners – embed consideration of local nature recovery within our core processes. | Officers are already actively engaged in early preparation of the LNRS. LNRS will be prepared in consultation with the Council (as a supporting authority) throughout 2024 and is due to be submitted to DEFRA in December 2024 | Informal discussions we productive.<br><br>LNRS adopted in December 2025, having full regards to Rushmoor Borough Council formal consultation comments.   |

| Action   | First Consideration Timeframe for Delivery  | Progress towards Delivery in January 2026   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Great Crested Newt (GCN) District Level Licensing.</p> <p>District Level Licensing allows potential developers to comply with Protected Species obligations for GCN through a strategic rather than site-by-site mechanism.</p> <p>Schemes can benefit GCN by creating or enhancing habitats in targeted areas to increase and re-connect populations at the landscape scale.</p> | <p>Officers will keep under review the potential for implementing the district licencing scheme.</p> <p>The NatureSpace scheme is considered the most effective for both GCN protection and ease of process for the Council and applicants.</p> | <p>Remains under review.</p> <p>Survey has now confirmed the presence of Great Crested Newts is a single location within Rushmoor boundary – to the west of our Borough.</p> <p>GCN eDNA testing was undertaken on a suite of potentially suitable waterbodies in May 2025. Results were either inconclusive (an unusually dry spring made sampling difficult) or negative.</p> <p>This indicates that while GCN are present within our Borough, their population range is likely restricted to the site of the positive record in the west.</p> <p>GCN expand their population ranges slowly. However, due to their rarity and high level of legal protection, it is important that decisions relating to their presence or likely absence, are made on best available and up to date species survey information to ensure statutory compliance.</p> |

*Table 8: Other Actions Delivered in Addition to Those Listed in the First Consideration Report*

| Community Engagement  |  |
|---|--|
| Action  | Outcome  |
| Co-ordination of Rushmoor Climate Community Group and Newsletter. | Network of RBC staff, Council Members and 100 + community members. Highlights environmentally focused events within the Borough; volunteer activities; links to grant funds for local environmental projects.  |
| Eco-Festival – 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2025                    | <p>A community event, which seeks to engage the local community to care about the environment and learn more about sustainable living.</p> <p>Included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information stalls from local greenspaces such Wellesley Woodlands and Runways End; locally made or sustainable products; Educational activities for all ages.</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Community Engagement</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBC stall promoting our greenspaces, greenspace groups, volunteer opportunities such as work parties and litter picks.</li> <li>Speakers including; The Places That Link Us Project; Blackwater Valley Action for Rivers; storytelling sessions.</li> </ul>   |
| Rushmoor Community in Bloom   | Supported by Rushmoor Borough Council, organised by Rushmoor Volunteer Services. Activities include providing grant funding towards the competition; judging the Best Wildlife Friendly Garden and Best Business Floral Display categories.  |
| Community tree planting November 2024                                     | 100 whips planted in Manor Park  |
| Supporting North Camp Community Group                                     | Maintain the beds and open space around Napier Pond for biodiversity gain.   |
| Eco Explorers Club  | Eco Explorers Club is held annually in town centres on the first weekend of every month. Includes interactive environmental-themed storytelling, alongside a hands-on activity focused on topics such as pollination, growing and gardening. Around 200 visitors attend each weekend, with families attending each month.  |
| Victoria Day 2025, with Wonderful Water theme – 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 | Rushmoor’s largest annual free outdoor event – a focus on promotion of Rushmoor’s blue and green spaces. A series of carnival workshops themed around “wonderful water” connected participants to local waterways and reserves through creative activities such as costume design, movement, and flag-making. Environmental-themed sessions were delivered in schools and youth clubs, alongside inclusive community workshops open to all ages and abilities. |
| PlayFest!   | Free annual children's festival of hands-on play and games, taking place in August each year. 25 interactive activities are available for families to explore, with a focus on creativity, arts, science, engineering and climate. Eco-themed activities include a hands-on forest school, beekeepers and live hive, eco-themed storytelling. Around 15,000 people attend each year  |
| Blooming Minds  | A well-being programme facilitated by Rushmoor Voluntary Services. A suite of 10 week sessions which offering opportunities for gardening-based activities, which reduce social isolation and positively impact on self-confidence, self-esteem and mental well-being.   |
| Blooming Marvelous  | <p>Volunteers who work to grow their own food on allotments in the Borough, maintain some of the public gardens and tidying up private gardens in support of those no longer able to do so themselves.</p> <p>Promoting physical activity, encouraging social interactions, and providing a sense of purpose and meaning.</p>  |

