

Report to Cabinet Meeting to be held on 21 January 2026	Electoral Ward(s) Affected All
Report submitted by: Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder: Cabinet Member for Climate Change	
BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT AND ACTION PLAN (Appendices refer)	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report asks Cabinet to approve Preston City Council's 2026 Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan. The Council is under a statutory duty to report on biodiversity every five years from 2026. The Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan (BDRAP) reports on the period 2024 to 2026, which corresponds to the First Consideration period, as well as covering the statutory five-year reporting period from 2026 to 2031. The Council is under a statutory duty to publish the BDRAP by the end of March 2026.
- 1.2 Preston's BDRAP provides an overview of sites of interest with regards to biodiversity in the Preston District; an action plan to conserve and enhance biodiversity; and a summary of the council's activity with respect to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The full document is appended in Annex 1.

2. Decision Required

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- i. Approve the Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan in principle. Individual stated actions requiring resources or funding will be brought to Members through the budget setting process or through separate reports for approval.
 - ii. Approve the actions set out at paragraph 4.1.1 to be funded from the existing Policy & Communications team Climate Change budget as outlined
 - iii. Approve the recommendation to issue the next Biodiversity Duty Report at a mid-point between this first reporting date and the 5-year statutory period.

3. Information

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Biodiversity underpins the ecosystems that sustain human wellbeing, providing essential services such as clean water, pollination, soil health, flood regulation and climate stability. The UK Environment Act (2021), building on the global Kunming-

Montreal Biodiversity Framework, establishes a strengthened Biodiversity Duty for public authorities. Under this duty, councils must conserve and enhance biodiversity in exercising their functions, report on their progress and deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments from January 2024.

3.1.2 The Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan (BDRAP) outlines how Preston City Council is meeting its statutory obligations to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It draws upon the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), developed collaboratively by Lancashire County Council and other district authorities and stakeholders, including Preston City Council. The LNRS identifies 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' and 'Potential Measures' for species and habitat recovery across the district.

3.1.3 Seven strategic Biodiversity Duty Objectives inform the delivery of the action plan:

Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.

Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.

Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.

Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.

Objective 6: Promote and support biodiversity enhancement projects.

Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district.

Overview of Preston's Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan

3.1.4 Section 2 of the report, *Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity in Preston*, details Preston's nationally and locally designated sites. These include the Site of Special Scientific Interest at Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods; 41 Biological Heritage Sites; and six Local Nature Reserves. The River Ribble and estuary also hold several environmental designations.

3.1.5 While much of this land is under private or third-party ownership, Preston City Council manages significant areas. These are listed in Section 2 of the report in the table *Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity on Council-owned land and property*; whilst the table *Non-designated council-owned land and property with Potential Measures to improve biodiversity* details the land the LNRS identifies as having potential for biodiversity to flourish, but which holds no formal designation.

Current and future actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity

3.1.6 Work to support biodiversity is being advanced across the Council. Section 3 '*Council activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Preston*', describes policy and practical measures implemented between January 2024 and 2026. Preston

City Council is under the statutory obligation to report on biodiversity every five years, and therefore continuing in Section 3, policy and practical actions currently planned for 2026-2031 are reported.

- 3.1.7 The proposed appointment in the Parks team of an apprentice Park Ranger will support the ongoing delivery of biodiversity duty in Preston. This is subject to a budget bid as part of the 2026/2027 budget setting process.
- 3.1.8 The BDRAP recommends using the Pride in Place impact fund to provide capital to improve the Biological Heritage Site Brockholes Wood for biodiversity, as well as making it suitable for public enjoyment. This proposal will be brought to members along with other Pride in Place schemes.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 3.1.9 This section provides an overview of the relevant legislation; the Council's process for managing planning applications which include BNG; and basic data on the planning applications submitted in Preston to which BNG has applied since its implementation. The section further outlines the opportunity the legislation creates for local authorities as landowners to generate income from the sale of biodiversity credits, providing operational information on the metric and information on Fishwick Bottoms as a potential site for a first habitat bank. The proposed appointment of a Biodiversity Net Gain Officer will underpin the Council's ability to comply with Biodiversity Duty by monitoring the delivery of new habitats created through Biodiversity Net Gain and supporting delivery of the council's own ambitions of improving biodiversity in Preston through developments on its own land. This is subject to a budget bid as part of the 2026/2027 budget setting process.

Future actions and appendices

- 3.1.10 The report includes a list of further activities that the council could undertake to support biodiversity in Preston. Finally, BDRAP Appendices 6.1 and 6.2 provide a full list of all Biological Heritage Sites in Preston, and a list of the Potential Measures identified in the LNRS to improve biodiversity on council-owned land and property.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications

- 4.1.1 The report indicates various small-scale, discrete projects for which funding is required in 2026/27. Funds for these projects can be made available from the Climate Change budget under the Policy team. All projects have been reviewed by relevant officers, and stem from the internal consultation undertaken when compiling the BDRAP.

Relevant team	Project	Approximate cost
Operational Property/Policy	Commission the building of a floating island on the docks to provide habitat for red-listed common terns.	£10,000
Operational Property/Policy	Work with the Fylde Bird Club to install swift boxes and callers on council buildings.	£2,000
Cemetery/crematorium	Commission the Lancashire Wildlife Trust to provide staff with basic ecological survey training.	£1,000
Cemetery/crematorium	Install bat and bird boxes, as well as other biodiversity-friendly infrastructure.	£2,000

4.1.2 The proposed additional apprentice Park Ranger will underpin the delivery of biodiversity duty, which is subject to council agreeing funding through the 2026/2027 budget setting process.

4.1.3 The BDRAP recommends using Pride in Place impact fund to provide capital to improve the Biological Heritage Site Brockholes Wood for biodiversity, as well as making it suitable for public enjoyment. This proposal will be brought to members along with other Pride in Place schemes.

4.1.4 The BDRAP contain a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031 throughout Section 3 and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.

4.2 Legal implications

4.2.1 Whilst there are no legal implications arising directly out of this report, its purpose is to ensure that the Council takes appropriate action to comply with the extended “biodiversity duty” introduced by the Environment Act 2021. Whilst the Government has not prescribed sanctions for public bodies that do not satisfactorily demonstrate how they intend to meet the extended obligations, a failure to evidence its intentions to discharge the duty would likely be a reputational matter for the Council.

4.3 HR Implications

4.3.1 Additional staffing resource as detailed in 4.1.2 above will assist in delivery of the Council’s biodiversity duty. The recruitment and employment of additional staff will be in accordance with the Council’s policies and procedures.

5. Impact Statement

5.1 Service Users

Biodiversity conservation and enhancement in the urban and surrounding areas of Preston will support resident wellbeing through greater access to nature.

5.2 Council Plans and Services

5.2.1 The Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan references and aligns with the Sustainable City priority in the Corporate Plan, the biodiversity policies in the incoming Local Plan (2023-2041), and is integrated within the Council's proposed Climate Strategy as Strategic Priority 5. In proposing use of council assets for community and environmental benefit, it aligns with the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy.

5.3 Fair Employment/ Living Wage

5.3.1 N/A

5.4 Equality Impacts of service changes/ new services

For residents in Preston with less access to private green space, improved biodiversity in the urban and surrounding areas will support greater access to nature.

5.5 Climate Impact Statement

5.5.1 The Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan contain measures to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Preston which will support climate change adaptation and mitigation. By using the Preston-specific data gathered from the LNRS, and by following this and future action plans, Preston aims to achieve measurable and lasting improvements to biodiversity across the district, contributing to national and global nature recovery goals.

6. Reasons For Decision

6.1 The publication of a Biodiversity Report and Action Plan is a statutory duty which comes into force in January 2026. The deadline for publication is 27 March 2026.

Background Documents:

Background documents open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
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Contact for further information:

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Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan

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Executive Summary

Biodiversity underpins the ecosystems that sustain human wellbeing, providing essential services such as clean water, pollination, soil health, flood regulation and climate stability. The UK Environment Act (2021), building on the global Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, establishes a strengthened Biodiversity Duty for public authorities. Under this duty, councils must conserve and enhance biodiversity in exercising their functions, report on their progress, and deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments from January 2024.

This report outlines how Preston City Council is meeting its statutory obligations to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It draws upon the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), developed collaboratively by Lancashire County Council and other district authorities and stakeholders, including Preston City Council. The LNRS identifies 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' and 'Potential Measures' for species and habitat recovery across the district.

Seven strategic Biodiversity Duty Objectives guide Preston's work:

Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.

Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.

Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.

Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.

Objective 6: Promote and support biodiversity enhancement projects.

Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district.

Section 2. '**Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity in Preston**', details Preston's multiple nationally and locally designated sites, such as the Site of Special Scientific Interest Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods, 41 Biological Heritage Sites, and six Local Nature Reserves. The River Ribble and estuary also hold several environmental designations.

While much of this land is under private or third-party ownership, Preston City Council manages significant areas. These are listed in '**2.7. Table 3: Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity on Council-owned land and property**', while '**2.8. Table 4: Non-designated council-owned land and property with Potential**

Measures to improve biodiversity' details the land the LNRS identifies as having potential for biodiversity to flourish, but which holds no formal designation.

Work to support biodiversity is being advanced across the Council. **'3. Council activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Preston'**, describes policy and practical actions implemented between January 2024-2026. Preston City Council is under the statutory obligation to report on biodiversity every 5 years, and therefore continuing in section **3**, policy and practical actions currently planned for 2026-2031 are reported. The proposed appointment in the Parks team of an apprentice Park Ranger will support the delivery of the biodiversity duty action plan. Further, using the Pride in Place impact fund to provide capital to improve the Biological Heritage Site Brockholes Wood for biodiversity, as well as making it suitable for public enjoyment is recommended. This proposal will be brought to members along with other Pride in Place schemes.

