

# Nature Strategy

## Appendix B: Biodiversity Duty Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Compliance with the Biodiversity Duty

The Government published the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (25YEP) in 2018 signalling that it would strengthen the Biodiversity Duty and introduce a mandatory system for the development of Biodiversity Net Gain (i.e. making sure that the habitats for wildlife associated with a development are, on completion of that development, in a better state than before the development took place).

The [Environment Act 2021](#) amended the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and introduced a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' to ensure public authorities make the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity a core consideration when delivering their functions.

The action local authorities take for biodiversity will contribute to the achievement of national goals and targets on nature recovery.

The [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#) (EIP23) builds on the 25YEP and sets out government's plans for improving the natural environment as outlined through the Environment Act 2021. The [Environmental Improvement Plan 2025](#) (EIP25) aims to build on the EIP23 by setting clear goals and targets and provides clarity and detail on the actions needed to deliver them.

By 2030, the government has committed to:

- halting the decline in species abundance; and
- protecting 30% of UK land.

By 2042, the government has committed to:

- increasing species abundance by at least 10% from 2023, surpassing 2022 levels;
- restoring or creating at least 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats;
- reducing the risk of species extinction; and
- restoring 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term.

## 1.2. Requirements of the Biodiversity Duty

As a public authority, Westmorland and Furness Council must:

1. From time to time, consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration as soon as practicable after the latest consideration.
3. Act to deliver the policies and achieve these objectives and report on them.

The Environment Act also introduced strict timelines for completing the first consideration, under point 1 and for the completion of subsequent considerations. The act also mandated that local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must regularly publish a 'biodiversity report'.

The date for the first consideration was set at no later than one year after the relevant part of the Act came into force, which was 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The first consideration was therefore required by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. Subsequent considerations must then be completed within five years of the authority's previous consideration.

The end date for the first reporting period was set at no later than three years after the relevant part of the Act came into force, which was 1st January 2026. Subsequent reports must cover a period of no longer than five years since the most recent report. All biodiversity reports must be completed within 12 weeks of the period that they cover.

This report is Westmorland and Furness Council's **first biodiversity report** and **covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023<sup>1</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026**.

Sections 2 and 3 report on the actions taken under points 2 and 3 above, with the first consideration, required under point 1, already having been reported in the [cabinet report](#) dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

As Westmorland and Furness Council is also a local planning authority (LPA), we need to make sure developments meet biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements. The Environment Act 2021 places a further requirement on LPAs to include information on BNG actions in their biodiversity duty reports. This information is set out in section 4.

The report has been structured using the [Defra reporting template](#); it is designed to be read in conjunction with Westmorland and Furness Council's [Nature Strategy](#) and [Appendix A: Nature Action Plan](#) which were published on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

## 2 Policies, objectives and actions

This section outlines the actions that Westmorland and Furness Council has already completed, either as an individual organisation or in partnership with others, that benefit local biodiversity and therefore contribute to our biodiversity duty. For completeness and clarity, this section also considers actions that are underway and nearing completion.

Policy or objective	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
<a href="#">Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy</a>	<p>Westmorland and Furness Council are the responsible authority for the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which was published on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The LNRS is required by law through the Environment Act 2021 and contains the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and the Local Habitat Map. It is a tool that prioritises nature recovery in places where it will have the greatest impact for people and nature. As a public authority, Westmorland and Furness Council must 'have regard' to our relevant LNRS, which is why it has been embedded in our own Nature Strategy and Action Plan.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> The date Westmorland and Furness Council was formed as a local authority

Policy or objective	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
<a href="#">Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy</a> (continued)	<p>Training was provided to development management planners and planning policy planners (and recorded) on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 which explained the background and purpose of the LNRS and the implications of the 'have regard' duty to development management and planning policy work.</p>
<a href="#">Nature Strategy 2025 to 2035</a> and <a href="#">Appendix A: Nature Action Plan</a>	<p>Following the publication of the Cumbria LNRS, Westmorland and Furness Council were one of the first organisations in England to directly align our nature recovery programme with the LNRS covering our area; the Nature Strategy and Action Plan were published on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The Strategy sets out our approach to nature recovery in Westmorland and Furness and the Action Plan introduces the programme of work that the Council will either lead on, or work in partnership to deliver, in order to begin to reverse the decline in biodiversity and create an area that is rich in wildlife, for the benefit of nature and people.</p>
<a href="#">Climate Action Plan Part One</a> , <a href="#">Climate Action Plan Part Two</a> and <a href="#">Climate Action Plan Part 2 Appendix Table of Actions</a>	<p>The Part One was published on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and the Part Two was published on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. Together these documents outline our climate change action programme to ensure the Council is carbon net zero as soon as possible, and that the area we serve is carbon net zero by 2037. The way we enhance and protect nature is one of six key areas addressed, with other areas that support nature recovery including the way we use things, the way we live and the way we travel.</p>
<p>Tree Strategy (<i>due to be published in 2026 but included for its relevance to the Biodiversity Duty</i>)</p>	<p>The Westmorland and Furness Council Tree Strategy will set out the council's objectives for managing its arboricultural and woodland assets for the benefit of residents, visitors and biodiversity. The Strategy will provide guidance for decision making alongside national regulations and legislation to support the responsible management of trees and woodlands by the council.</p>
<a href="#">Council Plan 2023 to 2028</a>	<p>Westmorland and Furness Council's Council Plan establishes our vision, values and priorities. One of the key challenges and opportunities identified is climate change and biodiversity loss, and we are looking to play a leading role in enhancing natural habitats to support nature recovery. One of our six priorities is to provide leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero, and habitat restoration, enhancement and creation plays a supporting and enabling role to do this such as through carbon sequestration. Similarly, one of our seven core values is to be ecologically aware, aiming to embed environmental considerations into everything we do.</p>

