

# **Strengthened Biodiversity Duty Report**

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# Appendix A: Three Rivers District Council Strengthened Biodiversity Duty Report, 2026

## Introduction

Three Rivers District covers approximately 89 km<sup>2</sup> (34 square miles) of which 76% is designated Metropolitan Green Belt. Within this, is a mosaic of habitats both urban and rural, including woodland, grassland, wetland, and freshwater.

In December 2023 the council published its first consideration on the Three Rivers District Council's website ensuring compliance with the Strengthened Biodiversity Duty. The first consideration included an initial review of existing strategies and actions aiming to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Following this at Full Council in July 2024, the Three Rivers Biodiversity Policy was unanimously adopted.

## 1. Three Rivers policies, objectives and actions (mandatory)

### 1.1 Three Rivers Biodiversity Policy

1.1.1 An umbrella policy which sets out the way in which the council will manage and monitor biodiversity across the district. It collates objectives and actions of policies from across the council and should be read in conjunction.

### 1.2 Statutory Development Plan - Development Management Policies

1.2.1 Adopted in 2013, the Development Management (DM) Policies for Local Development set out criteria against which planning applications are assessed and supports the implementation of the Core Strategy and wider Development Plan.

1.2.2 Within the council policies for development is “DM6 Biodiversity, Trees, Woodlands, Watercourses and Landscaping”. DM6 argues that development should result in no net loss of biodiversity value across the District as a whole. Stating that “Development must conserve, enhance and, where appropriate, restore biodiversity.”

1.2.3 The policy outlines parameters where development and biodiversity are given due regard:

a. Development impacting a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) or protected species will not be permitted if creating an adverse impact unless demonstrates a significantly high necessity for development or sufficient minimisation, mitigation and compensation of impact to the local environment.

b. Through the Hertfordshire BAP three key areas identified as mid-Colne Valley, Whippendell Woods and River Chess Valley.

c. Development proposals should incorporate measures for biodiversity enhancement and Green Infrastructure. There should be a desire to avoid

impacts to designated sites and important species/habitats through appropriate design.

- d. Development must conserve, enhance and, where appropriate, restore biodiversity.
- e. Development must not result in fragmentation or isolation of habitats and should seek for improved connectivity within the landscape.
- f. Landscaping proposals must be submitted for new development which protect and enhance tree, woodland and hedgerow.
- g. For development adjacent/over watercourses, the Water Framework Directive must be given due consideration.

## 1.3 Tree Strategy

- 1.3.1 The Three Rivers Tree Strategy, written in 2022, assesses the council's roles and responsibilities as a landowner, regulator, and advocate for trees. The value of trees, woodlands and hedges as wildlife corridors is highlighted within the strategy facilitating wildlife to move between habitats.
- 1.3.2 Actions within this strategy cover health and safety, tree protection and biodiversity. It is the biodiversity themed actions that are covered here. The councils Tree Strategy is due to be updated in 2027; hence some actions are still ongoing.

<b>Table 1: Actions and progress from the Tree Strategy</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Commission woodland inventory work to obtain data to feed into a district tree ecosystem services survey	Ongoing: A tree canopy cover report has been completed, further data on the structure of TRDC woodlands is required to be able to fully calculate the carbon storage and sequestration ability.
Review TRDC's tree asset register and add any additional sites	Ongoing: Working to improve the accuracy of the council's tree asset register with new sites being added and existing sites modified.
Organise basic tree safety training for relevant TRDC staff	Complete: Staff have undertaken training to identify issues with trees allowing early intervention.
Consult on the findings of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit and develop a five year plan for new tree planting and establishment on minor open spaces	Complete: Actions are reviewed, with new actions added, annually. The tree planting identified is carried out as funding allows.
Consider recruiting a community/education officer to work with local communities on new tree planting schemes on TRDC owned land	Complete: The officer delivered several projects, including BOA actions. This included 4 newly planted small woodlands with schools or local volunteers.
Develop plans for specific locations and tree varieties for new memorial tree planting and publicise opportunities to encourage support	To be completed.
Review existing standard tree and landscape conditions and make revisions where necessary	To be completed.
Update the Tree & Landscape section of the TRDC website to provide more	Complete: The relevant areas of the website within Tree & Landscape have been developed

information and guidance on third party owned trees	to include information on tree pests & diseases; protected trees; INNS; an FAQ section and more. This is reviewed and updated by the relevant officers.
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## 1.4 Three Rivers Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy

1.4.1 Updated in 2023, the Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy responds to the climate emergency declared by the council in 2019. The strategy focuses on what the council and its partners are doing and plan to do within the parameters of the current legal, financial, regulatory, and technological frameworks, under which we must operate to deliver substantial carbon emission reductions.