'4. Biodiversity Net Gain' provides an overview of the legislation, the council's process for managing planning applications which include Biodiversity Net Gain, and basic data on the planning applications to which biodiversity net gain has applied since its implementation. It further outlines the opportunity the legislation creates for local authorities as landowners to generate income from the sale of biodiversity credits, providing operational information on the metric and information on Fishwick Bottoms as a potential site for a first habitat bank. The proposed appointment of a Biodiversity Net Gain Officer will underpin the council's ability to comply with Biodiversity Duty by monitoring the delivery of new habitats created through Biodiversity Net Gain, and supporting delivery of the council's own ambitions of improving biodiversity in Preston through developments on its own land. This is subject to a budget bid as part of the 2026/2027 budget setting process.

'5. Actions to explore in the next reporting period' provides an outline of further activities the council could undertake to support biodiversity in Preston within the next reporting period. Finally, in appendix there follows **'6.1. Table 5'**, a full list of all Biological Heritage Sites in Preston, and finally **'6.2. Potential Measures listed in the LNRS to improve biodiversity on Council-owned land and property'**, which states the Potential Measures relevant to land and property owned by Preston City Council in full.

By using the Preston-specific data gathered from the LNRS, and by following this and future action plans, Preston aims to achieve measurable and lasting improvements in biodiversity across the district, contributing to national and global nature recovery goals while enhancing the quality of life for its residents. It is suggested that Preston next reports on biodiversity conservation and enhancement at a mid-point between this first report and the statutory 5 years, to maintain the momentum.

Table 1: Summary of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2024-2025

Actions relevant to biodiversity and corresponding objectives are included in full in the body of the report for various departments. Below follows Tables 1 and 2 summarising all actions across the council, as linked to objectives.

Actions completed 2024-2026	
Objective	Actions
<p>Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited new tree surveyors to begin implementing the 2024-2029 Preston Tree Strategy. 6-month secondment provided to survey all green spaces in Preston, with a view to finding optimum City Buzz planting locations.
<p>Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trialled machine use instead of pesticides to remove weeds from pathways and pavements. Began trialling reduced peat compost mixes at Avenham & Miller Parks nursery. <p>Neighbourhood services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial recycling collections increased since March 2025. Recycling facilities available for staff at all Council buildings, including food waste collection. Battery collection is available at the Town Hall. Set up eight new public differentiated recycling bins in the town centre and central parks. <p>Operational Property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecologists are contracted to survey to ensure that wildlife is not disturbed when works take place on council buildings. Funded a study to measure silt levels in the docks and small basin, to find a way to remove silt build-up without removing the feeding zone for wild birds. <p>Planning:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation.
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four major parks and green spaces have Green Flag management plans and continue to hold Green Flag status. • Action plan implemented in eight major parks/green spaces to achieve Green Flag status. • Initiated ‘City Buzz’ native perennial wildflower programme, growing the flowers from seed and plugs. • Began using Avenham and Miller Parks nursery for propagation, to increase diversity across the major parks. • 7,000 trees planted in 2023-2024; 3,000 trees planted in 2024-2025; 3,000 trees planted 2025-2026 in green spaces, improving tree species and age diversity. • Began recruiting for an additional Parks Development Officer. • Recruited a new Park Ranger, allowing the team’s ecologists to carry out more surveying and improvements work, as well as training incoming staff. • 1,000 trees provided in 2024-2025 to local schools, community groups and housing associations. • Began public consultation on improvements to Brookfield Park and Deepdale Enclosure, with a view to work towards Green Flag status. <p>Cemetery and crematorium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust who advised on biodiversity improvements; team of surveyors regularly survey and maintain trees; felled veteran trees are replaced by planted saplings, in 2025 approx. 20 trees were planted or relocated. <p>Cemetery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A phased removal from woodland areas of non-native invasive species rhododendron has begun; wildflowers have been planted and sown in long, decorative trenches; grass and vegetation have been allowed to regenerate in the older, less-frequented area of the cemetery. <p>Crematorium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead hedges used to dispose of brash and branches; grassed area leading up to the woodland managed with a single annual cut.

	<p>Operational Property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with the Fylde Bird Club to install four swift boxes and a swift caller at the engine room at the docks. • Supported the Fylde Bird Club in monitoring and supporting the red-listed common tern population nesting on the wave breakers at the docks. <p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation.
<p>Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited a new Park Ranger, allowing the team’s ecologists to carry out more surveying and improvements work, as well as training incoming staff. <p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation.
<p>Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 trees provided in 2024-2025 to local schools, community groups and housing associations. • Began public consultation on improvements to Brookfield Park and Deepdale Enclosure, with a view to work towards Green Flag status. • Updated Allotment Policy will ensure plots are left in a good state when released by outgoing tenants. • Bi-monthly volunteering available at Fishwick Bottoms, led by PCC Park Ranger. <p>Neighbourhood services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpages providing guidance on how to ‘reduce, reuse and recycle’ maintained. • Support the Parks Infrastructure team with repair, maintenance and replacement of nature access infrastructure. This includes boardwalks and pathways around ponds and woodland areas. • Began to map nature access infrastructure using the Council’s GIS mapping system.
<p>Objective 6: Promote and</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly volunteering available at Fishwick Bottoms, led by PCC Park Ranger.

support biodiversity enhancement projects.	Neighbourhood services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported 'Friends of Parks' groups in Preston with equipment for litter picking.
Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district.	Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation.

Table 2: Summary of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031

Below there are a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031, and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process onwards or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.

Actions to be completed 2026-2031	
Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.	Parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use survey data of parks and green spaces to update GIS maps of Council-owned land. Gather baseline data using ecological surveys to measure ongoing improvements of parks and green spaces. Cemetery and crematorium: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get expert advice from the Lancashire Wildlife Trust on improvements for biodiversity; Work with the LWT to provide staff with basic ecological survey training (if no capacity available from Parks/Planning teams) <i>(funding subject to approval)</i> Conduct annual ecological surveys following further biodiversity improvement measures

	<p>Cemetery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ecological survey of mown areas to gather baseline data, and regenerated areas to measure for biodiversity improvements resulting from the regeneration.
<p>Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the transition to peat-free compost mixes. • Write and implement an Environmental and Pesticides Reduction Strategy. <p>Neighbourhood services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste will be collected for all residents from April 2026. • Residential battery collection launching in 2026. • Looking to expand provision of differentiated recycling bins in the City Centre. <p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation. The incoming Preston Local Plan for 2023-2041 builds and improves on these policies.
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use nature-based solutions as appropriate to resolve issues in green spaces, such as accessible wetland creation for flood management. • Write or maintain Green Flag Award management plans for at least all eight major parks and green spaces in Preston. • Achieve 'Nature Towns and Cities' accreditation by, among other activities, improving smaller parks and green spaces across Preston. • Continue tree planting on council land to improve species and age diversity, as per the Preston Tree Strategy 2024-2039. • Write and implement a Non-Native Invasive Species strategy.

- Work with community partners to support smaller parks in Preston to achieve Green Flag Awards.
- Continue rollout of 'City Buzz' perennial wildflower project, involving local community groups and schools in growing and planting flowers.
- Continue tree giveaways to local landowners, improving tree coverage across the Preston district.
- Use the Pride in Place impact fund to provide capital to improve the Biological Heritage Site Brockholes Wood for biodiversity, as well as making it suitable for public enjoyment. Actions would include fixing paths, steps, tree work, and removing invasive species (*Funding subject to approval*).
- Appoint an apprentice to work with and be trained by Preston's experienced Park Rangers (*funding subject to approval*).

Cemetery and crematorium:

- Evaluate space for additional tree planting; use dead hedges within areas left to regenerate to manage waste woody materials;
- Install bat and bird boxes, as well as other biodiversity-friendly infrastructure (*funding subject to approval*).
- Meet again with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust for advice on how to improve biodiversity.

Cemetery:

- Evaluate whether any further areas can be left to regenerate, or whether regenerated areas can be expanded; assess whether wildflower areas can be increased in size.

Crematorium:

- Address issue of duck weed infestation in the pond on site; remove non-native invasive species Himalayan Balsam from the pond edge and surrounding area, re-plant with appropriate species; seek advice on and explore eliminating the use of herbicides to manage weeds growing in paved areas.

Operational Property:

- As appropriate, remove netting, or other interference, affecting lesser black-backed gulls on council-owned buildings.
- Build a floating island on the docks to provide habitat for red-listed common terns (*funding subject to approval*).
- Work with the Fylde Bird Club to install swift boxes and callers on other council buildings (*funding subject to approval*).

	<p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation. The incoming Preston Local Plan for 2023-2041 builds and improves on these policies. • Appoint a Biodiversity Net Gain Officer. The role will support the council to comply with Biodiversity Duty by monitoring the delivery of new habitats created through Biodiversity Net Gain, and supporting delivery of the council's own ambitions of improving biodiversity in Preston through developments on its own land (<i>funding subject to approval</i>). • Explore potential collaboration opportunities with United Utilities' Climate Resilience project.
<p>Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint an apprentice to work with and be trained by Preston's experienced Park Rangers (<i>funding subject to approval</i>) <p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation. The incoming Preston Local Plan for 2023-2041 builds and improves on these policies. • Appoint a Biodiversity Net Gain Officer. The role will support the council to comply with Biodiversity Duty by monitoring the delivery of new habitats created through Biodiversity Net Gain, and supporting delivery of the council's own ambitions of improving biodiversity in Preston through developments on its own land (<i>funding subject to approval</i>).
<p>Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss,</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community partners to support smaller parks in Preston to achieve Green Flag Awards. • Continue rollout of 'City Buzz' perennial wildflower project, involving local community groups and schools in growing and planting flowers. • Continue tree giveaways to local landowners, improving tree coverage across the Preston district.

