



Test Valley Borough Council
Biodiversity Monitoring Report
January 2023 – December 2025

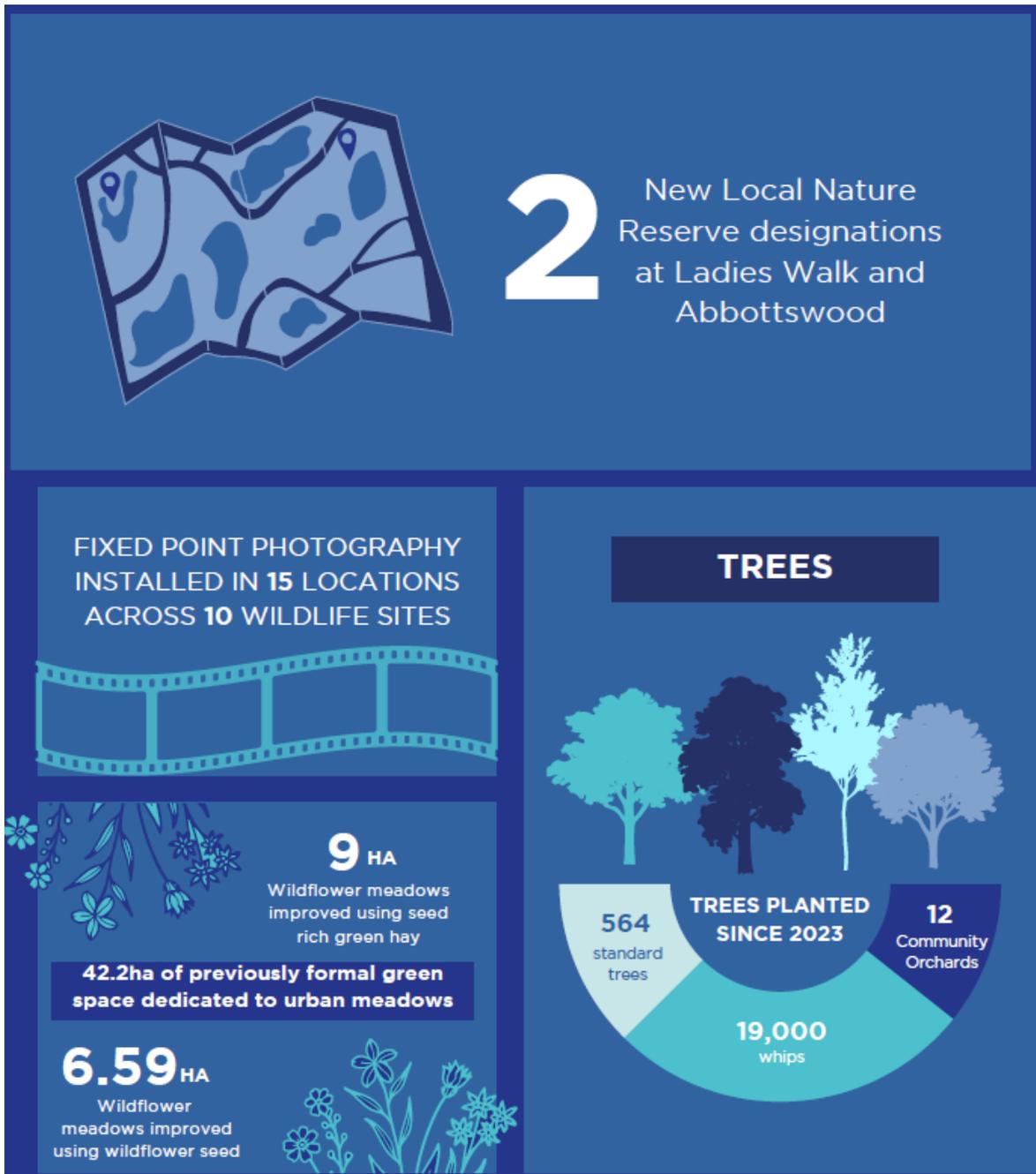
February 2026

Introduction

Our corporate plan highlights the environment as one of our strategic priorities, working towards a greener borough with our communities and businesses.

This monitoring report looks back at the last three years of work to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It summarises our progress across strategies, land management, education, and other projects. Much of this work has been made possible through strong partnerships and support from volunteers.

The below image gives a flavour of some of the work undertaken over the last three years.