1.4.2 The Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy actions are reviewed every six months, and the strategy is due to be updated in 2027 hence some actions are still ongoing.

**Table 2: Actions and progress from the Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy**

Action	Progress
Encourage widespread tree planting across the district to improve nature and provide shade.	Officers have assisted in 2022, 2023, 2024 and in 2025 with distributing the Herts Free Tree Giveaway.
Plot spaces managed for nature across Three Rivers to identify the opportunities to encourage and connect nature.	The Council is working with the Herts Nature Recovery Partnership on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Raise awareness of BNG and opportunity to connect nature with landowners and managers.	The council supported engagement opportunities with the Herts Nature Recovery Partnership through multiple social media channels.
Establish a carbon offsetting / insetting approach for the district and the potential requirement for trees and hedgerows in delivering this	Offsetting Principles for Hertfordshire approved by HCCSP on 3rd July 2025. TRDC to seek approval from CMT to develop an Offsetting approach document to formalise the council's approach to carbon offsetting and incorporate the HCCSP principles. HCCSP to develop a green asset sequestration calculation methodology by Spring 2026.
Deliver the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit - Alternative Grassland Management	The AGM is reviewed annually with suggested further opportunities added where appropriate.
Deliver the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit - Spring Wildflower Planting	Ongoing, progress and opportunities reviewed annually
Deliver the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit - Standard Tree Planting	Ongoing, progress and opportunities reviewed annually
Deliver the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit - Woodland Creation	Ongoing, progress and opportunities reviewed annually
Deliver the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit - Hedgerow Creation and Restoration	Ongoing, progress and opportunities reviewed annually
Support the ColneCAN (Catchment Action Network) Smarter Water Catchment funding bid	TRDC play an active role in ColneCAN working groups including water quality, the steering group, and invasive species group.

Continue to deliver tree planting within TRDC owned land as per the Council's Tree Strategy in relation to replacement trees, new standard trees and woodland planting.	Replacement trees; planting identified in management plans, Biodiversity Opportunities Audit; Memorial trees; and trees given away to TRDC residents as part of the free tree giveaway.
Delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy - continue to develop chalk stream recovery projects on TRDC open space	The Bury Grounds - river restoration complete Scotsbridge - river restoration complete Aquadrome – in development.
Delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy - investigate decultivating and naturalising of the water courses through South Oxhey Playing Fields	To be completed as and when capacity allows.
Delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy - Develop detailed plans for conservation grazing at Bishops Wood Country Park	The site management plan was adopted by the Council in 2023 and officers are delivering the action plan for the plan period 2023-2028.
Delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy - Investigate opportunities to use wildflower mixes to benefit pollinating insects within urban settings	To be completed as and when capacity allows.
Commission and act upon hydrological study of the Aquadrome to optimise management of water on the site in the Aquadrome.	Due for completion Winter 2025/26.
Establishment of a small community orchard and a community planting garden in the Aquadrome as part of the management plan	The Aquadrome is now in the development phase of a National Lottery Heritage Fund development phase where initiatives such as this will be further explored.
Maintain non-intervention approach within wet woodland and informal areas in the Aquadrome as part of the management plan	The Aquadrome is now in the development phase of a National Lottery Heritage Fund development phase where management options such as this will be further explored.
Create a new management plan for Pheasants and Solomons Wood. To include an action plan to support the management and enhancement of the woodlands for public use and biodiversity	The site management plan was adopted by the Council in 2024 and officers are delivering the action plan for the plan period 2024-2029.
Facilitate the establishment or re-invigoration of at least one community garden or biodiversity hub on non-Council-owned land* in each parish in Three Rivers, maintained by volunteers. Ensure provision of compost bins and water butts are considered in design of volunteer-maintained community growing spaces as part of Working Group.	The councils "Community Growing Spaces" working group established and seeking establishment of new community gardens/growing spaces on non-council owned land across district.
Support Services for Young People to create and maintain gardens/growing spaces in West Hyde Youth Club. Explore opportunities with Three Rivers local schools, youth councils and scout groups, as part of Community Growing Spaces Working Group.	Ongoing depending on capacity and budget.