Policy or objective	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
<a href="#">Council Plan Delivery Framework 2024 to 2025</a>	<p>The Council Plan Delivery Framework is a more detailed framework to provide an annual update on how we are working to achieve the priorities established in the Council Plan. It builds on the Council Plan priorities and values as outlined above and introduces our sustainability principles of equity, economy and environment, where we seek to protect our environment for the long-term. The Council Plan Delivery Framework is structured around ten service delivery themes, one of which is the environment, and how we are working to enhance biodiversity and build climate resilience in our area.</p>
<a href="#">Council Plan Annual Plan 2025 to 2026</a>	<p>The Council Plan Annual Plan focuses on where we need to put additional effort to achieve our annual priorities. Our priorities include issues that are about looking to the future and include the environment, with the recognition that our environment is essential for our health and wellbeing and for providing a strong economy. Focusing on this and aligning it with nature recovery is key to securing a sustainable future.</p>
Emerging Local Plan	<p>As a result of the district councils in Cumbria becoming two new unitary authorities in 2023, there are few up-to-date local planning policies on biodiversity. The council is due to start work on a new Westmorland and Furness Local Plan in 2026. Policy objectives in the new Local Plan will aim to maximise net gain in biodiversity and will have regard to the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy. In the meantime, the adopted Local Plans from the former councils apply to the relevant areas of the new unitary authority. Policies in the adopted Local Plans all aim to minimise adverse impact on biodiversity and wherever possible demonstrate net gains in biodiversity. Details of the current Local Plan policies relating to biodiversity are summarised in Appendix 1.</p>
Planning Advisory Service's Nature Recovery Reference Group	<p>Westmorland and Furness Council are one of 11 councils that is represented on the Planning Advisory Service's Nature Recovery Reference Group. The group provides a reliable line of communication between Natural England and local authorities to inform how and where to continue to target support and feedback across several Natural England workstreams including Nature Recovery Network, Local Nature Recovery Strategy, integrating nature into strategic planning, green infrastructure standards, regulatory reform pilots and strategic solutions.</p>

Policy or objective	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Nutrient Neutrality	Westmorland and Furness Council's delivery of nutrient mitigation solutions through the local nutrient mitigation fund will provide opportunities to explore stacking BNG units and NN credits on any sites purchased to deliver nutrient mitigation through land use change. The Council will complete surveys to determine the baseline condition of the habitats on such sites, and provided funding is available to do so, the Council will enhance those habitats and bring private green finance into the local area through the sale of BNG units.
Partner of the <a href="#">Cumbria Local Nature Partnership</a>	The Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (CLNP) is the Cumbria-wide strategic partnership for nature, established and confirmed by Government in 2012 under the Natural Environment White Paper 2011. It acts as a prominent and unified voice for the natural environment in Cumbria, advocating for nature across sectors and policy areas. As a local authority and partners in the CLNP, Westmorland and Furness Council support the work of the partnership to ensure any action has a consideration for the environment and maximises wider benefits
Partner of the <a href="#">Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership</a>	The Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership (MBLNP) covers the Cumbrian side of Morecambe Bay and their work overlaps with the CLNP. The MBLNP has an ambition to act as a catalyst for significantly improving the quality of the natural environment and connecting nature, businesses and communities. The Council is supportive of the MBLNP and the work the partnership does to champion nature and improve the quality of habitats around Morecambe Bay.
Partner of the <a href="#">Lake District National Park Partnership</a>	Westmorland and Furness Council are one of 23 partners involved in the Lake District National Park Partnership. The partnership's aim is to work towards the vision of the park in the best interests of its environment, communities, economy and visitors, and to have the chance to share best practice. By coming together, the partners can ensure the National Park remains a place where a prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and vibrant communities come together to sustain the spectacular landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage.
Partner of the <a href="#">Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Partnership</a>	Westmorland and Furness Council is one of 17 partners involved in the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Partnership. The Partnership has set out six ambitions for what the National Park will be like in 2040, including making it home to the finest variety of wildlife in England, and making it resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces. Each ambition is supported by a series of specific objectives, led by 24 different organisations, and directly involving over 60 others.

Policy or objective	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Partner of the <a href="#">Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Partnership</a>	Westmorland and Furness Council is a partner of the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Partnership along with Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council. The partnership also includes statutory agencies, voluntary bodies, parish councils, business user groups, landowners and farming representatives. The partnership works to enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the National Landscape, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future.
Partner of the <a href="#">North Pennines National Landscape Partnership</a>	The North Pennines National Landscape Partnership is an alliance of statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary or community organisations which care about, and for, the area. It convenes all those with an interest in the area to focus on the purpose of designation, which is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. The staff team is hosted by Durham County Council, on behalf of the funding partners, including Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council, Northumberland County Council and Defra.
Partner of the <a href="#">Love Windermere Partnership</a>	The Love Windermere Partnership is committed to protecting and revitalising Windermere Lake and its surrounding catchment. We are involved in all three workstreams: sewage, land management, and information. By working in partnership and bringing together expertise from diverse fields and listening to local voices, we can ensure that the strategies benefit the environment, community and economy of Windermere and its surrounding catchment, in line with the Council's strategic priorities.
Partner of the <a href="#">Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership</a>	Westmorland and Furness Council are working in partnership with the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2037 across all sectors including transport and mobility, buildings, and waste and consumption; most relevant to this report is our work with the 'Farming and Other Land Use' sector group. The group seeks to respond to sector-based emissions by increasing the natural sequestration potential of land managed for agriculture, peatlands, leisure and forestry, as well as wider opportunities to reduce emissions from agricultural operations.
<a href="#">Raise: Cumbria Community Forest</a>	Raise are one of the key partners in our 'One Tree per Resident' project, helping us to plant over 18,000 trees to date. They bring together communities, landowners, policy makers and artists to co-create sustainable woodland in diverse landscapes to address the climate crisis and improve the health, wellbeing and opportunities of Cumbrian people.

Policy or objective	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
<a href="#">Biodiversity in the Community Toolkit</a>	<p>This toolkit aims to encourage and inspire support for our biodiversity, particularly among those who would like to do more for nature on council-owned or managed land. We recognise that the Council's parks and open spaces may already look 'green' but that they could benefit from additional features to support biodiversity more effectively. Although the Council has our own programme of nature recovery projects, this toolkit supports community engagement and public interest in wanting to do more for nature in a voluntary capacity.</p>
<a href="#">Caring for Westmorland and Furness' Roadside Verges Guidance</a>	<p>The Council recognises roadside verges as a valuable resource for biodiversity, as well as providing great pleasure to people in their potential beauty when managed for safety and nature. This leaflet explains how by working in partnership, we can balance the necessary road safety and maintenance requirements, with sensitive ongoing management to help biodiversity on our roadside verges to thrive.</p>
<a href="#">Grey Squirrel Policy</a>	<p>Grey squirrels are a recognised invasive non-native species in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and in the Cumbria LNRS, due to their harm to red squirrels and the economic damage they cause to forestry and woodland areas. This policy outlines how the Council will work in partnership to facilitate appropriate control of grey squirrels in Westmorland and Furness.</p>
<a href="#">Weed Management Policy</a> and trials	<p>This policy sets out Westmorland and Furness Council's approach to managing weeds across council-owned and managed land. The Council recognises growing public concern and scientific debate regarding potential environmental and health impacts of chemical-based herbicides, such as those containing glyphosate. While current UK regulations allow glyphosate use, we are committed to reducing its use where safe and practical alternatives exist. As part of this, the Council is conducting trials of alternative methods in the built environment and monitoring the efficacy.</p>
<a href="#">Invasive Non-native Species Policy</a>	<p>This policy outlines how the Council will deal with invasive non-native species (INNS) on land that it owns, manages or is otherwise responsible for. It links to the Cumbria LNRS, the Council's Nature Strategy and Action Plan, as well as national policy.</p>
Single-use plastic policy ( <i>due to be published in 2026 but included for its relevance to the Biodiversity Duty</i> )	<p>A considerable amount of single-use plastic ends up in the oceans, representing approximately 50% of all marine litter and harming marine animals. This policy aims to reduce single-use plastics in our offices and other council buildings, instead choosing more sustainable options and considering the impact on our environment.</p>