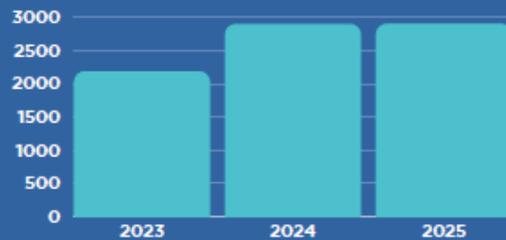


VOLUNTEERS

45 Active volunteers
in our Citizen
Science
Programme



HOURS DEDICATED TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



Total since 2023: 7994 hours

3663

Hours dedicated to environmental
education across our wildlife sites since
January 2023

21

Tit boxes installed to
encourage predators of
Oak Processionary Moth

272^{M2}

Bulb planting specifically
combat Oak Processionary
Moth

Background

Environment Act 2021 duties

Since 1 January 2023, there has been a legal duty on all public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, which was updated from the previous duty¹ that focused on the conservation of biodiversity.

As part of the requirements in this legislation, we reflected on what the council was already doing that contributes to conserving and enhancing biodiversity, including

¹ Through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

through working with partners. As a result, a statement was published in February 2024 that provided an overview of our activity².

There was also a requirement to report on how the duty has been implemented, initially looking at a three-year period, then subsequently reporting at five-year intervals. This is the first monitoring report and covers the period January 2023 to the end of December 2025.

Overview of Test Valley Borough Council

Test Valley Borough Council is a district council located in west Hampshire. It covers an area of about 628 square kilometres. Based on the 2021 Census, the population was just over 130,000 and included about 54,000 households. There are 43 councillors covering 20 electoral wards.

The council's Corporate Plan was developed through a collaborative approach. This highlighted the importance residents place on the conservation of local wildlife and nature for the future. This is reflected in our strategic priorities for 2023-2027, one of which focuses on the environment. As part of this, we intend to take opportunities to further invest in and nurture the natural environment and biodiversity across Test Valley.

Local authorities across Hampshire are reviewing how local government is organised. Last year the county was fast-tracked by the government for both devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). LGR means the current two-tier system in the county with district, borough and county councils will be replaced by larger unitary authorities. A decision on the make up of the unitary authorities is yet to be announced, but the new councils are planned to come into effect from 1 April 2028, when they will take on all services currently shared between district and county councils.

Alongside this, there is a process underway looking to devolve powers from central government to a new strategic authority overseeing Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. A Mayor will be elected in May 2028 who would oversee this organisation.

Biodiversity in Test Valley

Test Valley supports a range of biodiversity assets, including internationally and nationally important wildlife sites, as well as those of local significance. The statutory sites³ cover over 1,900 hectares of the borough, with over 5,760 hectares identified as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. A variety of habitats can be found in Test Valley, including chalk streams such as the Test and its tributaries, woodlands, heathlands, grasslands, and wetlands. It is also home to a range of species,

² Available at:

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/environmentandsustainability/biodiversity-in-test-valley>

³ This includes Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves.

including notable species of fish, butterflies, birds, and plants. Based on the latest reporting, this includes just over 9,300 hectares of priority habitat⁴.

A small part of the south west of the borough falls within the New Forest National Park. In addition, a large portion of the borough to the north of Andover is within the North Wessex Downs national landscape.

The council manages over 600 hectares of land with over 200 hectares of this having a primary focus of nature conservation of wildlife, providing safe well managed spaces for the community to encounter nature.

Structure of this monitoring report

There are a number of ways that we are delivering on the duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This report does not cover everything but reflects on some of the main projects and work undertaken. This has been structured using the same themes / work areas as in our first consideration statement, both in the main report and Appendix 1. Some projects overlap across the work areas, so we have tried to ensure a best fit to avoid repetition.

What we have been doing and what we plan to do

For each of the below themes we have reflected on what we have been doing over the last three years to support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. This has involved significant work with partners and support from volunteers across a range of projects and initiatives. This builds on the information provided in the statement we published in February 2024.

We have also sought to give an indication of what we plan to do over the next five years. There are some challenges with doing this as, based on the current timescales for Local Government Reorganisation, the expectation is that new local authorities will be in place in 2028. We anticipate that as LGR progresses, we will work with those authorities that we will merge with to establish our future aspirations for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. This is likely to continue to involve working with a range of partner organisations, stakeholder and volunteers.

Information relating to Biodiversity Net Gain is covered in the following section but there are some cross overs.

Strategies, policies and objectives

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire

We have had a supporting role in the creation of the first local nature recovery strategy for Hampshire. Over the reporting period we have participated in discussions and workshops that have helped to shape this document, as well as responding to the consultation on the draft document in 2025.

⁴ Annual Biodiversity Monitoring Report 2024/25, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC), 2025. Position as at 31 March 2025.

Hampshire County Council, who had lead responsibility for preparing the strategy, published it in December 2025⁵. We, along with other partners, will take account of the strategy in delivering our functions, including planning and land management.

Going forward we will be looking at how to support the implementation of the LNRS and have regard to it in the decisions we make, including for planning matters.