Continue to offer nature-themed events and activities at council-owned green spaces for young people.

Inclusion of nature themed events within the council's events and activities offer. All events to be reviewed seasonally.

## 1.5 Greenspace Management Plans

- 1.5.1 Within the District, the council is responsible for approximately 540 hectares of greenspace, within this are 11 major green space sites which each have a specific greenspace management plan.
- 1.5.2 These management plans set out the management, maintenance, and development framework for the sites over the next five or 10 years dependent on their length. The management plans are regularly reviewed to ensure action delivery is on track for both biodiversity and public amenity.
- 1.5.3 Specific management plans exist for
  - Rickmansworth Aquadrome; Local Nature Reserve & Local Wildlife Site
  - Bishops Wood & Batchworth Heath; Common Land, Local Wildlife Site & Country Park
  - Carpenters Wood; Local Wildlife Site, Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, Plantation in Ancient Woodland Site & within the Chilterns National Landscape
  - Chorleywood House Estate; Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site, Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland & within the Chilterns National Landscape
  - Croxley Common Moor; Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve & Local Wildlife Site
  - Croxley Hall Woods; Local Wildlife Site, Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland & Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site
  - Leavesden Country Park; Country Park
  - Oxhey Woods; Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site, Ancient Semi-Natural Site & Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site
  - Pheasants & Solomons Wood; Local Wildlife Site & Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
  - South Oxhey Playing Fields; Local Wildlife Site
  - The Withey Beds; Local Nature Reserve & Local Wildlife Site
  - The Green & Stones Orchard, Common Land & Local Wildlife Site (pending agreement at CCL committee 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026).
- 1.5.4 Copies of the management plans including the action plans and review cycles can be found on the [council website](#)

## 1.6 Three Rivers Biodiversity Opportunities Audit & Alternative Grassland Management Initiative

- 1.6.1 The Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, 2021 set the council objective of "ensuring that all TRDC owned land is managed sustainably and for the benefit of biodiversity and soil health."
- 1.6.2 Therefore, in conjunction with the 11 major greenspace strategies (outlined at 1.5) the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA) details management opportunities that benefit biodiversity in balance with the requirements of recreational pressure on the individual sites.
- 1.6.3 The BOA is reviewed by the council annually setting the management opportunities to be delivered over the next 12 months. Additional opportunities are continually sought and threaded into the BOA for delivery.

1.6.4 A copy of the BOA can be found on the [council website](#).

1.6.5 In 2022, following a pilot period the council introduced the Alternative Grassland Management (AGM) initiative where a series of different management options were prescribed for different sites where appropriate. Contributing towards the council motion to increase management for the benefit of biodiversity.

1.6.6 Further information on the AGM can be found on the [council website](#).

## 1.7 Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy

1.7.1 Written in 2022, the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy addressed the authority's approach to nature conservation, habitat management and enhancement in response to the ecological emergency that accompanies the climate emergency currently being faced. The strategy identified and prioritised actions to be taken by the council to benefit biodiversity.

1.7.2 The Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy was produced in 2022 with a five year management plan due to complete in 2027, hence some of the actions are ongoing. Due to the creation of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other related documents the actions of this strategy will be incorporated by other documents.

<b>Table 3: Actions and progress from the Nature Recovery Strategy</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Develop and improve the habitat mapping of TRDC land to aid management of open space for biodiversity using the Biodiversity Baseline, surveys and investigations.	Ecological surveys completed have been translated onto GIS through shapefiles.
Supply Grounds Maintenance with a basic wildflower and grass seed mix for the reinstatement of grassed areas following works, or other ground disturbance.	To be completed as and when capacity allows
Support and engage with the development of the Environment Act's Local Nature Recovery Strategy and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain on TRDC owned land.	Supported through multiple rounds of consultation and hosted an engagement session, contributes to Herts Land Manager forum for the LNRS development.
Continue to develop Chalk Stream Recovery projects on TRDC open space (e.g. Chorleywood House Estate, Scotsbridge, The Aquadrome).	The Bury Grounds - river restoration complete Scotsbridge - river restoration complete Aquadrome – in development
Undertake a hydrological study and options appraisal of Rickmansworth Aquadrome LNR a flood plain, and deliver the recommendations.	Progress awaiting release of Environment Agency flood modelling of the area, due for completion December 2025.
Implement natural flood management (NFM) opportunities throughout Oxhey Woods.	33 leaky dams installed within the woods.
Investigate de-culverting and naturalising the water courses through South Oxhey Playing Fields.	Initial conversations, seeking approval from Thames, potential involvement with wider Natural Flood Management programme.
Continue to develop partnerships with a range of local organisations., including Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Colne Can or Colne Valley Regional Park.	The council are an active member of ColneCAN and work closely with both the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Colne Valley Regional Park.