<p>conservation and enhancement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore reinstating 'Education in the Park' for schools in Preston. • Issue an Allotment Handbook promoting nature-friendly growing practices supporting new plot holders to make the most of their allotment.
<p>Objective 6: Promote and support biodiversity enhancement projects.</p>	<p>Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore establishing stronger links with community groups to promote nature recovery.
<p>Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district.</p>	<p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies in the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 and the Preston City Centre Plan, including various supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation. The incoming Preston Local Plan for 2023-2041 builds and improves on these policies. • Explore potential collaboration opportunities with United Utilities' Climate Resilience project.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Biodiversity is essential for human prosperity. It underpins ecological processes, which provide fundamental ecosystem services such as water regulation and purification, flood and erosion control, pollination and climate regulation.

The 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Frameworkⁱ adopted by the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity sets out actions to reverse the global decline in biodiversity by 2030. The Environment Act (2021)ⁱⁱ is the UK's response to this, supporting biodiversity improvement by, amongst other things, introducing a strengthened Biodiversity Duty on public authorities and mandating Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)ⁱⁱⁱ for new developments.

To this end, public authorities are under statutory obligation to produce a Biodiversity Duty report describing the organisation's roles and responsibilities in conserving and enhancing biodiversity, which includes:

- Reporting on existing and proposing future actions supporting biodiversity.
- Delivering and monitoring Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which came into effect in January 2024 as a statutory requirement in new developments.

1.2. Local Nature Recovery Strategy

All responsible authorities are obliged to write a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)^{iv}. In Lancashire, this was drafted by Lancashire County Council. Officers from Preston City Council have supported and advised in the elaboration of the strategy, alongside other local authorities in Lancashire, and a variety of local stakeholders.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy specifies measures to conserve or enhance various habitats and species. It includes a map showing 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity', which indicates lands holding environmental designations. It also includes a map of 'Potential Measures'^v, which shows areas where efforts should be concentrated to achieve the most for biodiversity and the wider environment, and the recommended measures to do so. The LNRS and accompanying maps were closely consulted when drafting this report.

1.3. Biodiversity Duty objectives

Objectives on biodiversity conservation and enhancement have been elaborated to focus the ongoing direction in delivering Biodiversity Duty in Preston. Therefore, actions have been linked to objectives in the body of the report. These are as follows:

Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.

Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.

Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.

Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.

Objective 6: Promote and support biodiversity enhancement projects.

Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district.

The Council is obliged to report every five years on Biodiversity Duty. However, it is suggested that a more frequent reporting schedule would maintain greater momentum across the Council. Therefore, reporting at a mid-point between this initial report and the statutory five years is recommended.

2. Outline of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity in Preston

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ across Lancashire. These are areas that hold environmental designations due to their importance for biodiversity.

Designated sites are protected by the existing [2012-2026^{vi}](#), and the incoming [2023-2041^{vii}](#) local plans, by policies ‘EN10 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation’ and ‘EN7 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation’ respectively. In some cases, sites are further protected by national and international legislation. Below follows definitions of the designations that can be found in the Preston district, along with lists of designated and non-designated sites of interest in Preston.

2.1. Geological Heritage Sites

Geodiversity is foundational to biodiversity, and Geological Heritage Sites (GHS) are locations with natural features of scientific, aesthetic, or educational value. There are 17 Geological Heritage Sites in the Central Lancashire area. These are protected by the area’s local plan, but do not feature in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

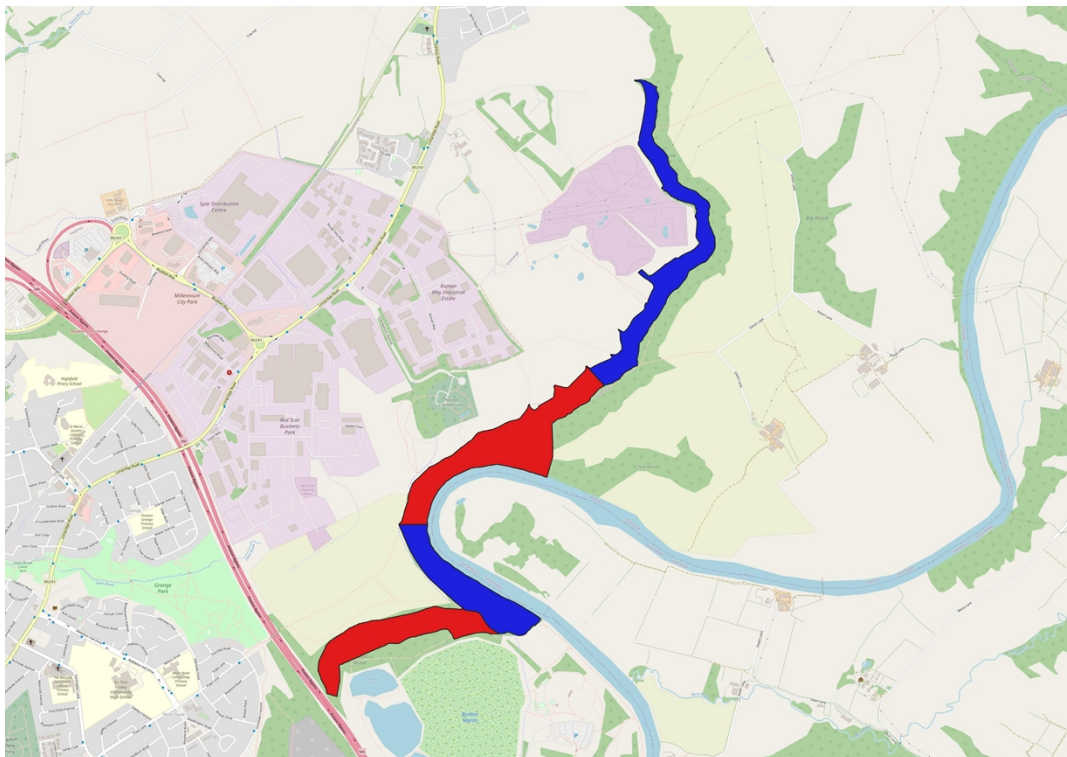
2.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a legally protected area that is considered the most important for wildlife and geology, representing the country’s finest flora and fauna. Owners of SSSI land have a duty to effectively and appropriately conserve the special features of the site.

There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest in the Preston district: Red Scar and Tun Brook woods, comprising 63.6 hectares, it is one of the largest areas of deciduous woodland in Lancashire. The site borders other woodlands in Preston, notably Brockholes Wood, a Biological Heritage Site fully owned by PCC. Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods is partly maintained by Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT), and according to Natural England is in 'favourable' condition. However, this assessment is based on a survey conducted in 2005. The LWT find this to be out of date and would judge the woods to be in 'unfavourable improving' condition, due to the encroachment of invasive species. Natural England will conduct their next inspection before end of 2028.

Different parts of the site are owned each by Preston City Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Church Commissioners. While there is no longer a formal agreement between the LWT and PCC, LWT manage the areas they own and those owned by PCC. Due to a lack of funds works at the site are limited to those required for health and safety. One of the pathways through the site has fallen into disrepair due to the collapse of a bridge at the end of a path. The bridge is the responsibility of Lancashire County Council.

The site borders the crematorium, and much of the grasslands and woodland situated between and around the sites is owned by Preston City Council, representing a key opportunity to improve biodiversity in the area.



Map showing patchwork of ownership at the SSSI Red Scar and Tunbrook Woods, red is owned by Preston City Council, blue is owned by Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

The remainder is under private ownership, at least in part by the Church Commissioners.

2.3. Biological Heritage Sites

Biological Heritage Sites (BHS) are considered vital for nature conservation and are the best areas for biodiversity outside legally protected areas. However they are vulnerable as there is no statutory requirement for BHS to have management plans, and no obligation to achieve or maintain favourable conservation status. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy recommends councils conserve and enhance BHS sites.

The Preston district has approximately 524.2 hectares (ha) designated Biological Heritage Sites (BHS), which includes the section of the River Ribble running through Preston. Many of the Biological Heritage Sites in the Preston district contain smaller areas within them which carry additional environmental designations. The other designations found in Preston have been described below. A full breakdown of BHS in Preston and the other environmental designations they contain has been included in appendix 6.1.

2.4. Statutory Irreplaceable Habitats

Statutory Irreplaceable Habitats are legally protected and are very difficult (or take a very long time) to restore, create or replace once destroyed. This may be due to age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity.

There are three types of Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat in the Preston district:

- **Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW):** any area that has been continuously wooded since 1600 AD, mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site.
- **Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS):** an area that has been continuously wooded since 1600 AD but is now planted with conifer or broadleaved trees. However, they retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.
- **Lowland Fen:** a type of peatland, this habitat is often located in low-lying valleys or basins. It is waterlogged and fed by groundwater, unlike rain-fed bogs.

In the Preston district there are 148.04ha designated Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW). The total land area in Preston is 14,230 ha, therefore ASNW accounts for just over 1%. There are a further 34.85ha within the Preston boundary designated Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites. Finally, there are 10.11ha designated Lowland Fen.