## 6. Future Actions for the Duration of this Reporting Period: 2026-2031

- 6.1 The government announced plans for local government reorganisation (LGR) of England’s two-tier counties – including Hampshire - as part of the English devolution white paper in December 2024. LGR involves the replacement of separate county and borough councils with a single tier of ‘unitary’ local authorities. LGR will take effect in Hampshire during the reporting period for this Biodiversity Duty Reporting period with the result that Rushmoor Borough Council will no longer exist in it’s current form by 2031. LGR is expected to result in the combining of existing Councils to create a larger unitary over a larger geographical area, but at time of writing, the alignment of the new structure is not known. The natural environment is currently managed very differently across the different Councils of Hampshire. LGR offers significant opportunities for realigning resources and promoting ambitious biodiversity gains.
- 6.2 At time of writing, natural environment staff within Rushmoor and adjacent authorities are working together to identify complementary biodiversity enhancement projects and align management aims. We will seek to promote best practice and take advantage of economies of scale.
- 6.3 We will aim to complete an interim review of this Biodiversity Duty Report in 2028, in view of LGR discussions and timeframes. The interim review will ensure that the Report can both influence and align with the strategic planning of the new unitary authority. Reporting schedules for this Biodiversity Duty Report will therefore need to be agile to take advantage of opportunities presented.

*Table 9: Future Actions*

| Action   | Description   | Outcome  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Managing Land to Enhance and Restore Biodiversity</b>   |   |  |
| Continue to Commission Professional Ranger Services from Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (BVCP). | The Council commission the BVCP to deliver on-the-ground land management activities. Their rangers work in accordance with approved Site Management Plans, where these are available. | The Council will review the Partnership agreements to ensure that this essential ranger service is adequately funded.<br><br>Council Officers and BVCP staff will continue to hold regular meetings to review seasonal land management activities, ensuring effective delivery of works. |
| Finalise the Interim Management Plan for Southwood Country Park.   | At time of publication, the Interim Management Plan is overdue for review. A fully costed management plan with timeframes for delivery and  | A fully costed management plan will be published for Southwood Country Park, in accordance with the relevant Service Level   |

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| Action   | Description   | Outcome   |
|--|---|---|
|  | responsible persons, needs to be agreed.  | <p>Agreement for site management tasks.</p> <p>The Park will be managed in accordance with this plan, updated and revised as required in response to habitat and species monitoring.</p>                                      |
| Manage Southwood Woodlands in accordance with the Agreed Management Plan dated April 2025 (2025-2034).             | Deliver, review and adjust as required, in response to habitat and species monitoring results.  | Continue to deliver the Southwood Woodlands Management Plan, updated and revised as required in response to habitat and species monitoring.   |
| Manage Rowhill Nature Reserve in accordance with the Agreed 'Addendum to Habitat Management Plan 2022-2032'.       | Deliver, review and adjust as required, in response to habitat and species monitoring results.  | Continue to deliver the Rowhill Management Plan Addendum, updated and revised as required in response to habitat and species monitoring.  |
| Ecological Enhancement of Cove Brook and Corridor from Southwood Country Park to Confluence with Blackwater River. | <p>Deliver a multi-source funded programme of works following a river catchment-based approach to enhancements implemented are ecologically coherent and work with the natural process of the river and corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bankside habitat and instream management to increase biodiversity</li> <li>• Reduction in artificial banks and beds</li> <li>• Restore natural flow, erosion and ecological functioning of river</li> <li>• Production of Cove Brook Management Plan for sustainable maintenance of works</li> </ul> | <p>Enhancement of bankside and riparian habitats for biodiversity gain;</p> <p>Contribute towards 'good' ecological status of the river in line with Water framework Directive ambitions.</p>                                 |
| Proposal for Council Owned and Managed Habitat Bank.   | For sale of compensatory Habitat Units to the open market to facilitate local development delivery in compliance with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) statutory obligations.  | <p>At time of publication, the broader framework of statutory and policy obligations around delivery of BNG is subject to review.</p> <p>The governance and cost implications of implementing a Council owned and managed</p> |