Action	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Nature Net Gains	The Nature Net Gains project has completed habitat baseline surveys of three council-owned sites using the statutory biodiversity metric, and has proposals to enhance 61.14 ha of habitat, 1.8km of hedgerow, and 3.3km of watercourse. The project has also engaged 15 private landowners and 4 public landowners in one-to-one meetings to test their readiness and appetite to enter local natural capital markets as a supplementary income and engaged 21 developers or infrastructure providers in one-to-one meetings with a demand for purchasing biodiversity net gain units.
<a href="#">Planting One Tree per Resident</a> (OTpR)	In response to the climate and biodiversity crises, Westmorland and Furness Council want to help our communities to plant one tree, or one metre of hedgerow equivalent, for every resident. This means planting a quarter of a million trees over a five-year period. To date, we have planted 120,335 which is 48% of the total needed to achieve our target.
Free Trees for Residents (part of OTpR)	Including in winter 2026, the Council distributed over 55,000 saplings to over 2,000 residents, landowners, parish councils, schools and businesses to engage households across urban and rural areas to 'green-up' their outdoor spaces.
Coronation Living Heritage Fund: Community Orchards (part of OTpR)	Using £50,000 from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund, Westmorland and Furness Council offered financial support to community groups, charities and schools to plant community orchards. In total, 12 publicly accessible community orchards were planted by communities which have become key features within their respective villages, supporting local food production and community cohesion.
Coronation Living Heritage Fund: Micro woodlands (part of OTpR)	Westmorland and Furness Council planted six micro woodlands: three in Barrow, two in Kendal and one in Alston. Micro woodlands follow a Japanese planting style known as 'Miyawaki' to create densely planted, self-sustaining woodlands in the built environment.
Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund (part of OTpR)	Westmorland and Furness Council supported eight community groups, education establishments and parish councils to plant over 1,000 trees and 810 metres of hedgerow, strengthening local ownership and long-term tree care.
Greening the Council Estate	The Council supported two of our council-owned care homes to plant trees on their land. These trees act as memory gardens and help connect residents and visitors to biodiverse outdoor spaces.

Action	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Climate and Nature Partnership Fund	The £900,000 Climate and Nature Partnership Fund supported collaborative partnership working to tackle climate change, support nature recovery, and ensure a fair transition to a low carbon future for our communities. The fund allowed us to support 24 different partnerships, 18 of which have projects that directly support nature recovery in Westmorland and Furness.
Nature Recovery Fund	The £50,000 Nature Recovery Fund launched on 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2025 to partially or fully funds projects that aid in the recovery of nature in the Westmorland and Furness area, directly linking to the Cumbria LNRS. Four applications were successful and will look to restore rivers, install leaky dams, protect and regenerate temperate rainforest, and install swift boxes.
Grassland restoration through 'Planting for Pollinators'	<p>In collaboration with Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Westmorland and Furness Council have been working with communities, landowners and partners to carry out planting. This has been achieved by plug planting with native species, pollinator-themed events and training, and supporting communities to contribute directly to pollinator conservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eden – six community planting sessions and five community engagement events.</li> <li>• South Lakeland – 10 sites with 20 planting sessions.</li> </ul>
Himalayan balsam control	The South Lakeland Locality Board's sub-group 'Climate Action and Increasing Biodiversity' contributed £9,500 towards Himalayan balsam bashing events run by South Cumbria Rivers Trust. The aim is to control this invasive non-native species in prominent locations around water courses to aid in the prevention of its spread.
Peatland restoration	The Council is working with the Cumbria Peat Partnership and North Pennines National Landscape to restore peatland in our upland areas by providing funding between 2025 and 2027 to identify, develop, and deliver over 400 ha of peatland restoration within Westmorland and Furness.
<a href="#">County Wildlife Sites</a>	County Wildlife Sites, also known as Local Wildlife Sites, are noted for their importance for wildlife. Although they aren't legally protected, they are important at a local planning level and can be publicly or privately owned. There are around 1,600 County Wildlife Sites in Cumbria, and Westmorland and Furness Council are working with Cumbria Wildlife Trust to identify, manage and monitor the condition of County Wildlife Sites in Westmorland and Furness.

Action	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Land assessment	The land assessment comprised of both desk study and field survey of council-owned land to understand its ecological potential and determine what could be feasible in terms of habitat enhancement / creation to support the delivery of Nutrient Neutrality and Biodiversity Net Gain. Resultantly, the land assessment has helped inform potential decision making in Nature Net Gains and in identifying opportunities for greening the council estate.
Contractor guidance for planting schemes	The guide for contractors aims to promote native, pollinator-friendly and climate-resilient planting in Westmorland and Furness. It recommends trees, shrubs and perennials that would work in a mixed planting scheme to benefit biodiversity, and offers key management considerations when selecting species.
Wildlife-friendly gardening	This guide is designed for anyone in Westmorland and Furness with some outdoor space, including balconies, gardens and allotments. It includes ideas and tips to inspire our residents to help nature, as well as creating spaces that bring joy, improve wellbeing and strengthen our connection to the natural world.
Great Salkeld Way Marking and Riverwalk	This is a partnership project between Hesket and Lazonby Place Action Group, the parish council, and other stakeholders such as Cumbria Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Westmorland and Furness Council. Stakeholders worked together to create a way-marked riverside walking route, including interpretation boards of local river life. The project contributes to the community health and wellbeing priority for the Place Action Group and has been supported by all stakeholders.
Seagrass restoration	Through funding from Our Future Coast, the Council is working with Cumbria Wildlife Trust to study existing seagrass beds around Roa Island, and to explore potential future restoration areas. This report is funded by Defra as part of the £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes which is managed by the Environment Agency. The programmes will drive innovation in flood and coastal resilience and adaptation to a changing climate.