Tree Strategy

A Tree Strategy and associated action plan was approved in May 2025. This represents the next step on a journey to continue with an integrated approach to the management of trees and woodlands. The strategy aims to build on the council's proven track record of a proactive approach to tree and woodland management across a broad portfolio of public spaces. It sets out our management principles for our trees and woodlands, our approach to new and replacement planting, and how we intend to ensure a resilient and sustainable tree stock for the future. The action plan provides a basis for what we intend to do over the next reporting period.

Planning functions

This section covers planning policy and development management functions, as well as other work areas linked to planning.

Policy and strategic planning

During the reporting period, we carried out two consultations on the emerging Test Valley Local Plan. One was a full draft document (Regulation 18 Stage 2) and another was a more targeted consultation (Revised Regulation 18) seeking to address the increase in housing requirement introduced by the government in December 2024. Biodiversity and nature more broadly were taken into account in preparing these consultation documents, including through site identification, gathering evidence, and drafting policies. Looking forward, the council intends to undertake a further consultation (Regulation 19 stage, currently planned to be by the end June) and then submit the draft Local Plan for examination by the end of 2026⁶.

We have worked with communities in Test Valley to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Some of these documents have needed to consider implications on nature conservation designations and have proposed policies that support biodiversity. We anticipate this continuing in the next reporting period.

Development management

The council has consistently encouraged developers to include enhancements for biodiversity into their planning proposals in line with its policies and the legislation surrounding protected habitats and species. These include features such as swift boxes and bat bricks/boxes installed on new buildings, considerations to make

⁵ Available at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/hampshire-strategy>

⁶ The timetable for preparing the Local Plan is set out in the Local Development Scheme, available at: <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/planningpolicy/lds>

habitats increasingly suitable for species groups such as invertebrates and reptiles and ensuring that landscaping is well suited to support existing biodiversity with measures such as native planting.

Mitigation strategies and approaches

There are a number of international nature conservation designations within and close to the borough. As such we have continued to work with partners to bring forward and implement mitigation strategies where appropriate to do so – some of these apply beyond the borough boundaries.

In the reporting period, we adopted a Supplementary Planning Document to update our approach to mitigation for recreational impacts on the New Forest and been an active partner in ongoing work to develop a strategic approach to on-designation mitigation for the New Forest. We are part of the Bird Aware Solent partnership and in 2024, along with partners, approved an updated mitigation strategy for recreational impacts on the Solent coastline and the birdlife it supports.



We have also worked with others to take account of the need for certain development to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to cumulative impacts on the Solent, River Itchen and River Avon. This includes working with landowners and other partners to enable nutrient offset schemes to be brought forward.

Looking forward, we will continue to work with partners to deliver the mitigation strategies and refine the approach taken as needed. In the next five years there could be changes in approach through the implementation of provisions in the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 on Environmental Delivery Plans and Nature Restoration Fund.

Great Crested Newt District Licencing

Test Valley Borough Council holds an Organisational Licence (also known as a District Licence) for great crested newts, for which NatureSpace are the named Delivery Partner. NatureSpace’s District Licensing Scheme provides an alternative licensing route to the traditional European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) when great crested newts are impacted by development. The scheme is designed to allow developers to pay for high-quality, strategically located off-site compensation that benefit great crested newt populations, whilst allowing construction to proceed on-site with fewer mitigation requirements. The District Licensing Scheme provides Test Valley Borough Council with a working example of a species conservation strategy (for great crested newts) and is helping to meet the requirements of the Local Plan on nature conservation.

An addendum to the Hampshire District Licence to include Test Valley Borough Council was granted in March 2024. To date, the scheme has generated £35,261 at the Hampshire level. These funds have secured over 55ha of terrestrial habitat compensation as well as seven high quality ponds created / restored, all delivered in Hampshire.

This compensation has been directly funded by development projects. To date, 25 development projects have submitted an enquiry to use the council's District Licence Scheme. This has included small proposals, as well as large-scale major developments. Currently, there are two developments authorised under the council's licence. One of which was a project led by the council for the extension of a car park at Bourne House in Romsey (planning reference 24/00749/FULLS), adjacent to known populations of great crested newts.

The legal requirements set out in the District Licence include occupancy multipliers for ponds (depending on location within the scheme's modelled impact risk zones) and different compensation ratios depending on the type of impact and year of the scheme's operation.

Approximately 60 - 65% of funding goes directly to the Newt Conservation Partnership to find compensation sites, create highly quality habitats, and monitor great crested newt populations at the local and landscape scale. 20% is spent directly on habitat creation/restoration, 20% is ring fenced in a fund to ensure the management of compensation ponds is secured in perpetuity and 25% is for monitoring. All created and restored ponds and habitats are monitored and managed for a minimum 25-year period.