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| Action  | Description   | Outcome   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | Habitat Bank will remain under review. It is unknown at present, if this proposal will be taken forward during this plan period.  |
| 194 Urban Trees Planted under Urban Tree Challenge Fund.  | Aftercare period for these trees continues until 2028   | Aftercare is delivered in line with Funding requirements. Planted trees are established and healthy.  |
| Review how the Council Cut and Manage Grasslands within our Borough to Encourage a More Species-Rich Sward for Enhanced Biodiversity. | <p>Much of the land owned and managed by the Council comprises road verges, parklands and parcels of publicly accessible amenity space within built development.</p> <p>A majority of these spaces are managed to a close regular mowing regime. This regime favours strong aggressive grassland species and can prevent the establishment and seeding of wildflowers. Judicious cutting of limited paths and retention of cutting piles in hidden corners, can maintain the feeling of neatness and reduce costs.</p> <p>A reduced cutting regime, with removal of arisings, allows a more species rich sward to develop, encouraging rarer wildflowers to the benefit of pollinators and the wider ecosystem.</p> | <p>Review current cutting regimes and identify locations where cutting can be reduced.</p> <p>Amend grass cutting third-party contracts to reflect reduced cutting regimes.</p>   |
| Great Crested Newt Presence / Likely Absence Population Monitoring.   | GCN are known to be present within Rushmoor Borough. Spring 2025 surveys identified likely absence at survey locations within Council owned and managed land. Improvement in GCN habitat as a result of ditch enhancement works at Southwood County Park has increased opportunities for this known population to spread within the Borough. Due to their high level of legal protection, it is essential that planning decisions and management of our estate is appropriately informed by their presence to ensure statutory compliance.  | The Council shall undertake 5 x eDNA surveys of suitable waterbodies as present on Council owned and management land, every 2 years, in accordance with best survey practice – the first biennial survey being 2027. Survey location will focus on sites subject to active management or proposals for change of use. |
| <b>Partnership Working</b>  |   |   |
| Partnering and Supporting Hampshire   | HBIC is the local environmental records centre for Hampshire. The   | The Council will continue to proactively support HBIC and commission data and survey  |

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| Action   | Description  | Outcome  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)</p>  | <p>council supports HBIC via a rolling Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>HBIC provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professional ecological consultancy; protected habitat and species data gathering and interpretation services;</li> </ul> <p>Detailed botanical survey of Rushmoor Sites of Importance for Conservation (SINCs), local wildlife sites of County Importance for species and / or habitats, on a rolling programme. Ensures up to date evaluation of these County Important wildlife sites. Management recommendations as a result of these surveys are been shared with relevant landowners and implemented on Council owned / managed sites.</p> <p>Rushmoor signed a new 3 year Service Level Agreement in 2024 to run until 2027.</p> <p>The data provided under this Partnership is critical to ensuring that land management and planning decisions have appropriate regards to legally protected habitats and species – a legal obligation and a material consideration in planning terms.</p> <p>SINC surveys ensure that our most precious habitats can be managed correctly.</p> | <p>services, on at least current levels and seek to expand where appropriate.</p>  |
| <p>Partnering and Supporting the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership and the Joint Strategic Partnership Board</p> | <p>As a signatory to the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework, the Council need to have an active role in supporting the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) elements of the Framework via the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership.</p> <p>The Council have a seat on the Board and are actively engaged in ensuring the Framework is implemented appropriately and in line with statutory obligations.</p>  | <p>The Council will continue to proactively engage with the both the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership and the Board, at both Officer and Council Member level.</p> <p>The Council will continue to proactively engage with proposals for revising delivery of SAMM.</p> |
| <p>Active Engagement with</p>  | <p>The Council will continue to actively engage with the numerous formal</p>   | <p>In a fast moving legislative and policy framework, the Council</p>  |

| Action   | Description  | Outcome   |
|--|--|---|
| Central Government Formal Consultations  | <p>consultations from Central Government, as they relate to biodiversity.</p> <p>Recent consultations include; Planning and Infrastructure Act; revisions to Biodiversity Net Gain secondary legislation; far reaching changes to planning policy; Sustainable Drainage Systems; Local Plans; Design Coding.</p>   | will continue to proactively engage with formal consultations to revise the policy or statutory framework, where these revisions have scope to impact – positively or negatively – on local biodiversity. |
| <b>Review of Rushmoor Policies and Strategies to Enhance and Restore Biodiversity</b>    |  |   |
| Development of new Local Plan  | Develop a suite of strong environmental policies in the draft local plan that will contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity; ensure the local plan aligns closely with priorities in the Hampshire LNRS; conduct the necessary environmental assessments to support the draft local plan including Strategic Environment Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Water Cycle Study | Ensure biodiversity gain opportunities are embedded within the new Local Plan.  |
| Delivery of Local Delivery of Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) 'Measures' | Incorporate consideration of the LNRS into council functions and decision making. Deliver and encourage the delivery of identified measures for nature on land in the borough, through management of council owned sites and planning.   | Development management decisions have due regards to the Hants Local Nature Recovery Strategy.  |
| Development of Rushmoor Borough Council Design Code                                      | Ensure Design Code/s have due regards to   | Development management decisions have due regards to habitat and species protection best practice; delivery of nature-based solutions; deliver LNRS 'measures'.   |
| <b>Community Engagement</b>  |  |   |
| Co-ordination of Rushmoor Climate Community Group and Newsletter                         |  | On-going  |
| Eco-festival   |  | Proposed for summer / autumn 2026   |
| Rushmoor Community in Bloom  |  | On-going  |

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| Action             | Description | Outcome  |
|--------------------|-------------|----------|
| Eco Explorers Club |             | On-going |
| Blooming Minds     |             | On-going |
| Blooming Marvelous |             | On-going |