### 3 Future actions

Westmorland and Furness Council published our Nature Strategy and Appendix A: Action Plan on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025, being one of the first organisations in England to directly link our nature delivery programme to the LNRS for our respective area. We recommend that this statutory section of our Biodiversity Duty report is read in conjunction with our [Nature Strategy 2025 to 2035](#) and [Appendix A: Action Plan](#) for further information.

We have included a timescale on the actions whether they are:

- Short-term – to be achieved within 12 months.
- Medium-term – aiming to be achieved within 5 years.
- Long-term – aiming to be achieved within 10 years.
- Ongoing – to be delivered or reviewed continually.

#### Strategy Policy Working

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O1	Overarching	Ensure alignment with Westmorland and Furness Council's Climate Change Action Programme to deliver actions with shared benefits for nature, climate change mitigation and adaptation.	<i>LNRS Principles for Nature Recovery</i>	Climate and Natural Environment	Not applicable	Short-term

ID	Category	Action * Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O2	Overarching	Produce guidance to help embed the consideration of nature impacts and nature-based solutions into council operations and services, through inclusion in service area plans and strategies, risk registers, Cabinet reports etc.	<i>LNRS Principles for Nature Recovery</i>	All	Not applicable	Long-term
O3	Overarching	Where possible support the safeguarding of ‘areas of particular importance for biodiversity’, ‘areas that could become of particular importance’ and LNRS priority species where possible and appropriate by incorporating them into our Local Plan, supplementary planning guidance and development management decision-making.^	Priority 4 Measure O10	Local Plan, Development Management	Not applicable	Medium-term
O6	Overarching	Maintain habitat and species protections through effective planning, monitoring, enforcement and reporting processes.	Priority 4 and 27 Measures O10 and O11	Development Management	Not applicable	Ongoing
O22	Overarching	Develop, publish and implement the Council's invasive non-native species policy.	Priorities 2 and 27 Measures O2 and O3	Climate and Natural Environment	Not applicable	Short-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
BE1	Built environment	Explore the aspiration to go above and beyond the statutory requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain to a potential of 20%, and if appropriate, obtain the evidence needed to enshrine this into local planning policy.^	Priorities 4 and 25  Measures O10 and U9	Local Plan	Sharing good practice with Lake District National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Cumberland Council	Medium-term
BE2	Built environment	Draw on good practice to develop local planning policies which maximise opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity through the planning system.^	Priority 4  Measure O10	Local Plan	Sharing good practice with Lake District National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Cumberland Council	Medium-term
BE3	Built environment	Limit the impact of obtrusive lighting on behavioural patterns of nocturnal species by following the Council's dark sky policy to: i) Preserve nocturnal environments. ii) Mitigate light pollution iii) Use appropriate lighting levels and colour temperatures.	Priorities, 25, 26 and 27  Measure U8	Highways, Capital Programmes, Assets.	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Lake District National Park Authority, Friends of the Lake District	Ongoing

ID	Category	Action * Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
BE6	Built environment	Provide ongoing internal and external training, knowledge sharing opportunities and ecological support to Development Management planners to help them to consider biodiversity, including statutory Biodiversity Net Gain, in relevant planning applications.	Priority 25  Measure U9	Development Management, Climate and Natural Environment	Planning Advisory Service, Lake District National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Cumberland Council	Ongoing
WT1	Woodland and trees	Develop and publish a tree strategy for Westmorland and Furness Council owned/managed woodlands and trees to enhance the biodiversity of the Council's existing woodlands, increasing the diversity of age, species and structure, and minimise the potential to cause harm or damage.	Priorities 8, 10 and 27  Measures W1 and W14	Arboriculture	Not applicable	Short-term
G1	Grassland	Promote good practice when managing our grassy areas for the benefit of pollinating insects by developing and publishing a local pollinator and insect policy.	Priorities 16, 17 and 27  Measures G2 and G4	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Local Nature Partnership, People's Trust for Endangered Species, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Plantlife, Buglife	Short-term

**Partnership Working**

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O7	Overarching	Continue to work in partnership with the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership and the Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership and support their biodiversity aims and objectives through i) membership on the board and ii) membership of sub-groups.	<i>LNRS Principles for Nature Recovery</i>	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Local Nature Partnership, Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership	Ongoing
O8	Overarching	Continue to work in partnership with the Lake District National Park Partnership and support their biodiversity aims and objectives through i) membership on the board and ii) membership of sub-groups.	<i>LNRS Principles for Nature Recovery</i>	Climate and Natural Environment	Lake District National Park Partnership	Ongoing
O9	Overarching	Continue to work as part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Partnership to support the achievement of the shared ambitions and objectives for nature and climate in the National Park, including through ongoing membership of the Partnership board.	<i>LNRS Principles for Nature Recovery</i>	Climate and Natural Environment	Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Partnership	Ongoing

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O15	Overarching	Enhance our access to locally relevant data to inform nature recovery, climate mitigation and adaptation, and enable strategic decision-making through simplified data sharing agreements and by working with partners.	Priority 3  Measure O7	All	Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre, Cumbria Local Nature Partnership	Medium-term
O20	Overarching	Explore research opportunities for nature recovery, climate mitigation and adaptation by engaging with relevant educational establishments.	Priority 3 and 5  Measures O8 and O14	Climate and Natural Environment	University of Cumbria, Lancaster University, Morecambe Bay Curriculum	Ongoing
O23	Overarching	Work in partnership to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species, and the diseases they carry across our area, through increased biosecurity, including education, engagement, and targeted risk reduction.	Priority 2 and 27  Measures O2 and O3	Climate and Natural Environment, Parks and Open Spaces, Grounds Maintenance, Public Health, Environmental Health	Rivers Trusts, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Cumbria Local Nature Partnership, farmers and landowners etc	Long-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
CE11	Community and engagement	Support the provision of local green education and skills training in the environment and agriculture sector by working with partners.*	Priority 5  Measures O14 and O16	Climate and Natural Environment	Land and Nature Skills Service, NFU, The Farmer Network, National Parks, National Landscapes, CICs, farmers and landowners.	Ongoing
CE14	Community and engagement	Work with partners to encourage and support community food growing schemes to reduce food miles, increase biodiversity, and improve residents' mental and physical wellbeing.	Priorities 25 and 27  Measure U6	Climate and Natural Environment, Community Development	Town and parish councils, community groups, local charities, farmers and landowners.	Medium-term
WT6	Woodland and trees	Using the Council's grey squirrel policy, fund and/or grant licences for relevant incorporated groups to undertake appropriate management of grey squirrels on council-owned or managed sites through the use of trained operatives.*	Priority 8 and 27  Measures W1, S1 and S2	Arboriculture, Climate and Natural Environment.	Local groups and charities with an interest in squirrels.	Long-term
G5	Grassland	Plant native wildflowers with local provenance for pollinators in multiple locations each year in partnership with local communities and charities.*	Priorities 16, 17 and 27  Measures O21 and G2	Climate and Natural Environment, Community Development	Community groups, landowners and charities such as Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Ongoing