2.5. Local Nature Reserves

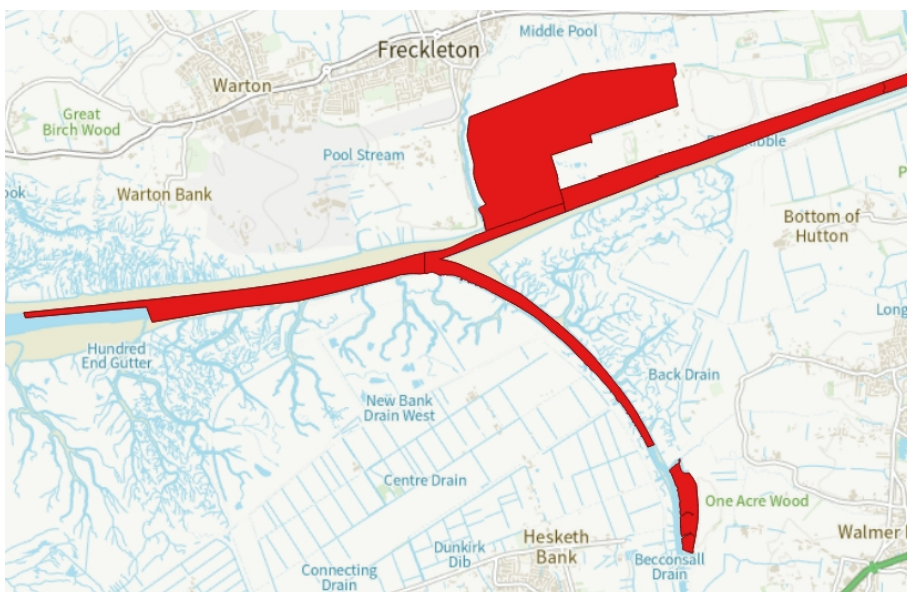
Local Nature Reserves are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. It is a statutory designation that can be made by local authorities, as well as Parish and Town Councils if the power to do so has been delegated to them. In Preston, there are six designated [Local Nature Reserves](#)^{viii} two of which are actively managed.

2.6. Marine Conservation Zones, Special Protected Areas and Ramsar International Wetland sites

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) are areas that protect a range of nationally important, rare or threatened habitats and species. Together with other marine protected areas, they form the UK contribution to an international network of protected sites in the northeast Atlantic.

Ramsar International Wetland sites are representative, rare, or unique wetlands of international importance for conserving biological diversity designated under the Ramsar Convention. Special Protected Areas (SPA) are designated zones, either on land or at sea, that provide legal protection for vulnerable bird species, including rare, threatened, and regularly occurring migratory birds. Both designations are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

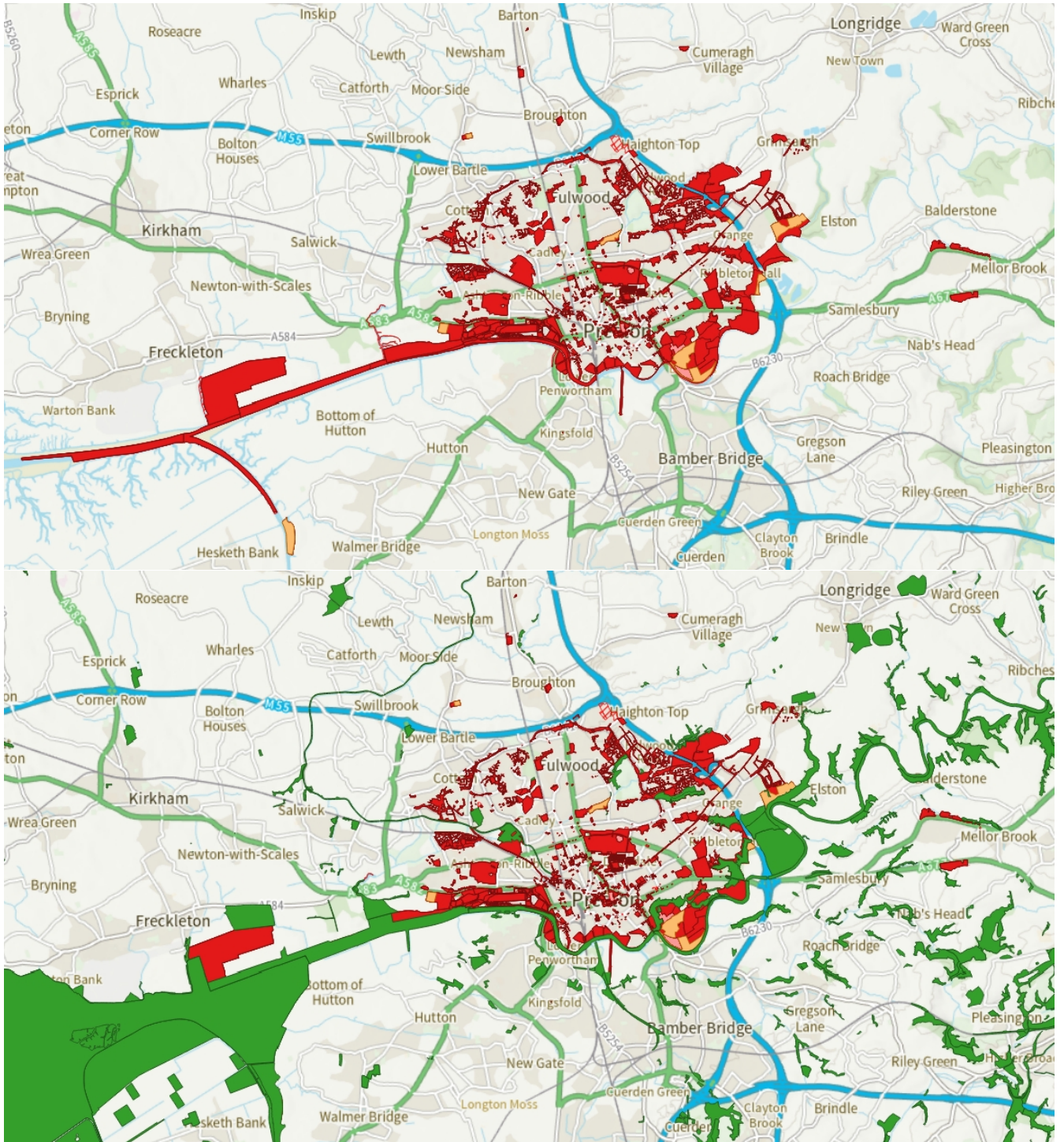
The Ribble Estuary hold all three designations and is also a SSSI. The MCZ features along the section of the Ribble running through Preston. The Ramsar and SPA areas lie outside the Preston boundary. However, Preston City Council owns the River Ribble bed (not the banks running alongside) up to Hundred End Gutter, as well as the area up to Back Drain/Two Rivers. This includes an area of land leased for grazing next to the tributary River Douglas above Becconsall Drain. The Council is further responsible for maintaining the way markers along the river to the mouth of the estuary.



Area of the River Ribble owned by Preston City Council which lies outside the Preston boundary.

2.7. Table 3: Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity on Council-owned land and property

Many designated sites in Preston are owned privately, or by organisations other than the Council. Below follows Table 3, which lists sites owned by Preston City Council that hold environmental designations, and are therefore marked 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' in the Local Environment Record Network (LERN) map. Also included are the 'Potential Measures' as recommended in the LNRS to enhance biodiversity in these areas. A full description of the Potential Measures relevant to land and property owned by the Council is included in **appendix 6.2**.



Above: Map showing land and property owned by Preston City Council.

Below: Map showing land and property owned by Preston City Council, overlaid with a map showing Areas of Particular Importance of Biodiversity as identified in the LNRS.

Note: At the time of writing, a map showing an overlay with the areas where 'Potential Measures' are recommended is not available, it will be available from LERN in January.

Table 3: Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity on Council-owned land and property			
Site	Env. Designations:	Site status/ description	Potential measures for enhancement (in full in appendix 6.2)
River Ribble and adjacent lands			
Grange Farm	SPA, Ramsar, SSSI (area of site – designations are together with Ribble Estuary and Ribble and Alt Estuaries).	Site leased for farming. Farmed area adjacent to another SSSI, 'Newton Marsh', on land not owned by PCC.	Aquatic and Wetlands: AW1.1, AW3.3 Coastal and Estuarine: C1.1, C3.1, C3.3, C3.4, C2.3 Grassland: G1.1 Species: Black-tailed godwit: BTG1, BTG2, BTG3, BTG4, BTG5 BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	Ramsar, Special Protected Area,	Preston City Council owns the bed of the River Ribble (not the banks running alongside) up until 'Hundred End Gutter', as well as 'Back Drain/Two Rivers'.	Aquatic and Wetlands: AW1.1
Ribble Estuary	SSSI, MCZ		Species: Atlantic salmon: AS3
River Ribble, Lower Tidal Section	BHS, MCZ	The section of the River Ribble running through Preston is a BHS and MCZ, and the river bed is owned by PCC.	BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1 Species: Atlantic salmon: AS3
River Douglas Estuary	BHS	Land above Beconsall Drain is leased for grazing	BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1
Wallend Road	BHS	This BHS is part of the River Ribble, Lower Tidal Section BHS.	Rocky: R3.1 Urban: U2.5 Woodland: W1.2, W1.3