The remaining contributions are allocated to the administration of the District Licence, including funding District Licensing Officer positions, undertaking site assessments, supporting developers, ecological consultants, and local planning authorities through the licensing process, increasing the coverage of the scheme to benefit a wider group of developers and planning authorities, annual reporting to Natural England, as well re-modelling, scheme evaluation and licence renewals every 5 years.

The District Licensing Scheme is a species conservation strategy at its core. The mitigation hierarchy is fully integrated into the assessments undertaken by NatureSpace; this includes a consideration of whether a development site can be included under the District Licence or whether impacts to newt populations would be so severe as to warrant site avoidance (in whole or in part). Development sites which are authorised under the District Licence benefit from streamlining of licensing requirements, greater flexibility and reduced on-site mitigation requirements when compared to 'traditional' mitigation licensing, whilst at the same time delivering better conservation outcomes for the species. Monitoring reports are available to download here: [Resource Hub - NatureSpace Partnership \(naturespaceuk.com\)](https://naturespaceuk.com).

Tailored mitigation requirements are applied to high-risk sites in the Red Impact Risk Zone based on the fine-scale considerations of individual developments. This could take the form of timing restrictions on impacting sensitive habitats, requiring searches of suitable features by ecological consultants or a requirement for limited fencing and trapping of favourable habitats prior to clearance. Whilst only sites in the Red Zone may be subject to these specific requirements, every development authorised is able to move any great crested newts discovered to suitable habitat, and out of harm's way. Regardless of risk zone every development is provided best

practice guidance at the time of authorisation and supported throughout the lifespan of their project to increase the level of safeguarding great crested newts receive.

Other planning related activities

At the end of each year, we have published an Authority Monitoring Report, which provides an update on various indicators linked to the implementation of the adopted Local Plan. This includes information relating to biodiversity. The reports are published on the council's website⁷.

We have actively worked with landowners in the borough to enable them to bring forward biodiversity gain sites (more information below) and nutrient mitigation sites. We anticipate this continuing going forward subject to any changes through the introduction of Environmental Delivery Plans.

Land management and stewardship

Local Nature Reserves

In 2024 we declared two new sites as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Ladies Walk in Andover and Abbotswold Nature Reserve in Romsey. These are important sites for wildlife and people, and the declaration reflects the important role the council has placed in their ongoing management and protection, as well as that of dedicated volunteers who help us to carry out practical wildlife conservation tasks on site and record valuable species data which contributes to the annual review of management practices. These additional sites join a further four designated Local Nature Reserves, comprising Rooksbury Mill, Anton Lakes, Tadburn Meadows and Valley Park Woodlands. Local Nature Reserve designation provides a formal recognition of the local biological importance of a site, with local planning authorities required to consider Local Nature Reserves in planning decisions, making it harder for proposals to negatively impact designated sites.

Management of other sites

The council is responsible for 15 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and seeks to promote their positive management through regular assessment and specific management to favour target features. Sites managed for wildlife and currently not designated as SINCs are also regularly surveyed and put forward to SINC designation where appropriate.

⁷ Available at: <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/planningpolicy/amr>

Urban meadows

We launched the urban meadows initiative in 2021. Since then, it has grown with a further 27.8 hectares at the start of the reporting period in January 2023 rising to a total of over 42 hectares borough wide in 2025. The areas included in the project have been monitored to determine their development using volunteers through our citizen science programme. Areas which continue to lack species diversity have been subject to a number of habitat enhancements, including the use of green hay from local species rich meadows, seeding with substrate appropriate wildflower seed or specialist seed enriched substrate in the case of Romsey Abbey. Areas which have received additional enhancement will continue to be monitored for establishment into the future.



Regeneration projects

As part of the Andover town centre masterplan, a project has been developed to relocate the southbound carriageway of the Western Avenue gyratory to provide the space for a new ecologically rich park adjacent to the River Anton. The creation of the park will include planting that supports a chalk stream river habitat and encourages biodiversity. By focussing the park on the eastern side of the river, this leaves the western side of the river and its banks undisturbed from public access. It is also anticipated that the project will result in a biodiversity net gain of about 12%.

Planning permission (reference 25/01047/FULLN) was granted for this scheme in October 2025, with construction expected to begin in late 2026. This forms part of the wider regeneration programme, which is part funded by the £18.3 million awarded to the council by the UK Government to revitalise Andover town centre.