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
WF1	Wetland and freshwater	Support partners to improve freshwater quality across Westmorland and Furness.	Priorities 21 and 27  Measures F12, F13, F15, F5 and O25	Climate and Natural Environment, Waste and Environmental Services	Love Windermere Partnership, Environment Agency, Freshwater Biological Association, Rivers Trusts, CLA, NFU, The Farmer Network, Federation of Cumbria Commoners	Ongoing
WF2	Wetland and freshwater	Continue to work in partnership with the Love Windermere Partnership and support their biodiversity aims and objectives through i) membership on the board and ii) membership of sub-groups.	Priorities 7, 21 and 27  Measures F12, F13, F14, F15, F5 and O25	Climate and Natural Environment, Waste and Environmental Services	Love Windermere Partnership	Ongoing
CM2	Coastal and marine	Support the establishment of seagrass colonies in the Morecambe Bay area for carbon sequestration opportunities and nature benefits.*	Priorities 22 and 27  Measure C3	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Our Future Coast	Medium-term
CM3	Coastal and marine	Through partnership working, explore recreational disturbance impacts and mitigation.	Priorities 4, 22 and 27  Measure O13	Climate and Natural Environment, Local Plan	Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership and Cumbria Local Nature Partnership	Medium-term

### Community Working

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
CE7	Community and engagement	Encourage community groups, town and parish councils, businesses, schools and residents to take action for nature in their local areas, and recognise volunteers working on nature projects.	Priorities 6, 25 and 27  Measures O18, O20 and O21	Climate and Natural Environment, Communications, Community Development	Town and parish councils, businesses, community groups, CICs, schools, youth councils and youth groups, RHS, Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Ongoing
CE10	Community and engagement	Through partnership grants, support farmers and landowners to make more space for nature and improve soil health within the farmed landscape.*	Priorities 7 and 27  Measure O23	Climate and Natural Environment providing grants (not directly delivering)	Through partnership grants to relevant partners, NFU, The Farmer Network, CLA, Federation of Cumbria Commoners, CICS, farmers and landowners.	Ongoing
WT4	Woodland and trees	Support community tree planting schemes such as community orchards and micro-woodlands.*	Priorities 8 and 27  Measure W2	Climate and Natural Environment, Community Development	Town and parish councils, community groups.	Medium-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
G4	Grassland	Gather residents' views on grassland management in Westmorland and Furness, such as frequency of cuts and locations where grass could be left longer, by conducting a survey.	Priorities 16, 17 and 27  Measures O21 and G2	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Local Nature Partnership	Short-term
G9	Grassland	Identify suitable pilot areas in 20mph or 30mph zones to act as trial plots for improving roadside biodiversity, including reducing mowing frequency, removing arisings and overseeding with native and local provenance flowering species for invertebrates.	Priorities 17 and 27  Measure G2	Highways, Parks and Open Spaces, Waste and Environmental Services	Contractors	Medium-term
CM1	Coastal and marine	Help reduce the risk of harm to wildlife from litter by supporting and enabling community-led coastal clean-up efforts along Westmorland and Furness' beaches and strandlines outside of nesting bird season.	Priorities 21 and 27  Measure O21	Climate and Natural Environment, Waste and Environmental Services, Community Development	Cumbria Wildlife Trust, RSPB, National Trust, community groups, town and parish councils	Ongoing

**Land management across council-owned land**

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O11	Overarching	Explore alternatives to pesticides and herbicides, aiming to minimise their use in council operations to reduce environmental impacts and address health and safety concerns.^	Priority 25 and 27  Measures U1 and O20	Climate and Natural Environment, Highways, Parks and Open Spaces	Not applicable	Medium-term
O19	Overarching	Produce Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMP) for Westmorland and Furness Council sites to be put forward for Biodiversity Net Gain funding.	Priority 25 and 27  Measure U9	Climate and Natural Environment	Consultants	Long-term
CE8	Community and engagement	Improve the biodiversity on council-owned school grounds by supporting the implementation of biodiversity strategies, and encourage schools not owned by the Council to improve biodiversity.	Priorities 25 and 27  Measure U9	Climate and Natural Environment, Estates, Assets, Capital Programmes	RHS, schools.	Medium-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
BE4	Built environment	Create a list of habitat and/or species interventions suitable for public spaces, and implement at least three on each Council-owned site above 1 ha in the built environment where appropriate.*	Priorities 25, 26 and 27  Measures U1 and U10	Parks and Open Spaces, Assets, Capital Programmes, Climate and Natural Environment, Cemeteries.	Not applicable	Medium-term
WT2	Woodland and trees	Adopt the tree mitigation hierarchy in our tree and woodland management approach (avoid tree damage, minimise loss, adequate mitigation, and compensation as a last resort).	Priority 8, 10 and 27  Measures W1 and W14	Arboriculture	Contractors.	Ongoing
WT5	Woodland and trees	Identify and implement appropriate opportunities for tree planting and woodland expansion on existing Council-owned land.	Priority 9 and 27  Measures W6 and W7	Arboriculture, Climate and Natural Environment, Parks and Open Spaces, Assets, Capital Programmes.	Not applicable	Ongoing