		Two areas are leased for recreational business. The majority of the leasehold is adjacent to the BHS area.	
Urban areas including parks			
Haslam Park	Local Nature Reserve		Aquatic and Wetlands: AW3.1 Urban: U2.2, U2.3, U4.3
Pope Land and Open Space	Local Nature Reserve		Urban: U4.3
Grange Valley	Local Nature Reserve		Urban: U2.3, U4.3 Woodland: W1.2, W1.3, W2.1
Hills and Hollows	BHS, Local Nature Reserve	PCC own the area designated a Local Nature Reserve. The wider area is designated BHS, which includes land not owned by PCC.	BHS Current/Provisional: 1.1
Woodlands			
Red Scar and Tunbrook Woods	SSI, Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)	PCC own sections, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Church Commissioners own other areas.	
Brockholes Wood	BHS, Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)	Owned by PCC.	BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1 Woodland: W1.1
Fulwood Park Woods + Clock House Farm	BHS, Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)	Clock House Farm is leased. Fulwood Park Woods is an area outside the leasehold, which carries	BHS: 1.1 Woodland: W1.1 Urban: U2.3

		environmental designations.	
Fishwick Bottoms + Throslock Wood	Biological Heritage Site, Local Nature Reserve; Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (Lowland Fens + ASNW).		BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1 Woodland: W1.1, W1.2, W1.3, W2.1 Urban: U2.2, U2.3, U4.3 Aquatic and Wetlands: AW3.1.1
Mellings Wood and Dark Wood	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)	Most of the area is leased.	BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1 Woodland: W1.1
Mellor Brook + Carter Fold Wood	BHS	Part of site owned by PCC, part of the BHS Mammon Wood and Carter Fold Wood – located in Ribble Valley.	BHS Current/Provisional: B1.1 Species: Atlantic salmon – AS1 Urban: U2.2, U2.3 Woodland: W1.1, W2.7

2.8. Table 4: Non-designated council-owned land and property with Potential Measures to improve biodiversity

Table 4 lists sites owned by Preston City Council which do not hold any environmental designation, but for which the LNRS provides recommended 'Potential Measures' to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Table 4: Non-designated council-owned land and property with Potential Measures to improve biodiversity		
Site	Site status/ description	Potential Measures (in full in appendix 6.2)
Council-owned buildings		Species: Lesser black-backed gull: LBBG3
Other urban areas including verges		Urban: U1.2, U2.3, U2.5
Boys Lane and Walker Lane grasslands	Some areas are leased.	Grassland: G1.2 Woodland: W1.2, W1.3, W2.7 Urban: U2.3

Preston New Road	Leased, located in Ribble Valley.	Urban: U2.3
Docklands and Marina		Urban: U1.2
Grimsargh Playing Field + street areas	Grimsargh House area is leased.	
Ashton Park		Urban: U2.3
Riversway roadside		
King George Playing Fields	Leased.	
Goosnargh Playing Field	Tennis court and changing rooms are leased.	
Moss Leach Brook and adjacent field	Field is former pasture, and leased. Moss Leach Brook owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. The Woodland Trust also manage local sites Midgery Wood, Fernyhalgh Wood & Masons Wood.	Urban: U2.3 Woodland: W1.2, W1.3
Savick Brook off Savick Way	Savick Brook is leased, the land around the brook is not.	Coastal and Estaurine: C1.3

3. Current and future council activities to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Preston

The following describes the work teams across the Council are doing to support biodiversity in Preston. Each section includes information on activities supporting biodiversity in a different Council department. There is a short summary, followed by:

- Actions taking place from 2024-2026 (initial consideration period)
- Actions expected to take place between 2026-2031 (first reporting period)

As described above, actions are linked to Preston's Biodiversity Duty objectives.

3.1. Planning Policy

3.1.1. Summary

Preston City Council's current development plan consists of the [Central Lancashire Core Strategy](#), the [Preston Local Plan 2012-2026](#) and the [Preston City Centre Plan](#). The Council has also adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide guidance on biodiversity and nature conservation.

A new [Preston Local Plan for 2023-2041](#) has been drafted and is expected to be adopted in Summer 2026. The new local plan has built upon and improved the objectives and policies supporting biodiversity. The current development plan and the new local plan have been written jointly with two other district authorities, Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council. When adopted, new developments in Preston will be subject to the policies in the new 2023-2041 local plan, including the policies on biodiversity

The documents include several objectives and policies which support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Preston. The policies set out expectations for new developments to ensure they protect and enhance nature conservation and biodiversity.

Further, the documents collectively support the following objectives related to Biodiversity Duty:

Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.

Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district

Whilst demonstrating the Council's commitment to:

Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.

3.1.2. Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Local Plan (2012-2026)

The adopted [2010-2026 Core Strategy](#), includes the following strategic objectives and policies which support biodiversity conservation or enhancement.

- SO 2: To ensure there is sufficient and appropriate infrastructure to meet future needs, funded where necessary by developer contributions.
- SO 17: To maintain and improve the quality of Central Lancashire's built and natural environmental assets so that it remains a place with 'room to breathe'.
- SO 23: To manage flood risk and the impacts of flooding especially adjoining the river Ribble and at Croston.
- SO 24: To reduce water usage, protect and enhance Central Lancashire's water resources and minimise pollution of water, air and soil.
- Policy 17: Design of New Buildings, includes a series of criteria that the design of new buildings is expected to follow. These include: providing landscaping as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features and natural assets, habitat creation, providing open space, and enhancing the public realm.

- Policy 18: Green Infrastructure sets out criteria and expects new development to protect and enhance the natural environment, invest and improve the natural environments and secure mitigation where necessary.
- Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity requires development to conserve, protect and seek opportunities to enhance and manage biological assets.
- Policy 29: Water Management sets out criteria for the improvement of water quality.

At the time of reporting, the adopted local plan is the [Preston Local Plan 2012-2026](#), which contains the following policies relevant to biodiversity:

- EN2 - Protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure requires development proposals to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure.
- EN3 - Future Provision of Green Infrastructure requires development to conserve and enhance environmental assets, natural resources and the ecological network.
- EN10 - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation requires biodiversity and ecological networks to be protected, conserved and enhanced. The policy sets out criteria for new development to follow to support this requirement.
- EN11 - Species Protection states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect of protected species and sets out criteria to mitigate impacts where necessary.

The plan also includes site specific policies that set out criteria in relation to protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

Further, the Council has produced and uses the following SPDs when determining planning applications. These documents include further policy guidance related to biodiversity in planning:

- [Biodiversity and Nature Conservation SPD](#)
- [Design Guide SPD](#)

3.1.3. Central Lancashire Local Plan (2023-2041)

The new [Local Plan for 2023-2041](#) is written in conjunction with Chorley and South Ribble councils, and is expected to be adopted and form part of the development plan in Summer/Autumn 2026. The plan recognises the challenges biodiversity and nature face and the effects of climate change. To address this, the plan enhances the way in which it, and the new development it will influence, respond to climate change and biodiversity.

The local plan includes the following strategic objectives that directly support the conservation or enhancement of biodiversity:

- SO 1 - Climate Change: To ensure new development is resilient to and mitigates against the effects of climate change by achieving our goal to be at

least carbon neutral. Reducing vulnerability to flooding, promoting sustainable forms of surface water drainage, minimising natural resource and energy use, and incorporating sustainable construction and water efficiency practices.

- SO 9 - Natural Environment: To conserve and enhance the natural environment including designated and un-designated landscapes and biodiversity. Promoting a connected green and blue infrastructure network that plays a role in managing flood risk, delivers measurable net biodiversity gains and improves access to nature, parks, and open spaces for all.

On adoption of the new local plan, the existing policies that support biodiversity and the natural environment will be superseded. The existing and new policies are set out below:

Core Strategy and Local Plan 2012-2026	Local Plan 2023-2041
EN2 Protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure	EN5 Green Infrastructure
EN3 Future Provision of Green Infrastructure	
EN10 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation	EN6: Biodiversity Net Gain EN7: Designated Sites for Nature Conservation EN8: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows EN9: Species Protection
EN11 Species Protection	EN9: Species Protection
Policy 29 Water Management	EN10 Development and Flood Risk EN11 Water Resource Management EN12 Protecting Groundwater Source Protection Zones
Policy 30 Air Quality	EN14 Environmental Quality

EN5: Green Infrastructure prioritises the protection, quality and connectivity and multi-functionality of green infrastructure and the ecosystem services it provides. It requires new development to contribute to improvements to green infrastructure, sets out a criteria for this to be achieved and mitigation where necessary.

EN6: Biodiversity Net Gain requires development to retain, protect and enhance biodiversity and ecologically valuable habitats. To protect and enhance habitats in the district, the policy sets out a hierarchy for the delivery of the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements. The starting point should be on site, then locally etc.

EN7: Designated Sites for Nature Conservation identifies designated sites and sets out criteria for their protection.

EN8: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows requires development to retain, protect and improve these habitats. Where an impact is justified, the policy sets out criteria for mitigation.

EN9: Species Protection sets out criteria to manage and mitigate the impact from development.

EN10: Development and Flood Risk, EN11: Water Resources Management and EN12: Groundwater Source Protection Zones all include criteria to ensure that development does not adversely impact on the capacity and water quality of any waterbody or groundwater.

EN14: Environmental Quality expects development to minimise and mitigate pollution.

The local plan has a new specific policy relating to climate change. CC1: Climate Change includes reference to the importance of biodiversity conservation and enhancement for resilience and to mitigate climate change.

3.1.4. Biodiversity in upcoming master plans

The policies on biodiversity in the Local Plan for 2026-2041 will inform the master plans for upcoming large-scale developments in Preston:

- North West Preston (including a 'Linear Park') (Policy SS3)
- Fulwood Barracks Policy (SS4)
- Preston West (Policy SS5)

Where applicable, these sites will incorporate the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, and the policies include requirements for green infrastructure, ecology and nature conservation. These policies will ensure that the master plans protect and enhance nature.