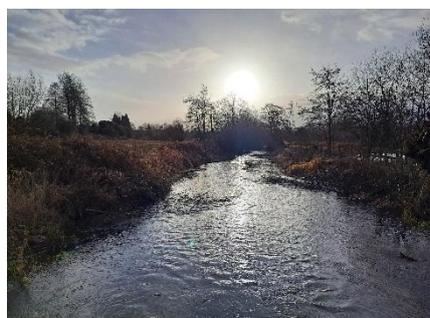
Partnership working

The council are directly and indirectly involved with a number of partnership projects to support species conservation, habitat enhancement and community involvement in nature-based conservation. By working closely with our partners including Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Wessex Rivers Trust and People's Trust for Endangered Species to name a few, we can contribute to nature conservation on a landscape scale.

Directly working with the Test and Itchen Catchment Partnership demonstrates our commitment to protecting and enhancing the valuable chalk stream habitat of the River Test which flows through the heart of the Test Valley. The partnership offers stakeholders the opportunity to share knowledge, as well as develop, facilitate and deliver actions which address issues affecting the health of the catchment. As a result of this partnership projects including Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Anton Chalk Stream Resilience Programme have become a vital lifeline for headwater enhancement and community engagement on the River Anton.

Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership Scheme

The Watercress and Winterbourne Landscape Partnership Scheme, which is funded with support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, is a community focussed project working to secure river and wetland restoration along the headwaters of the River Test and Itchen. This project has trained many volunteers in ecological surveying techniques, funded and delivered river restoration projects and broadened the understanding of the history of the river catchments through the collection of stories. Working on the Upper River Anton the scheme has delivered a number of chalk stream enhancement projects at Anton Lakes and Rooksbury Mill LNR including the installation of woody debris to enhance channel velocity and enhance bankside habitat. The installation of a cattle crossing at Anton Lakes will also contribute to reducing sediment caused through poaching. The project has also contributed to chalk stream education in local schools, education into the impacts of duck feeding in Andover town centre and will see the launch of two new interactive wildlife trails at Anton Lakes and Rooksbury Mill LNR.



The council is also working in partnership with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust through the management of the council owned site at Fishlake Meadows in Romsey. The site boasts a mix of flood plain habitats in close proximity to the River Test. In addition to this the council has indirectly contributed to the conservation of White Clawed Crayfish through the support and funding of species surveys and the development of a local Ark Site.

Test Valley Dormouse Project

Working in partnership with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Dormouse Group (HDG), People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), and Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South East (FWAG South East) the project works to map the distribution of the rare mammal and connect habitats across private land linking populations of dormice across the north of Test Valley.

The partnership works with landowners to adopt dormouse friendly management techniques and to improve linkages through hedgerow planting and restoration. Greater connectivity and a well-managed wooded habitat within northern Test Valley will allow a healthy population of dormice to thrive.



The project area has approximately 2,235ha of woodland, much of which is small and fragmented. Since the project began 27km of hedgerow and 24 woodlands have been assessed to identify potential for restoration of dormice, mapping landscape features to identify connectivity between suitable linear features and woodland areas. Several events have been hosted to encourage private landowners to engage with the project.

Over the past 12 months, the project has hosted a landowner event for the Wessex



Farm Cluster Conservation Group, which involved an interactive session to highlight new potential survey locations as well as landowner knowledge. This was followed by a site walk to look at a variety of hedge management techniques including hedge laying, coppicing and rejuvenation and cutting. A number of footprint tunnel surveys have also been carried out throughout the project area including Ladies Walk and Picket Twenty.

Volunteer Groups

The council support and facilitate a number of volunteer conservation groups throughout the borough including The Anton River Conservation Association (TARCA), Tadburn Conservation Volunteers, Wilder Romsey and Friends of the Parks. These groups have contributed to 7994 hours of volunteer time dedicated to wildlife conservation across our wildlife sites. The groups carry out tasks including coppicing, tree planting, riverbank enhancement and pond creation. The valuable work of our dedicated volunteers helps to ensure these sites are maintained as thriving wildlife habitats and act as advocates for wildlife conservation across the borough.



Rooting For Andover

Rooting for Andover is a volunteer-led community growing and conservation group working to improve Andover's green spaces for both people and wildlife. The group currently manages one community garden – the Poppy Community Garden – which acts as their main hub for volunteering, learning and community activity, alongside the ongoing maintenance of nearby community orchards. Their work combines food growing with nature-friendly management, helping residents engage with local green spaces in practical, hands-on ways.

With a strong focus on biodiversity and conservation, Rooting for Andover supports pollinators and wildlife through wildflower planting, orchard care, composting and habitat features such as ponds and insect homes. The group works closely with the council and other partners to enhance green infrastructure, encourage community stewardship and promote sustainable land management, contributing to wider objectives around nature recovery, wellbeing and community resilience.