Develop detailed plans for conservation grazing at Bishops Wood Country Park.	Incorporated within the Bishops Wood & Batchworth Heath Management Plan actions
Implement Forestry Commission woodland management plans for major woodlands.	Completing a 5-year review of the FC woodland management plans. Stewardship funded work taking place at Bishops Wood, Oxhey Woods and Carpenters Wood.
Assess the condition of TRDC owned hedgerows and review their management and whether restoration works may be desirable, such as hedge laying, coppicing and replanting.	Hedge restoration completed at Romily Drive Open Space and commenced at Beechen Wood
At Chorleywood House Estate investigate the potential of creating an area to represent the historic farming of the site with introduction of cornfield wildflower species and cereals in a small pilot area.	To be completed as and when capacity allows
Continue to support CMS to undertake farm advisory and woodland creation visits to support landowner in the district to take advantage of Agri-environmental schemes.	Will continue to support CMS with advisory when approached by interested landowners.
Deliver the recommendations of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit	Ongoing
Investigate opportunities to support urban specialist species on TRDC buildings, including installation of swift nesting boxes, bat boxes and other nesting and roosting opportunities.	To be completed as and when capacity allows
Investigate opportunities to use wildflower mixes to benefit pollinating insects within urban settings (e.g. flower beds, planters, around the base of newly planted trees).	To be completed as and when capacity allows
Develop knowledge of biodiversity in the urban areas of the District by surveying and use of citizen science (e.g. Butterfly transects, RSPB bird surveys, ancient tree hunt).	Supporting citizen science in the District through the Riverfly Monitoring scheme and further opportunities through the Aquadrome project
Create Biodiversity themed educational material to be distributed to the local community and schools via the Council's website and social media.	Complete and on going
Continue to support local conservation volunteering groups throughout the District; including the Hertfordshire County Council volunteer group operated by CMS	Working with a series of volunteer groups including CMS Conservation Volunteers, Sustainable Three Rivers and Friends Groups.

## **2. Consideration of other strategies (mandatory)**

**2.1 Hertfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

2.1.1 Hertfordshire County Council formed the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership in 2023 as the responsible authority for the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The partnership included organisations such as: Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and local bodies such as Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre and Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

2.1.2 The Partnership utilised key documents through the county to develop the LNRS, including the following from Three Rivers District Council:

- Three Rivers Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy
- Three Rivers District Council Biodiversity Policy
- Three Rivers District Council's Corporate Framework
- Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy
- Three Rivers Tree Strategy

2.1.3 In addition to this the Council contributed to the LNRS in highlighting council owned land that may be applicable to either Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity or Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity.

2.1.4 The council officers attended a series of webinars/seminars both as a local authority and landowner/land manager within the county.

2.1.5 Further to this the council was consulted through the process, where feedback was compiled and returned to the Partnership for consideration.

**2.2 NPPF**

2.2.1 Updated in 2024, the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies aiming for sustainable development. Included within this is an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

2.2.2 Planning permission applications are determined in accordance with the NPPF and local development management documents.

2.2.3 In relation to biodiversity and the landscape, the two sections of principal relevance include:

- 13. Protecting Green Belt Land
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

**2.3 Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan**

2.3.1 The Chilterns Conservation Board have written a management plan for the National Landscape spanning 2025-2030. This plan summarises the issues faced by the area and management policies/actions need to conserve it.

2.3.2 Approximately 6km<sup>2</sup> of the Chilterns National Landscape is within the Council's boundary including Chorleywood House Estate LNR and Carpenters Wood LWS.

2.3.3 The Chilterns National Landscape management plan is considered within the Chorleywood House Estate management plan encouraging sustainable land management enhancing and maintaining biodiversity, natural beauty and heritage features. Additionally, enhancing public awareness understanding of wildlife conservation.