3.1.5. Consideration of other strategies

Preston City Council contributed information to and supported the drafting of the Local Natural Recovery Strategy led by Lancashire County Council. Preston City Council provided information and worked collaboratively with the with the County Council to ensure that the Strategy was appropriate for Preston.

The following maps have been included as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

- [Lancashire Ecological Network Approach and Analysis](#)
- [Land Trust Strategic Greenspace report \(part 1 of 2\)](#)
- [Land Trust Strategic Greenspace report \(part 2 of 2\)](#)

- [Lancashire Ecological Network Grassland Network map](#)
- [Lancashire Ecological Network Woodland Network map](#)
- [Lancashire Ecological Network Grassland Network map - Chorley](#)
- [Lancashire Ecological Network Woodland Network - Chorley](#)
- [Lancashire Ecological Network Grassland Network - South Ribble](#)

3.2. Preston’s parks and green spaces

3.2.1 Summary

There are eight major green spaces in Preston, four of which hold Green Flag awards. Preston Council is ambitious, and is working towards all major parks, and many smaller parks and green spaces in Preston also achieving the Green Flag award. Two of the major green spaces also include areas designated Local Nature Reserves, and these are actively managed with the further support of ‘Friends of’ and volunteer groups.

Avenham and Miller Parks are the most biodiverse, boasting a range of trees and shrub plants. Further, Avenham & Miller Parks host an onsite nursery, which will be used to propagate from the reservoir of plants on parks, and improve biodiversity in the other major parks. In addition, there is an opportunity to use nature-based solutions on the parks, for example, areas that flood regularly could be transformed into accessible natural wetlands, increasing biodiversity while improving our offer.

The nursery on Avenham & Miller parks will also be used to sow and grow a native perennial wildflower mix. This will expand into our community-focussed ‘City Buzz’ project, which will engage with local schools and community groups to plant native perennial wildflowers in parks and verges across Preston on an ongoing annual basis. We hope these projects will support us in achieving Nature Towns and Cities accreditation.

The Preston District has almost 500,000 trees, and a comprehensive survey is being conducted. Preston's tree stock would benefit from increased diversity in terms of both species and age. We are using UKSPF funding to increase tree species and age diversity on parks and green spaces. We have also donated a significant number of trees to Preston community groups.

The proposed appointment in the Parks team of an apprentice Park Ranger would support the delivery of biodiversity duty in Preston. Further, the proposed use of the Pride in Place impact fund to provide capital to improve the Biological Heritage Site Brockholes Wood for biodiversity, as well as making it suitable for public enjoyment is recommended.

3.2.2. Completed and future actions, 2024-2026 and 2026-2031

Actions completed 2024-2026	
Objective	Action

<p>Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.</p>	<p>Recruited new tree surveyors to begin implementing the 2024-2029 Preston Tree Strategy.</p> <p>6-month secondment provided to survey all green spaces in Preston, with a view to finding optimum City Buzz planting locations.</p>
<p>Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.</p>	<p>Trialled machine use instead of pesticides to remove weeds from pathways and pavements.</p> <p>Began trialling reduced peat compost mixes at Avenham & Miller Parks nursery.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>Four major parks and green spaces have Green Flag management plans and continue to hold Green Flag status.</p> <p>Action plan implemented in eight major parks/green spaces to achieve Green Flag status.</p> <p>Initiated 'City Buzz' native perennial wildflower programme, growing the flowers from seed and plugs.</p> <p>Began using Avenham and Miller Parks nursery for propagation, to increase diversity across the major parks.</p> <p>7,000 trees planted in 2023-2024; 3,000 trees planted in 2024-2025; 3,000 trees planted 2025-2026 in green spaces, improving tree species and age diversity.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.</p>	<p>Began recruiting for an additional Parks Development Officer.</p> <p>Recruited a new Park Ranger, allowing the team's ecologists to carry out more surveying and improvements work, as well as training incoming staff.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>1,000 trees provided in 2024-2025 to local schools, community groups and housing associations.</p> <p>Began public consultation on improvements to Brookfield Park and Deepdale Enclosure, with a view to work towards Green Flag status.</p>

Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.	
Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.	Updated Allotment Policy will ensure plots are left in a good state when released by outgoing tenants.
Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement. Objective 6: Promote and support biodiversity enhancement projects.	Supported 'Friends of Parks' groups in Preston with equipment for litter picking. Bi-monthly volunteering available at Fishwick Bottoms, led by PCC Park Ranger.
<p><i>Below there are a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031, and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process onwards or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.</i></p>	
Actions to be completed 2026-2031	
Objective	Action
Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.	Use survey data of parks and green spaces to update GIS maps of Council-owned land. Gather baseline data using ecological surveys to measure ongoing improvements of parks and green spaces.
Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.	Complete the transition to peat-free compost mixes. Write and implement an Environmental and Pesticides Reduction Strategy.
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Use nature-based solutions as appropriate to resolve issues in green spaces, such as accessible wetland creation for flood management. Write or maintain Green Flag Award management plans for at least all eight major parks and green spaces in Preston.

	<p>Achieve ‘Nature Towns and Cities’ accreditation by, among other activities, improving smaller parks and green spaces across Preston.</p> <p>Continue tree planting on council land to improve species and age diversity, as per the Preston Tree Strategy 2024-2039.</p> <p>Write and implement a Non-Native Invasive Species strategy.</p> <p>Use the Pride in Place impact fund to provide capital to improve the Biological Heritage Site Brockholes Wood for biodiversity, as well as making it suitable for public enjoyment. Actions would include fixing paths, steps, tree work, and removing invasive species (<i>funding subject to approval</i>).</p>
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.</p>	<p>Appoint an apprentice to work with and be trained by Preston’s experienced Park Rangers (<i>funding subject to approval</i>).</p>
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.</p>	<p>Work with community partners to support smaller parks in Preston to achieve Green Flag Awards.</p> <p>Continue rollout of ‘City Buzz’ perennial wildflower project, involving local community groups and schools in growing and planting flowers.</p> <p>Continue tree giveaways to local landowners, improving tree coverage across the Preston district.</p>
<p>Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.</p>	<p>Explore reinstating ‘Education in the Park’ for schools in Preston.</p>

	Issue an Allotment Handbook promoting nature-friendly growing practices supporting new plot holders to make the most of their allotment.
Objective 6: Promote and support biodiversity enhancement projects.	Explore establishing stronger links with community groups to promote nature recovery.

3.2.3. *Relevant policies:*

- [Preston Parks and Green Space Strategy 2021-2031](#)
- [Preston Tree Strategy 2024-2039](#)
- Allotment Policy (link to be included once complete)

3.3. Cemetery and Crematorium

3.3.1. *Summary*

The grounds teams at each the cemetery and crematorium carry out various activities that support biodiversity, including wildflower and tree planting and the use of dead hedges. Both sites link to important local woodlands. The cemetery is adjacent to Brockholes Wood, which is a designated Biological Heritage Site, and the crematorium connects to the Site of Special Scientific Interest Red Scar and Tunbrook Woods. It is therefore of wider benefit to manage the sites to support biodiversity, where appropriate and in keeping with the intended purpose of the sites to do so.

3.2.2. *Cemetery: completed and future actions, 2024-2026 and 2026-2031*

Actions completed 2024-2026	
Objective	Action
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	<p>Team of surveyors regularly survey and maintain trees, and advise on relocating self-seeded trees.</p> <p>Felled veteran trees are replaced by planted saplings, in 2025 approx. 20 trees were planted or relocated.</p> <p>Wildflowers have been planted and sown in long, decorative trenches.</p> <p>A phased removal from woodland areas of non-native invasive species rhododendron has begun.</p>
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the	Grass and vegetation have been allowed to regenerate in the older, less-

<p>district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.</p>	<p>frequented area of the cemetery. The edges are mowed to show maintenance is ongoing, and signs are put up to inform visitors.</p>
<p><i>Below there are a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031, and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process onwards or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Actions to be completed 2026-2031</p>	
<p>Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.</p>	<p>Get expert advice from the Lancashire Wildlife Trust on improvements for biodiversity.</p> <p>Work with the LWT to provide staff with basic ecological survey training (if no capacity available from Parks/Planning teams) <i>(funding subject to approval)</i></p> <p>Conduct ecological survey of mown areas to gather baseline data, and regenerated areas to measure for biodiversity improvements resulting from the regeneration.</p> <p>Conduct annual ecological surveys following further biodiversity improvement measure</p>
<p>Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>Evaluate whether any further areas can be left to regenerate, or whether regenerated areas can be expanded.</p> <p>Evaluate space for additional tree planting.</p> <p>Assess whether wildflower areas can be increased in size.</p> <p>Use dead hedges within areas left to regenerate to manage waste woody materials.</p>

	Install bat and bird boxes, as well as other biodiversity-friendly infrastructure <i>(funding subject to approval)</i>
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3.3.3. Crematorium: completed and future actions, 2024-2026 and 2026-2031

Actions completed 2024-2026	
Objective	Action
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	<p>Team of surveyors regularly survey and maintain trees, and advise on relocating self-seeded trees.</p> <p>Dead hedges used to dispose of brash and branches.</p> <p>Grassed area leading up to the woodland managed with a single annual cut, allowing biodiversity to thrive in the summer months.</p> <p>Met with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust who advised on biodiversity improvements.</p>
<p><i>Below there are a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031, and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process onwards or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.</i></p>	
Actions to be completed 2026-2031	
Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.	<p>Provide staff with basic ecological survey training (if no capacity available from Parks/Planning teams) <i>(funding subject to approval)</i>.</p> <p>Conduct annual ecological surveys following further biodiversity improvement measures</p>
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	<p>Meet again with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust for advice on how to improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Address issue of duck weed infestation in the pond on site.</p>

	<p>Remove non-native invasive species Himalayan Balsam from the pond edge and surrounding area, re-plant with appropriate species.</p> <p>Evaluate onsite locations for tree planting.</p> <p>Seek advice on and explore eliminating the use of herbicides to manage weeds growing in paved areas.</p> <p>Install bat and bird boxes, as well as other biodiversity-friendly infrastructure (<i>funding subject to approval</i>).</p>
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3.4. Neighbourhood Services

3.4.1. Summary

The neighbourhood services team is responsible for collecting residential business and public bins waste from across the Preston district. This is then taken to recycling centres run by Lancashire County Council, who are the disposal authority.