Andover Trees United

Working in partnership with Andover Trees United, the council has facilitated the planting of over 4,500 trees at Bury Hill Meadows as part of the Queen Elizabeth



Memorial Copse. Andover Trees United, which is a volunteer led registered charity, works to promote conservation, improve biodiversity and promote responsible access to natural spaces. The group organised and delivered a series of planting weeks alongside local schools to encourage children to experience tree planting first hand. The project, which began in the winter of 2022, reached its completion in November 2025

Education, awareness and conservation advice

Annually, we play host to local schools who carry out pond dipping activities alongside the national curriculum for Key stage 1 and 2 at a number of our wildlife sites at, Rooksbury Mill, Anton Lakes, Tadburn Meadows and Valley Park Local Nature Reserves, with visits also extended to Charlton Lakes in Andover. In 2025, we delivered more than 1,300 hours of educational sessions on conservation to schools, uniformed groups, community groups and members of the public. We also host work placement opportunities for students from universities, colleges and secondary schools providing important opportunities to gain valuable work-based experience firsthand.

We hosted a number of guided bat walks across our nature reserves, as well as training volunteers in traditional habitat management techniques including hedge laying.

During 2025, 45 volunteers took part in our newly launched citizen science programme, helping to contribute species information to important national data sets, for species including butterflies, amphibians and reptiles, dormice, harvest mice as well as freshwater invertebrates.

Members of the public have also been taking part in our fixed-point photography project, which has been launched across all wildlife sites and allows for accurate visual monitor of habitats and site development.

Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The council has implemented the requirement for BNG to be delivered as part of proposed development within the borough and has met its obligations by working with developers and planning applicants to ensure the minimum 10% net gain is achieved wherever applicable, as per the legislation. During the reporting period, the council has approved a total of six biodiversity gain plans with a further eight permissions granted that require biodiversity net gain (pending discharge of the biodiversity gain condition). Additional details of the consented planning applications requiring net gains can be found in Appendix 2: Biodiversity Net Gain.

Considering the six approved biodiversity gain plans, the council has facilitated a total increase of 1.37 area habitat units and 0.64 linear habitat units during the reporting period. The average percentage net gain for area habitats achieved is 16.48% and the average net gain for linear habitats achieved is 52.92%. Additional details can be seen below in Appendix 2: Biodiversity Net Gain.

Of the six approved biodiversity gain plans, five have achieved the required net gain on-site only and one has done so via a combination of on-site gains and off-site units. This demonstrates the council's commitment to ensuring development follows the biodiversity gain hierarchy.

Looking to the future, the council has agreed to act as the monitoring body for two large (~40ha) private habitat banks within the borough to help kickstart a local biodiversity unit market to support development within the region. Furthermore, the council aspires to create a habitat bank of its own within the borough to further support biodiversity net gain locally and is taking a proactive approach in assisting landowners that come forward to explore the potential of using their land holdings for the provision of BNG units.

The council will continue to work with developers and applicants to ensure that statutory BNG requirements are met within development and, where appropriate, we will encourage developers and applicants to go above and beyond, either by increasing the net gain achievements of developments or through the implementation of other biodiversity enhancements to complement enhanced or created habitats.

Conclusions and next steps

We have sought to conserve and enhance biodiversity through delivery services, working with partners, and how we manage our land. This is something that has been highlighted as important by the residents of Test Valley through the development of our corporate plan. We are grateful for the support from volunteers, stakeholder and other partners in contributing to the activity summarised above. We intend to continue to exercise our functions taking account of the general biodiversity objective relating to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as we go forward.

Within the course of the next reporting period, it is expected that local government will be reorganised within Hampshire. This means there is less certainty over the second part of the reporting period, in particular on the action that will be taken. However, the duty to take account of the biodiversity objective will remain a legal requirement for the new unitary authorities and we will be continuing to deliver the ongoing projects and work areas, including through the management of our land, education and awareness activities, and work with partners.

Appendix 1: Overview of progress made and intended next steps

It should be noted that under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the expectation is that new local authorities will be in place in 2028, with a transition towards this commencing in advance. Therefore, this needs to be considered within what actions that can be identified and delivered in the next five years. As LGR progresses, and there is a transition to new unitary authorities, we will work with those authorities that we will merge with to identify the opportunities for making progress in relation to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
Corporate strategy	Corporate Plan 2023-2027: A Place for Everyone – Supporting our Communities to Thrive Climate Emergency Action Plan (2024)	A second iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan was approved in November 2024. This recognises a range of co-benefits of action, including for biodiversity. As part of delivering the actions within this document, the Council looked at carbon storage and sequestration of its green spaces and explored opportunities to increase this whilst conserving biodiversity.	<p>Following a review of the recommendations to support carbon sequestration on the council's green spaces, we will look to implement any appropriate measures.</p> <p>We will continue to explore opportunities to deliver projects that support co-benefits for the climate and nature.</p>
Biodiversity strategy	Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)	We have continued our involvement in projects that link to the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and its actions, many of which are covered elsewhere in this report. Each year we have provided a summary of some of the work undertaken through our Authority Monitoring Report .	As the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been published, we will consider how we can support its implementation in the approach we take to conserving and enhancing biodiversity reflecting on our corporate plan and associated priorities and in the context of the implications of Local Government Reorganisation.