## 2.4 Wilder Futures: Creating a wilder Hertfordshire and Middlesex by 2030

- 2.4.1 Acknowledging that wildlife is in trouble the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust created this strategy with hope to reverse declines in wildlife and wild spaces.
- 2.4.2 The strategy goals encompass:
  - More land in Hertfordshire and Middlesex is managed and protected for nature
  - More people are standing up for wildlife and taking action for nature's recovery
  - Nature plays a central and valued role in helping to address climate issues and people's health and wellbeing

## 3. Three Rivers future actions (mandatory)

### 3.1 Green spaces strategy

- 3.1.1 The Council plans to produce a new Green Spaces Strategy within the next 5 years. This strategy will evaluate and set objectives for management of council owned and managed green spaces ensuring they are managed for the benefit of recreation, kept safe and accessible and also for the benefit of biodiversity.
- 3.1.2 It will incorporate the major site management plans and build on the biodiversity opportunities audit so that all greenspace is incorporated through either specific actions or general management regimes.

### 3.2 New Local Plan

- 3.2.1 The Council are currently producing a new Local Plan which will set out future growth and development within the District until 2041. Updating the Core Strategy (2011), Development Management Policies (2013) and Site Allocations (2014).
- 3.2.2 Within this Local Plan will be two policies:
  - a. Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Landscaping: this will acknowledge the levels of protection attributed to trees, woodlands and hedgerows. It will also recognise those without protective designations which should also be retained, protected and wherever possible enhanced due to increasing threats to trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
  - b. Biodiversity: this will recognise how integral biodiversity is to the character of Three Rivers in addition to other benefits sought including flood attenuation, softening extreme weather, wellbeing and carbon sequestration. These Local Plan policies ensure that the mitigation hierarchy is followed of firstly to avoid damage, secondly to mitigate damage and thirdly as a last resort that damage is effectively compensated.
- 3.2.3 The new local plan will have a wide remit to take positive steps towards achieving the 'step change' demanded by the Environmental Improvement Plan and provide the framework by which Government expects it will achieve commitments made in the 25-year Environment Plan.
- 3.2.4 Site allocations in the emerging Local Plan may also have site specific interventions included relating to biodiversity.

### 3.3 Regular Updating & renewing of Green Space Management Plans

- 3.3.1 The Council will continue to review and update management plans throughout the District inline with their individual timelines. The management plans will continue to seek the appropriate balance between management for recreation and biodiversity aiming for the sites to be resilient and sustainably managed.
- 3.3.2 With the renewal of the management plans, new action plans will be issued. These will include both regular actions for day-to-day management and also aspirational future actions for example for additional tree planting, wetland creation or interpretation boards.

## 4. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) information (mandatory)

- 4.1 BNG is an approach to development aiming to leave biodiversity in a quantifiably better state than it previously was. In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Therefore, unless an exemption applies, developers must now deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity, meaning that development will result in an increase in biodiversity (quality/quantity) than there was before.
- 4.2 As a local planning authority, within the Strengthened Biodiversity Duty, the Council must report on actions taken to meet BNG, the results during the past reporting period and plans for the next reporting period.
- 4.3 With the introduction of BNG in February and April 2024, the council has been working to ensure these obligations are met.
  - 4.3.1 In July 2024, the council adopted the Three Rivers Biodiversity Policy and updated all members on the topic of Biodiversity Net Gain. Within this the council committed to consider council owned and maintained land as potential receptor sites for BNG.
  - 4.3.2 In order to be able to support organisations wishing to create a Habitat Bank via a Section 106 agreement; the council created a criteria form. The aim of the document is to outline the information needed regarding a Habitat Bank ahead of Three Rivers District Council considering entering a legal agreement via a section 106 with a habitat bank provider. Once an agreement is signed, the habitat bank provider can apply to Natural England to be on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register which will enable biodiversity units purchased by developers to be used to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain as part of the planning process if off-site provision is required. At the time of reporting, the council have not secured any habitat banks.
- 4.4 The biodiversity gains that have been secured within the first reporting period (from 12th February 2024 for major planning applications and 1st April 2024 for all other planning applications, until 31st December 2025) are detailed below.

4.4.1 As table 4 presents, within the reporting period, there were a total of 1105 planning applications granted, of which 1080 were exempt from mandatory BNG. A total of 8 biodiversity gain plans have been approved in the period. The Biodiversity Gain Plan sets out how the biodiversity gain objective of at least a 10% gain will be met for the development granted planning permission. Of the 8 approved plans, 7 secure the BNG within the application site and 1 has secured the BNG off-site.

4.4.2 The 17 applications which appear unaccounted for within table 4, are situations where planning permission has been granted and the biodiversity gain plan condition has not yet been discharged.