Preston City Council adheres to the latest Simpler Recycling legislation, and we have a [comprehensive webpage](#) describing the rollout of new activities stemming from this legislation.

3.4.2. Completed and future actions, 2024-2026 and 2026-2031

Actions completed 2024-2026	
Objective	Action
Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.	<p>Commercial recycling collections increased since March 2025.</p> <p>Recycling facilities available for staff at all Council buildings, including food waste collection. Battery collection is available at the Town Hall.</p> <p>Set up eight new public differentiated recycling bins in the town centre and central parks.</p>
Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.	<p>Webpages providing guidance on how to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' maintained.</p>

Below there are a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031, and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process onwards or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.

Actions to be completed 2026-2031	
Objective	Action
Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.	<p>Food waste will be collected for all residents from April 2026.</p> <p>Residential battery collection launching in 2026.</p> <p>Looking to expand provision of differentiated recycling bins in the City Centre.</p>

3.5. Operational Property

3.5.1. Summary

Preston City Council owns a number of buildings, which the Operational Property team maintain. The team have links with Fylde Bird Club, supporting them with common tern and swift conservation projects. There are further opportunities to support biodiversity, which include building on activities the team already undertake.

3.5.2. Completed and future actions, 2024-2026 and 2026-2031

Actions completed 2024-2026	
Objective	Action
Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.	<p>When works take place at Council-owned buildings, the team contracts ecologists to conduct surveys to ensure that wildlife is not disturbed. This is in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010).</p> <p>Funded a study to measure silt levels in the docks and small basin, to find a way to remove silt build-up without removing the feeding zone for wild birds.</p>
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the	Worked with the Fylde Bird Club to install four swift boxes and a swift caller at the engine room at the docks.

district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Supported the Fylde Bird Club in monitoring and supporting the red-listed common tern population nesting on the wave breakers at the docks.
Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.	Support the Parks Infrastructure team with repair, maintenance and replacement of nature access infrastructure. This includes boardwalks and pathways around ponds and woodland areas. Began to map nature access infrastructure using the Council's GIS mapping system.
<p><i>Below there are a number of actions to conserve or enhance biodiversity in 2026-2031, and many of these actions still require detailed plans or proposals. Members are asked to agree the actions in principle. Where possible, the stated actions will be funded from existing resources. Where this is not possible, and where it is stated against the action that the action is subject to funding approval, actions will be proposed as budget bids as part of the budget setting process onwards or will be brought to Members as individual Cabinet or Council reports as appropriate.</i></p>	
Actions completed 2026-2031	
Objective	Action
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	As appropriate, remove netting, or other interference, affecting lesser black-backed gulls on council-owned buildings. Build a floating island on the docks to provide habitat for red-listed common terns (<i>funding subject to approval</i>). Work with the Fylde Bird Club to install swift boxes and callers on other council buildings (<i>funding subject to approval</i>).

4. Biodiversity Net Gain

4.1 BNG and the local authority's role as planning authority

Overview

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been mandatory since 12th February 2024 for new planning applications for major developments made under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990, subject to the confirmed exemptions. For small sites, it

has applied since 2nd April 2024. Biodiversity Net Gain legislation states that the biodiversity value attributable to a development must be at least 10% higher than the pre-development biodiversity value. Preston City Council relevant policy for this is 'EN6: Biodiversity Net Gain', in the incoming [Local Plan for 2023-2041](#).

Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved using the following three methods, which are listed in order of how they must be prioritised by the developer. The Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy is incentivised by weighting how much each method costs to developers.

1. Onsite BNG +10% is delivered on the site of development.
2. Offsite BNG +10% is delivered at a different site to that of the development.
3. Statutory credits +10% is delivered by purchasing Government credits.

Biodiversity Net Gain process

To support developers in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain, Preston City Council provides information via the [Major Development Advice Service](#)^{ix}, and information on BNG is provided in the [Validation Checklist for Planning and Other Applications](#)^x (pages 8-9). To support with the assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain reports and metrics, Preston City Council consults with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. Their advice is then considered by the Planning Officer when determining an application.

Planning applications with BNG

Since the legislation came into force on 12th February 2024, Biodiversity Net Gain has been enacted at Preston City Council. Basic data can be reported thus far:

- Number of planning applications that have been granted where a Biodiversity Net Gain plan has been required: 49
- Number of planning applications for which Biodiversity Net Gain has been secured for delivery at least partially offsite: 1
- Number of planning applications for which offsite Biodiversity Net Gain has been secured through the purchase of Statutory Credits: 0

It should be noted that a proportion of the Biodiversity Net Gain to be delivered across the 49 identified planning applications will be delivered offsite. Biodiversity Net Gain in these planning applications is yet to be secured by S106 agreement and therefore not readily identifiable.

It is expected that if resources are secured to bring a Biodiversity Net Gain Officer in post, part of the role will include reporting on BNG using the Government's Biodiversity Net Gain reporting template, which is yet to be released.

The proposed Biodiversity Net Gain Officer will support the council to comply with Biodiversity Duty by monitoring the delivery of new habitats created through Biodiversity Net Gain, and supporting delivery of the council's own ambitions of improving biodiversity in Preston through developments on its own land.

4.2 The opportunities BNG creates for local authorities as landowners

Biodiversity units and the BNG metric

As a landowner, Preston City Council could enter the market as a supplier of biodiversity credits. If a local authority owns land containing habitat that could be greatly enhanced, then it can create biodiversity units to sell as credits to the developers who need them, and generate capital at the same time. There is a location weighting in the Biodiversity Net Gain metric, which incentivises developers to purchase biodiversity credits from near to the site of development. Biodiversity units can also be used to offset developments undertaken by the council.

Biodiversity units are an agreed measure of biodiversity value, and are assessed using the [biodiversity metric tool](#). The tool can be used to measure the baseline of existing habitats, habitat enhancement and habitat creation.

The metric assesses habitat as follows:

- **Level of distinctiveness.** From very low to very high distinctiveness.
- **Type.** There are 3 broad types:
 - Area-based habitats (15 broad habitat types, each comprising a range of specific habitat classifications)
 - Hedgerows (13 distinct types)
 - Watercourses (5 distinct types)
- **Condition.** Assessed from Poor to Good.

The trading rules dictate that each unit cannot be summed, traded, or converted between *types*. For example, this means that hedgerow cannot be replaced by grassland, and vice-versa. However, depending on the level of distinctiveness, area-based habitats can be replaced by different habitat classifications. This is done on a like-for-better basis. For example, low distinctiveness grassland could be replaced with high distinctiveness woodland. Full details are found in [The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guide](#)^{xi}

Selling credits

To sell credits, Preston City Council could set up a habitat bank, which is an area registered as a Biodiversity Unit supply area on the [Natural England's Gain Site](#)

[Register](#)^{xii} Sites delivering Biodiversity Units need to deliver the number and types of units they have sold. This means adhering to the agreed strategies as outlined in the Habitat Monitoring and Management Plan, and addressing any issues that arise over time. Credits sales provide income at the start, but the costs for maintenance and formal monitoring continue for 30+ years. Funds should therefore be ringfenced to ensure the 30-year maintenance of the habitat bank.

The following steps are taken or commissioned to assess and set up a site as a habitat bank:

- Baseline survey
- Complete the biodiversity metric tool
- Write Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, which will detail how many biodiversity units can be gained from the baseline with the planned interventions.

Registration of a habitat bank is secured with a legal agreement. A Local Authority cannot hold an S106 with itself, so the options are to either:

- a. Set up an S106 with another Local Planning Authority hosting the habitat bank;
- b. agree a Conservation Covenant with a Responsible Body;
- c. set up a Special Vehicle Organisation to hold the asset, deliver the biodiversity credits, with which the LPA can then have a S106.

Responsible Bodies to local to Preston include the Environment Agency and the Land Trust. Costs vary for registering sites and monitoring from one provider to another. There are cost efficiencies with registering fewer larger sites, as opposed to many smaller sites.

See guidance on how to [register a habitat bank](#)^{xiii} and using a [conservation covenant](#)^{xiv} Full guidance here: [Sell biodiversity units as a land manager - GOV.UK](#)^{xv}

Once enhancements or habitat creation are *modelled*, the site's projected uplift in biodiversity is quantified as units, which can then be listed on the [biodiversity gain site register](#). Once the unit is sold, it is recorded on the [record allocation of off-site biodiversity gains to a development](#)^{xvi}

The price of a unit needs to include:

- initial creation and enhancement of habitats
- management of the land covering at least 30 years
- monitoring and reporting
- ecologist or other expert's costs
- insurance
- remedial work to correct any habitat management failures
- machinery, tools and other staff to carry out the tasks

- inflation
- consulting experts to review your legal agreement

At present, the values of biodiversity units average between £20,000-£40,000, depending on the habitat type, location and ecological distinctiveness of the unit.