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
WT7	Woodland and trees	Manage existing council-owned woodland to be wildlife-rich by increasing structural and species diversity and resilience within the wooded landscape, and encourage natural processes such as the decay of dead wood.	Priorities 8 and 27  Measure W1	Arboriculture	Contractors	Ongoing
WT8	Woodland and trees	Continue to adopt precautionary tree health measures by undertaking relevant surveillance and subsequent management of diseases and pests to prevent their establishment or spread.	Priority 8  Measure W4	Arboriculture	Contractors	Ongoing
WT9	Woodland and trees	Where individual trees are felled for safety reasons on council-owned land, retain a significant portion of the trunk (where safe to do so) to create standing monoliths with bat crevices and solitary bee holes to provide new opportunities for biodiversity.	Priority 8, 10 and 27  Measure W1 and W14	Arboriculture	Contractors	Ongoing
WT10	Woodland and trees	Identify suitable sites on council-owned land to reinstate or plant new hedgerows and associated margin features, to enhance biodiversity and create and restore connectivity.	Priority 11 and 27  Measure W16	Climate and Natural Environment, Arboriculture, Parks and Open Spaces, Assets	Landowners, People's Trust for Endangered Species	Long-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
WT11	Woodland and trees	Review the council's hedgerow maintenance regime and implement measures to increase biodiversity, such as cutting at appropriate times of year, reducing cutting frequencies where safe to do so and maintaining hedgerows at different heights and widths.	Priority 11 and 27  Measure W15	Highways	Contractors, People's Trust for Endangered Species	Medium-term
G6	Grassland	Assess council-led maintenance practices for parks and open spaces, leisure pitches and cemeteries to support grounds maintenance practices that benefit nature.	Priorities 16, 17 and 27  Measure G2	Parks and Open Spaces, Cemeteries	Contractors and grounds maintenance teams	Ongoing
G7	Grassland	Explore the feasibility of dedicating 30% of our parks, open spaces and cemetery areas to wildlife by 2030 to mirror the global 30x30 initiative.	Priorities 25 and 27  Measures U1 and O20	Climate and Natural Environment, Parks and Open Spaces, Cemeteries, Arboriculture	Not applicable	Medium-term
G8	Grassland	Increase the number of our parks and cemeteries with Green Flag status by 2030.	Priorities 25 and 27  Measures U1 and O20	Parks and Open Spaces	Not applicable	Medium-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
WF6	Wetland and freshwater	Where Westmorland and Furness Council is a riparian owner, effectively manage invasive species and introduce appropriate habitat improvements based on individual site assessment and recommendations, for instance otter holts, overplanting with native plants or providing shelter for fish.	Priorities 2, 9, 19 and 27  Measures W6, F5, O2 and O3.	Assets, Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Rivers Trust	Ongoing

### Education, advice and awareness of biodiversity

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O10	Overarching	Encourage wildlife friendly gardening to benefit native biodiversity by providing guidance.	Priority 6 and 27  Measure O20	Climate and Natural Environment, Locality Boards, Community Power, Communications, Library Service	Cumbria Wildlife Trust, RSPB, RHS	Short-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding.</i> <i>^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
CE1	Community and engagement	Produce and deliver a Nature Literacy training programme for council officers and members.	Priority 6 Measures O18 and O21	Climate and Natural Environment	Not applicable	Short-term
CE2	Community and engagement	Inform and engage Council officers, Councillors and grounds maintenance contractor staff in the delivery of this plan.	Priority 6 Measure O18	Climate and Natural Environment	Contractors and grounds maintenance teams	Ongoing
CE3	Community and engagement	Develop a communications and engagement strategy for climate and nature.	Priority 6 Measure O18	Communications	Not applicable	Short-term
CE4	Community and engagement	Share climate and nature related work and success stories with residents, through quarterly public newsletters.	Priority 6 Measure O18, O21	Communications, Climate and Natural Environment	Not applicable	Ongoing
CE5	Community and engagement	Share climate and nature related work and success stories with staff, through quarterly internal newsletters.	Priority 6 Measure O18	Communications, Climate and Natural Environment	Not applicable	Ongoing
CE6	Community and engagement	Inform our residents about Council maintenance regimes, such as reducing cutting, wildflower planting displays containing pollinator friendly planting by producing educational materials and communications.	Priorities 6 and 25 Measures U1, O18, O20 and O21	Communications, Parks and Open Spaces, Cemeteries, Climate and Natural Environment	Contractors and grounds maintenance teams, Cumbria Wildlife Trust.	Ongoing

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
CE9	Community and engagement	Engage diverse audiences with climate and nature by supporting and engaging with public events.	Priority 6  Measures O18 and O21	Climate and Natural Environment, Community Development, Public Health	Public events organised by community groups, agricultural sector, town and parish councils etc.	Ongoing
CE13	Community and engagement	Develop council-wide initiatives that support our 'Ecologically Aware' value and volunteering policy by working with the council's internal Change Champion group.	Priority 6  Measures O18, O20 and O21	Climate and Natural Environment, Change Champions	Not applicable	Ongoing

### Funding

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O5	Overarching	Continue to identify, survey, and manage data by supporting the Cumbria-wide County Wildlife Sites project where funding is available.*	Priorities 3 and 4  Measures O4 and O12	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Long-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O17	Overarching	Ensure Westmorland and Furness Council is best placed to secure long-term funding opportunities to help nature recovery, climate mitigation and adaptation by maintaining a register for funding opportunities.	Priority 25 and 27  Measure U9	Climate and Natural Environment	Not applicable	Ongoing
O18	Overarching	Explore opportunities to facilitate the development of high-integrity local nature markets, including the option of creating and selling biodiversity net gain units and nutrient neutrality credits through the proposed "Nature Net Gains" special purpose vehicle.*^	Priority 25 and 27  Measure U9	Climate and Natural Environment	Lake District National Park Authority, Cumberland Council, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, landowners.	Medium-term
O21	Overarching	Maintain and improve access to live and accurate habitat and species data through continued funding for Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre, supporting future mapping and sharing data.*	Priority 3  Measure O7	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre	Ongoing

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
P1	Peatland	Support partners to deliver peatland restoration projects that would provide landscape scale nature recovery, carbon sequestration and natural flood management benefits.*	Priorities 13, 14 and 27  Measures M1, M2 and M8	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Peat Partnership, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, North Pennines National Landscape	Long-term