**Table 4: Eligible planning permissions requiring BNG consideration**

	<b>Consented applications requiring net gains</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
A	Total number of planning permissions granted that require biodiversity net gain in the reporting period	1105	N/A
B	Total number of planning permissions granted in the reporting period where an exemption to the biodiversity net gain condition applies	1080	98%
C	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period	8	N/A
D	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through on-site units only	7	87.5%
E	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through off-site units only	1	12.5%

4.4.3 Of the exempt applications, table 5 outlines which exemptions have been claimed with the majority being householder applications.

**Table 5: Exemptions**

<b>Exemption</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Deminimis:</b> The development does not impact priority habitat and impacts an area less than 25m <sup>2</sup> or less than 5m of linear habitat.	87
<b>Householder:</b> applications made by householders defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning, Order 2015.	870
<b>High Speed Rail:</b> Applies to development forming part of (or ancillary to) high-speed railway transport networks.	1
<b>Application prior to BNG:</b> for applications made before day one of mandatory BNG.	33
<b>Retrospective:</b> Applications for works that have already been completed are currently exempt from BNG.	53
<b>Self-build:</b> application consists of no more than 9 dwellings, on a site no larger than 0.5 hectares and consist exclusively of dwellings classed as self-build or custom housebuilding.	36
<b>Total</b>	1080

4.4.4 Of the 8 approved biodiversity gain plans, table 6 covers a breakdown of the biodiversity change from pre-development to the expected post development value. This is separated into the three types of habitat unit (area, hedge and

water). As can be seen from the table the expected gains exceed the 10% mandatory net gain.

**Table 6: Overall expected gains & losses across approved biodiversity gain plans**

	<b>Overall expected gains and losses</b>	<b>Total or average</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Hedge</b>	<b>Water</b>
A	Total number of pre-development biodiversity units approved on-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	19.96	17.7	1.25	1.01
B	Total number of post-development biodiversity units approved on-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	28.02	23.13	3.59	1.3
C	Total net unit change in biodiversity units, on-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	8.06	5.43	2.34	0.29
D	Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, on-site	82%	31%	187%	29%
E	Total number of baseline biodiversity units approved off-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	0.03	0.03	N/A	N/A
F	Total number of post-intervention biodiversity units approved off-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	0.07	0.07	N/A	N/A
G	Total net unit change in biodiversity units, off-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	0.04	0.04	N/A	N/A
H	Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, off-site	133%	133%	N/A	N/A
I	Total number of biodiversity units offset using statutory credits broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
J	Total net unit change in biodiversity units (including any units offset using credits)	8.1	5.47	2.34	0.29
K	Average percentage (%) change (including statutory credits)	82%	31%	187%	29%

#### 4.5 Monitoring BNG

4.5.1 To ensure that BNG obligations continue to be met into the future; a fee charging schedule has been approved. This will enable the local planning authority to effectively monitor the creation and enhancement of significant gains which are proposed to either achieve biodiversity net gain on-site or proposed as part of a habitat bank used for developments which can only achieve off-site gains.

4.5.2 Developments will be subject to a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) which will include a specification of the habitats to be created or enhanced and details of their monitoring. Monitoring events will require a developer/subsequent landowner to provide an update report at set intervals in respect of the creation and enhancement of the habitats and any remedial action

needed/taken. It is expected that this will take place at years 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30. Some of these will involve a site visit by an Ecologist, accompanied by a Planning Officer to view the site and ensure compliance with the HMMP and to ratify the content of the monitoring reports.

4.5.3 The costs will be based on a combination of the technical difficulty of the habitat to be enhanced/created (which is set in the Statutory Metric), and the area of that habitat.

**Table 7: Monitoring Fee**

<b>Size:</b>	<b>Technical difficulty:</b>		
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Very Small Sites (Up to 2ha)</b>	£5,060	£5,420	£7,170
<b>Small (2.01 to 4.99ha)</b>	£5,550	£5,900	£7,580
<b>Medium (5 to 10ha)</b>	£6,900	£7,510	£9,990
<b>Large (10.01 to 19.9ha)</b>	£10,640	£11,890	£16,960
<b>Very Large (20+ ha)</b>	£11,610	£13,830	£20,430

## 5. Future Reporting

5.1 The next reporting period will cover: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2030. At the conclusion of this reporting period a Strengthened Biodiversity Duty report will be compiled summarising the actions taken to meet the duty in the period, an overview of BNG within the period and how the council will continue to meet the duty in the following reporting period.