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
Planning functions	Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2011-2029 (2016) Draft Local Plan	Two rounds of consultation have been undertaken on the draft Local Plan – Regulation 18 Stage 2 and Revised Regulation 18. Both have sought to reflect on the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, whilst also planning for development needs in a way that aligns with national policy.	We are working towards the next iteration of the draft Local Plan, the Regulation 19 / pre-submission stage. This will be prepared taking account of the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Planning functions	Supporting communities to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) and other forms of community planning.	We have been supporting parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups in their preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. In some cases, these include provisions in relation to biodiversity and nature conservation, as well as ensuring compliance with legal requirements. Three NDPs have been made in the reporting period that include policies or proposals linked to biodiversity.	We intend to continue to support communities to prepare and review their Neighbourhood Plans.
Planning functions	Preparing and implementing strategic mitigation strategies , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Bird Aware Solent Strategy (2024) • New Forest Recreation Mitigation Supplementary 	The council has continued to work with partners to bring forward and implement mitigation strategies in relation to international nature conservation designations. This has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approving a revised mitigation strategy for recreational impacts on the Solent designations 	The council will continue to work with partners to coordinate approaches in relation to mitigation for international nature conservation designations as a result of new development.

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
	Planning Document (2025)	<p>(Revised Bird Aware Solent Strategy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted a Supplementary Planning Document to update our approach to mitigation for recreational impacts on the New Forest • Continued to work with partners on developing a joint approach to on-designation mitigation for recreational impacts on the New Forest • Continued to work with partners in relation to mitigation for water quality (nutrients) in relation to multiple international nature conservation designations, including through the Solent Mitigation Partnership which was set up in early 2025 building on previous work through the Partnership for South Hampshire. 	
Planning functions	Delivering development management and enforcement services in a way to conserve and enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attached biodiversity enhancement planning conditions to consented applications to enhance and conserve biodiversity on a local level. • Worked with developers throughout design stages to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work closely with developers to encourage innovative designs that are beneficial to biodiversity. • Continue to insist upon (where appropriate) the implementation of site-specific biodiversity enhancements that are beneficial

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
		proactively encourage outcomes beneficial to biodiversity.	to nature but not captured by BNG.
Planning functions	Preparing for and implementing biodiversity net gain (BNG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured the delivery of the statutory net gain requirements for development and where appropriate encouraged developers to go above and beyond the baseline requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and establish local habitat banks within the borough to support biodiversity net gain for local developments. Support local landowners that wish to consider using their land to create habitat banks. Continue to work closely with developers and applicants to ensure the delivery of biodiversity net gain.
Land management & stewardship	<p>Seek to ensure sites are in positive management / favourable conservation status. The council has a range of strategies, management plans and other information including:</p> <p>Green Space Strategy 2021-2031</p> <p>Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve</p>	<p>Tree and woodland strategy approved in 2025.</p> <p>Two new Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) designated.</p> <p>Rooksbury Mill LNR, Valley Park Woodlands LNR and War Memorial Park retain Green Flag Award which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.</p>	<p>New LNR designations for Harewood Common and Bury Hill Meadows.</p> <p>Increase and improve provision of urban meadows creating diverse green spaces throughout the borough. Working to raise awareness in the wider community, through engagement with parishes and wider groups.</p> <p>Green Flag application for Charlton Lakes.</p>

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
	<p>Fishlake Meadows Nature Reserve</p> <p>Urban meadow creation</p> <p>Tree and woodland strategy (2025)</p>	<p>Incorporation of climate resilient management techniques throughout site management plans.</p> <p>Continued expansion of the council's urban meadows project has led to a total of 42.2 hectares of formal green space dedicated to wildlife conservation, creating urban wildlife corridors through Andover, Romsey, North Baddesley and Valley Park.</p>	<p>Securing further land in the valley of the Test floor to extend the boundary of Fishlake Meadows</p> <p>Develop proposal to improve visitor experience in and around Fishlake Meadows whilst protecting the sites unique character and conservation status.</p> <p>Expand volunteer training through citizen science project to empower communities to find out more about their local area, as well as contribute to local and national data recording.</p> <p>Strategy implementation with a focus on canopy cover assessment to include benefits for wellbeing, air quality as well as increased carbon storage and landscape connections.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Southern Water and the Wessex Rivers Trust on the Anton Chalk Stream Resilience Programme to deliver catchment scale enhancement on the River Anton.</p>
Regeneration	<p>South of Romsey town centre masterplan</p>	<p>Work is underway to bring forward some of the projects in the approved</p>	<p>The council will continue to work with partners to bring forward the</p>