### Delivery

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O4	Overarching	Embed ecosystem services into urban development opportunities such as by supporting the Barrow Rising initiative.*	Priority 25  Measures U4, U5 and U9	Climate and Natural Environment, Economic Development, Capital Programmes, Highways	Not applicable	Long-term
O12	Overarching	Where feasible, use sustainably sourced peat-free compost or soil in all council funded landscaping, horticulture, and externally supplied materials.	Priority 25 (indirectly 13 and 14)  Measure U1	All	Not applicable	Medium-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
O13	Overarching	Source native plants and trees for Council-led schemes from peat-free and local sources, ensuring species are selected for their climate resilience.	Priority 25 (indirectly 13 and 14)  Measures U1, W1 and W15	All	Contractors and grounds maintenance teams	Medium-term
O14	Overarching	Work with our contractors to collect green waste from our grounds maintenance work and establish local composting sites, where the compost can be used on our own land and for community projects.	Priority 25  Measure U1	Parks and Open Spaces, Community Development	Contractors, grounds maintenance teams, town and parish councils, community groups	Medium-term
O16	Overarching	Support the long-term conservation status of LNRS priority species by working in collaboration with our own services and with local partners.*	Priority 27  Measures S1, S2, S18, S31	Climate and Natural Environment	Cumbria Local Nature Partnership, Lake District National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Rivers Trusts, Freshwater Biological Association etc	Long-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
CE12	Community and engagement	Promote opportunities for nature-based health and wellbeing activities as part of green social prescribing.	Priorities 6 and 25  Measure O19 and U6	Climate and Natural Environment, Public Health, Active Travel	Natural England, National Health Service	Ongoing
BE5	Built environment	Reduce the number of bedding plants purchased in plastic trays for creating floral displays in summertime, instead moving towards more sustainable native planting that requires less watering and maintenance, and has greater resilience to our changing climate.*	Priorities 25, 26 and 27  Measures U1	Parks and Open Spaces	Contractors and grounds maintenance teams	Short-term
BE7	Built environment	Encourage contractors to use native climate resilient species in planting schemes by producing and providing a suggested specification and guidance document.	Priorities 25, 26 and 27  Measure U1	Climate and Natural Environment, Capital Programmes, Parks and Open Spaces, Local Plan	Contractors, RHS	Short-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
WT3	Woodland and trees	Working with partners plant one tree, or one metre of hedgerow, per Westmorland and Furness resident (approximately 250,000 trees) to increase tree cover and to sequester carbon by 2028.*	Priorities 9 and 27  Measure W6	Climate and Natural Environment	Forestry Commission, Lake District National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Raise Community Forest, Ullswater Catchment Management CIC, Woodland Trust, town and parish councils, community groups	Medium-term
G2	Grassland	Review and republish the 'Caring for Westmorland and Furness' Roadside Verges' booklet, including updated policies and practices.	Priorities 16, 17 and 27  Measures G2 and G4	Climate and Natural Environment, Highways	Not applicable	Short-term
G3	Grassland	Promote the natural growth of grasses and wildflowers to support a variety of insects and other species by collaborating with local and national campaigns and educating the public.	Priorities 16, 17 and 27  Measures O21 and G2	Parks and Open Spaces, Cemeteries, Communications, Community Development	Contractors and grounds maintenance teams	Short-term

ID	Category	Action <i>* Action subject to funding. ^ Action will require formal decision-making process subject to Cabinet approval.</i>	LNRS Priority and Measure	Team(s)	Suggested partner(s) where applicable	Timescale
G10	Grassland	Manage existing special verges proactively for pollinators and other wildlife, and protect them from damage.	Priorities 16 and 27  Measures G1 and G4	Highways	Contractors	Ongoing
WF3	Wetland and freshwater	Embed natural flood management learning and good practice, from the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience project, to enhance ecosystem services, natural capital and climate resilience.	Priorities 9 and 19  Measures W6, F1 and F3	Climate and Natural Environment	Environment Agency, Natural England, Cumbria Community Foundation, Lancaster University, Cumbria CVS, Cumberland Council	Medium-term
WF4	Wetland and freshwater	Improved nature-based solutions using the learning captured by the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience project, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems that benefit nature.	Priorities 9, 19 and 26  Measures W6, F1, F3, F13 and U11	Climate and Natural Environment	Environment Agency, Natural England, Cumbria Community Foundation, Lancaster University, Cumbria CVS, Cumberland Council	Medium-term
WF5	Wetland and freshwater	Explore and where feasible implement opportunities for riparian planting in upland areas, to manage water quality, quantity and temperature.	Priorities 9, 19 and 27  Measures W6 and F5	Climate and Natural Environment, Assets, Arboriculture	Rivers Trusts, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, National Parks, North Pennines National Landscape, Natural England	Long-term

## 4 Biodiversity Net Gain information

### 4.1 Background

As a local planning authority (LPA), Westmorland and Furness Council must include the following Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) information in the Biodiversity Duty Report:

1. The actions the council has carried out to meet BNG obligations.
2. Details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans the council has approved.
3. How the council plans to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period.

This section of the report sets out the required information.

### 4.2 Actions the council has taken to meet BNG obligations

The council commissioned a BNG Implementation Report from Riccardo, received June 2023. The report identified a set of measures for the council to follow which would prepare the authority for the commencement of mandatory BNG. The measures which directly relate to meeting the council's BNG obligations are set out below.

#### Recruitment of ecologists

The council recruited a permanent team of three suitably qualified ecologists by May 2024. The ecologists have backgrounds in local government, private practice and in statutory nature conservation bodies and their combined professional is in excess of 50 years.

The ecologists have worked closely with colleagues in development management to:

- review and comment on planning applications that are in scope of BNG;
- train development management planners to be able to assess minor applications in scope of BNG;
- hold bi-weekly drop-in sessions for development management planners to answer; their BNG, and other ecological, queries; and
- develop guidance for the council's website: [Biodiversity net gain planning advice | Westmorland and Furness Council](#).

The ecological team has benefited the council significantly in other ways including other aspects of development management (e.g. Habitats Regulations Assessment and protected species), support with development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), support with the development of a new local plan and support with other project, policy and guidance work.

#### Regular focus groups

In mid-2023 the council set up two regular focus groups in preparation for mandatory BNG. One group consisted of a wide selection of officers from development management and planning policy and was focused on finding solutions to the technical challenges posed by BNG. The other group consisted of senior leaders and representatives of the technical working group and was focused on the strategic challenges to implementing BNG and Nutrient Neutrality rules and removing barriers to resolving the technical challenges. The groups have proved very effective and continue to convene on a bi-weekly basis.

## Conservation Covenants and section 106 agreement templates

The council became a Conservation Covenant Responsible Body in September 2024 and has since developed template section 106 agreement and conservation covenant templates for use in conjunction with planning applications that are within scope of BNG. Fees for monitoring the delivery of legal agreements have also been developed and are included on the council's register of fees and charges.

### 4.3 Other actions the council has taken to support BNG

Westmorland and Furness Council has taken other actions with the aim of supporting the development of a BNG market locally, that are not statutory but support delivery of the statutory requirement of the BNG legislation, as well as contributing to delivery of Cumbria LNRS priorities. These actions include the following.

#### Land Assessment

In 2024, the council commissioned a 'Land Assessment' to examine the potential of its estate to provide BNG units which could be registered and sold locally. The results of the assessment were received in early 2025. Further details are provided in Section 2.

#### Nature Net Gains

In 2024 the council began work on a collaborative project called 'Nature Net Gains' to explore opportunities for developing a nature market in Cumbria. The aim of this project is to develop a mechanism to ensure a steady supply of high quality registered off-site BNG units that can be sold to facilitate local development needs. Further details are provided in Section 2.

#### Application process for independent habitat banks

In early 2025, the council launched its application process for legal agreements to secure independent habitat banks: [Independent Mitigation Sites | Westmorland and Furness Council](#) consisting of an application form, fee structure and accompanying applicant guidance. One application has been received to date.