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
	Andover town centre masterplan	masterplans. This includes the scheme for Western Avenue getting planning permission in October 2025 to incorporate a new public space and enhancements to the River Anton corridor.	masterplans, with specific projects ensuring that opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity are taken. The Western Avenue project is due to begin construction in late 2026.
Partnership working	Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	The council had a statutory role in supporting the creation of this strategy and we responded to the consultation on the draft document in 2025.	Now the LNRS has been published, we are one of a number of partners that has a role in delivering the LNRS, this could include through planning functions and land management for example.
	Supporting the delivery of the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan and North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan	In October 2025, the council adopted the latest iteration of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan, which covers 2025 to 2030.	Continue to work with other organisations to support the delivery of the partnership plan and management plan for the respective national landscapes.
	Working with the Partnership for South Hampshire	For a number of years, we have been working with the Partnership for South Hampshire and other partner local planning authorities and organisations in relation to the approach to nutrient neutrality, including exploring options for offset schemes. More recently this has been expanded to also consider Biodiversity Net Gain.	We anticipate continuing to work collaboratively on these matters.

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
	Working with the local environmental records centre	The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) has an important role in assisting us in meeting our duties in terms of ecological data, including undertaking surveys and helping to monitor changes.	Continue working with HBIC in line with the Service Level Agreement.
Partnership working community and land management	Catchment Management	We continue to be an active member of the Test and Itchen Catchment Partnership as well as working alongside active partners to deliver chalk stream enhancements through the Watercress and Winterbournes Lottery Funded Project, including river enhancement projects at Rooksbury Mill and Anton Lakes, as well as the Regeneration of Andover town centre at Riverside Park and Folly Park in partnership with Southern Water.	We will continue to work in partnership with Wessex River Trust on the Anton Chalk stream Resilience Programme. As a stakeholder it is important that we play our part to protect and enhance this precious chalk stream habitat.
	Test Valley Dormouse Project	We have been working in partnership with other organisations to map the distribution of dormice and connect habitats in northern Test Valley.	Anticipate continue working in partnership with others to support this project. This may include expanding and consolidating findings of the project, including additional hedge planting projects.
	Andover Trees United	4500 trees planted by school children from across key stage groups 1 and 2. This work has created 3 hectares	Support Andover Tress United to realise future tree planting opportunities in Andover including on public land and explore public and

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
		of newly planted broadleaf woodland at Bury Hill Meadows.	private partnerships for future land management opportunities.
Education, advice and awareness	Countryside events Educational visits	<p>Our Countryside Events programme alongside independent community events and corporate volunteering days have contributed to a total of 7994 volunteer hours to wildlife conservation.</p> <p>Our educational school visit programme has contributed 3663 hours to environmental education throughout the reporting period. With a focus on Key stage 1 and 2 education topics included freshwater habitats, food chains and adaptations.</p> <p>We continue to support the development of both Level 2 Countryside Worker and Level 4 Countryside Ranger apprentices in partnership with Sparsholt College.</p>	<p>Continue to support volunteer groups to deliver conservation tasks on site through an expanded Countryside Events Programme.</p> <p>Expand citizen science programme to provide species specific training for volunteers where necessary.</p> <p>Expand school education programme to allow more flexibility alongside national curriculum.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the Wessex Rivers Trust to deliver comprehensive education programme across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.</p>
Other work		With funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we worked with partners to deliver a pilot demonstrator project focusing on land management and regenerative farming that looked at different ways to reduce nutrient input. The outputs	

Topic / work area	Policies, objectives and actions	What we have done in the reporting period	What we plan to do in the next five years
		of this study were shared and are available on the council's website .	

Appendix 2: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Consented applications requiring Net Gains during the reporting period	Number	Proportion
Total number of planning permissions granted that require biodiversity net gain in the reporting period	14	N/A
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period	6	N/A
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through on-site units only	5	83%
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through off-site units only	0	0%
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through statutory credits only	0	0%
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site and off-site units	1	17%
Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site units and statutory credits	0	0%
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%
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%

Approved Plan	Area Habitats Unitary Gains	Linear Habitats Unitary Gains	Area Habitats Percentage Net Gain	Linear Habitats Percentage Net Gain
1	0.16	0.37	11.11%	109.49%
2	0.04	0.05	12.67%	42.70%
3	0.5	0.02	16.36%	12.25%
4	0.25	0.2	10.55%	153.07%
5	0.34	N/A	38.12%	N/A
6	0.08	N/A	10.05%	N/A
Total gains and average percentage Net Gain achieved	1.37	0.64	16.48%	52.92%