### 4.4 BNG expected to result from approved gain plans

Westmorland and Furness Council approved 21 biodiversity gain plans between 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (commencement date of BNG legislation) and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 (cut-off date for reporting). Of these gain plans, 18 were supported by the main statutory biodiversity metric and 2 by the statutory small sites biodiversity metric.

The following table sets out the split between BNG delivery locations detailed within the approved gain plans.

Location of gain site(s)	Number of gain plans
Onsite only	17
Onsite & Offsite (inside Westmorland and Furness LPA or same NCA <sup>2</sup> as development site)	1

<sup>2</sup> Natural Character Area

Location of gain site(s)	Number of gain plans
Onsite & Offsite (outside LPA or NCA of development site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA)	0
Onsite & Offsite (outside LPA or NCA of development site and neighbouring LPA or NCA)	0
Offsite only (in LPA)	0
Offsite (outside LPA or NCA of development site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA)	2
Offsite (outside LPA or NCA of development site and neighbouring LPA or NCA)	1
Statutory Credits	0

The following table sets out the total onsite change in Westmorland and Furness and offsite net change at the three spatial scales set out in the statutory biodiversity metric.

Change location	Unit type	Biodiversity Units
Onsite Net Change	Habitat units	-15.35
	Hedgerow units	5.11
	Watercourse units	2.90
Offsite net change in Westmorland and Furness	Habitat units	0.30
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Offsite net change in adjacent LPA or NCA	Habitat units	0.21
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Offsite net change beyond Neighbouring LPA or NCA	Habitat units	116.98
	Hedgerow units	0.53
	Watercourse units	0.00

The total % net change averaged across all approved gain plans and excluding instances where the unit type was not present at baseline was 18% for area habitats (n=21), 234% for hedgerows (n=8) and 33% for watercourses (n=2).

#### 4.5 How the council intends to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

##### Continuing and Improving Established Trends

Westmorland and Furness Council plans to continue meet its BNG obligations during the next reporting period principally by maintaining and improving the trends it has set during preparation for, and implementation of, the first two years of mandatory BNG. Activities will include:

- continuing to maintain an ecology team to review and comment on planning applications that are in scope of BNG;
- continuing of training and support for development management planners on relevant aspects of BNG;

- horizon scanning for new challenges that may arise as a result of implementation of BNG rules and/or changes to the rules by involvement in expert networks such as Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT), Planning Advisory Service (PAS) BNG discussion groups, Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE), Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- Continue to develop guidance for the council's website to support planning applicants: [Biodiversity net gain planning advice | Westmorland and Furness Council](#).

These activities will be principally driven by the council's ecology team, with support from development management planners and planning policy planners.

### Software

The council recognises that improved data processing will assist in monitoring of BNG delivery across the LPA. The council has invested in upgrades to its planning management software that will allow it to better track BNG applications, from submission through to monitoring, and to provide more detailed quantitative data in future reporting periods. More detailed quantitative data will not only be useful for future biodiversity duty reporting, it will be essential, as the number of approved gain plans grows. Improved quantitative data will also allow the council to monitor the effectiveness of its efforts to develop nature markets and deliver Cumbria LNRS priorities.

## 4.6 Other actions the council intends to take to support BNG

The tables in section 4.4 show that there has been a small net loss of biodiversity from Westmorland and Furness during the reporting period. The loss is mainly due to one large planning application that could not provide onsite units and, in accordance with the biodiversity gain hierarchy, had to purchase a large number of units to meet its BNG obligations. As no habitat banks were available in Westmorland and Furness and because the number and type of units meant that they could not be purchased within an adjacent LPA, they had to be purchased within the furthest spatial risk category.

The deficit in onsite units demonstrates that there is work to be done to support the development of the offsite BNG market in Westmorland and Furness. The council plans to continue to work closely with partners to develop 'Nature Net Gains' as a vehicle for the trading of nature market credits in Cumbria. The council also plans to seek additional resources, where possible, to increase its ability to support third party habitat banks within Westmorland and Furness to secure legal agreements.

## 5 Future Reporting Requirements

The council must observe the following timescales for the next biodiversity report.

**Next consideration** of what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity by **no later than 12<sup>th</sup> December 2028**.

Next biodiversity reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 to **no later than 1<sup>st</sup> January 2031** with the report published within 12 weeks of the end date.

## Appendix 1 – Local Planning Policies on Biodiversity Gain and Enhancement

### Barrow Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2031 (adopted 2019)

- **Policy N3** - Proposals for new development should minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. Proposals will be expected to improved access to important biodiversity areas and will be required to show full details of measures to achieve this in the form of a suitable Management Plan. Consideration should be given to the Council's Biodiversity and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and any other relevant guidance.
- **Biodiversity & Development SPD (2018)** - The SPD states that all new development should provide net gain in biodiversity where possible.

### Eden Local Plan 2014 – 2032 (adopted 2018)

**Policy ENV1** - New development will be required to will be required to avoid any net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and where possible enhance existing assets.

### South Lakeland Core Strategy (adopted 2010)

- **Policy CS38.1** - Protect species and habitats and create new habitats and wildlife corridors where biodiversity conservation and enhancement is affected by development.
- **Policy CS8.3** - All development proposals should protect, enhance and restore the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and buildings.

### South Lakeland Development Management Policies Development Plan (adopted 2019)

**Policy DM4** - All development proposals should, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not possible, result in environmental net gain for biodiversity, green and blue infrastructure and demonstrate how the use of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure will deliver wider requirements and objectives. These gains should be quantitative and should be clearly demonstrated as a net gain as a result of development.

### Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document (adopted 2019)

Part of the adopted Local Plan documents for former South Lakeland area in respect of the AONB (jointly adopted with Lancaster City Council).

**Policy AS04** - New development will conserve and enhance the AONB's biodiversity and geodiversity, avoid the fragmentation and isolation of or disturbance to wildlife, habitats and species. It will also help to create and reinforce green corridors and ecological networks, and deliver ecosystem services as a means of maximising wider public benefits and in reinforcing the local area's identity and sense of place.

**Cumbria Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (adopted 2017)**

- **Policy SP15** - Minerals and waste management developments, including restoration and after use, should help to secure movement from a net loss of biodiversity towards achievement of net gains in biodiversity resources by protecting, enhancing, expanding and linking areas for wildlife within and between the locations of highest biodiversity resources and encouraging the conservation and expansion of the ecological fabric elsewhere.
- **Policy DC16** - Proposals for minerals and waste developments, including ones for ROMP applications and time extensions, will be required to identify, where appropriate, any potential impacts on important biodiversity and geological conservation assets and on any functional ecological and green infrastructure networks; their potential to enhance, restore or add to these resources, and to contribute to national and local biodiversity and geodiversity objectives and targets.