Fishwick Bottoms as a habitat bank

Fishwick Bottoms is a large area of land owned by Preston City Council. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies various Potential Measures for enhancing biodiversity on the site. Habitat Banks which are improved in line with the Potential Measures as recommended in the LNRS benefit from a 15% multiplier in terms of the monetary value of Biodiversity Units yielded. Fishwick Bottoms could be developed as a habitat bank to provide a site within the Preston District from which developers could purchase biodiversity credits to secure off-site Biodiversity Net Gain.

The habitat in Fishwick Bottoms is degraded. In the lower part of Fishwick Bottoms, some of the fields have been leased for grazing. In this area, the LNRS recommends improving the extent and condition of floodplain habitats, and expanding and enhancing fens, reedbeds, springs, flushes, marshes, marsh fen and ephemeral waterbodies. Following these recommendations could also provide natural flood management.

On the upper reaches of Fishwick Bottoms, part of the area is a designated Local Nature Reserve, and parts are designated Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat, Ancient Woodland. The LNRS includes recommendations to maintain veteran trees, woodland habitat creation and enhance the biodiversity value of woodland.

To begin building a business case for turning Fishwick Bottoms into a habitat bank, the following needs to be assessed.

- What is the estimated the baseline of the habitat?
- What estimated Biodiversity Units could it yield when improved?
- Considering current master plans in the district, what is the projected need in the area for Biodiversity Units of the type that would be made available by improving the habitat in Fishwick Bottoms?
- What number and type of biodiversity units are needed for off-site BNG in the 49 above-mentioned planning applications?

5. Actions to explore in the next reporting period

Finally, further actions which fall outside of current plans, but which would enhance Preston City Council's delivery of Biodiversity Duty are listed below. These actions could use the Preston-specific data drawn from the LNRS provided in Tables 3 and 4 as guidance to direct efforts to achieve the best for biodiversity in Preston.

Objective	Action
Objective 1: Strengthen our evidence, understanding, and monitoring of biodiversity in the Preston district.	Conduct baseline and ongoing ecological surveys of council-owned and occupied land and property as measures are implemented.
Objective 2: Minimise or eliminate practices harmful to biodiversity.	Look at transitioning cleaning products used by the Council to 'eco' alternatives.
Objective 3: Achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity across the district guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	<p>Explore options to better conserve and enhance Biological Heritage Sites in Preston.</p> <p>Explore options for using BNG legislation to improve biodiversity on Preston's public parks and other green spaces.</p>
Objective 4: Support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making.	Explore options for integrating active travel and nature-based solutions in public spaces.
Objective 5: Raise awareness to the public and to local institutions on biodiversity loss, conservation and enhancement.	<p>Reach out to local farmers and landowners to encourage take up of grants supportive of improving biodiversity, especially by those whose properties are on environmentally designated land.</p> <p>Run a campaign focussed on biodiversity conservation and enhancement in Preston.</p>
Objective 7: Work with key partners to support biodiversity enhancement across the district.	<p>Create wider partnerships with local organisations including the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, including to support the SSSI Tun Brook Woods managed by the charity.</p> <p>Work with developers to get the best out of their off-site Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations (developing a 'BNG Market place').</p>

6. Appendix

6.1. Table 5: Biological Heritage sites in the Preston District

Biological Heritage Sites situated at least partly in the Preston district with their other environmental designations are listed below in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Biological Heritage Sites in the Preston District			
Site Name	Total Area (Ha)	Shared with other districts	Other designations
River Ribble, Lower Tidal Section	188.6	South Ribble and Fylde	Marine Conservation Zone
Riber Ribble, Upper Tidal Section	58.6	South Ribble	Marine Conservation Zone
River Ribble from London Road Bridge Preston, in West, to County Boundary, in East	298.1	South Ribble, Ribble Valley	Marine Conservation Zone
Lancaster Canal Whole Length in Lancashire Including Glasson Branch	179.5	Lancaster, Fylde Wyre	
Lea Marsh	30.4	Fylde	Marine Conservation Zone (river ingress)
Mason's Wood (Lea)	2.5		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Mason's Wood (Sherwood)	9.9		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Savick Bridge	2.5	Fylde	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (Lowland Fen) Marine Conservation Zone (river ingress)

Bartle Wetland	4.2		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (Lowland Fen)
Cottam Hall Brick Works	9.3		
Lower House Wood	2.30	Wyre	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Brock Valley East, Walmsley Bridge to Higher Brock Bridge	20.1	Wyre	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW and PAWS)
Hell Clough	5.1		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Brock Mill Stream Wood	1.4		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Roper Wood and New Plantation	3.3		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Boggy Wood and Seed Hill Wood	6.3	Wyre	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (PAWS)
Woodtop, Dewhurst and Gill Barn Woods	11.2	Wyre	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW and PAWS)
Beacon Fell	18.6		
Kidsnape Wood	6.8		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (PAWS)
Bullsnape Wood	3.5		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Whittingham Mires and Ponds	0.74		Statutory Irreplaceable

			Habitat (Lowland Fens)
Grimsargh Reservoirs	12.1		
Wood Top Wood	2.5		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Big Wood	12.2		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (PAWS)
Elston Lane	0.23		
Gib Holme Wood	17.7	Ribble Valley	Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Pope Lane Ponds	16.3		
Brockholes Quarry	99.2		
Brockholes Wood	28.1		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Eyes Wood	4.9		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Melling's Wood and Dark Wood	8.4		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Throslock Wood	3.8		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)
Fishwick Bottoms	5.0		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (Lowland Fen/PAWS/ASNW) Local Nature Reserve
Sandy Brook	18.0		Local Nature Reserve
Haighton Park and Fulwood Park Woods	12.1		Statutory Irreplaceable Habitat (ASNW)

6.2. Potential Measures listed in the LNRS to improve biodiversity on Council-owned land and property

Habitat:

6.2.1. Aquatic and Wetlands

AW1.1 Support the expansion of eels across the county for example by: removing barriers to migration such as dams, installing eel and elver passes, improving water quality, protecting key areas from habitat loss

AW3.1 Restoration of Lancashire's lost pond landscape

AW3.3 Expand and enhance fens, reedbeds, springs, flushes, marshes, marsh fen and ephemeral waterbodies.

6.2.2. BHS Current/Provisional

B1.1 Habitat restoration, enhancement and positive conservation management within Biological Heritage Sites, which: supports the qualifying features of the BHS, maintains and enhances any irreplaceable habitats present, supports other existing habitats and species of the site, increases the ecological value of the site, is informed by the BHS site description and other information available from the BHS Partnership, and gives consideration to any available advice from the BHS Partnership.

6.2.3. Coastal and Estuarine

C1.1 Create and restore coastal habitats (such as sand dunes, dune slacks and saltmarshes) to reverse fragmentation.

C1.3 Create and enhance habitat corridors and stepping stone habitats to support species migration including connectivity between coastal and freshwater ecosystems e.g. saltmarsh, estuaries, intertidal pools, floodplain grazing marsh.

C2.3 Allow natural formation of embryonic habitats such as embryonic dunes, saltmarshes (including strand line and pioneer vegetation) and dune slacks.

C3.1 Create and enhance undisturbed coastal: high tide feeding and roosting habitat for wildfowl, nesting sites and high tide feeding and roosting habitat for wading birds.

C3.3 Creation and restoration of naturally functioning saltmarsh habitat.

C3.4 Creation of coastal habitats (such as brackish reedbeds, coastal grasslands and wetlands), to buffer and expand coastal and estuarine habitats, allowing for habitat expansion with sea level rise and reconnection of low-lying reclaimed and frequently flooded agricultural land to coastal and transitional habitats.

6.2.4. Grassland

G1.1 Create and maintain conditions to allow thriving, resilient and dynamic populations of waders important to Lancashire dependent on key habitats including grasslands, peatland and arable land.

G1.2 Secure appropriate management of grasslands with high biodiversity value such as ancient permanent grasslands and grasslands rich in plant species, fungi, or invertebrates (for example, conservation grazing, preservation of undisturbed and uncultivated soils and maintenance of low nutrient levels, appropriate sward structure and hydrological conditions).

6.2.5. Rocky

R3.1 Maintain and enhance existing biodiversity value of geological features, rocky habitats and artificial habitats arising from past industry and development, including quarries, mineral extraction sites, disused railways, open mosaic on previously developed land and spoil heaps (hushings) for example, by appropriate management for the habitat type.

6.2.6. Urban

U1.2 Create more connected pollinator wildflower-rich habitat in and through urban centres seeking connectivity to the B-Lines approach for example hedgerows, arable margins and headlands, green roofs, and with parks and gardens containing wetland features, wilder areas with native plants including tall ruderals.

U2.3 Wooded habitat creation and enhancement in urban area such as orchards, street trees, micro-woods, urban woodland and hedgerows.

U2.5 Maintain and enhance the biodiversity of open mosaic habitat on previously developed land.

U4.3 Restoration and enhancement of existing Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks and District Wildlife Sites

6.2.7. Woodland

W1.1 Restore natural processes and enhance the biodiversity value of existing wooded habitats, prioritising ancient and long-established woodlands, temperate rainforest, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and wet woodland. On sites identified as BHS, also follow Measure B1.1.

W1.2 Enhance the biodiversity value of broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation woodland, including: Diversification of structure, age and species composition,

Increasing the proportion of native species, Retaining permanent areas of broadleaved woodland, Creation of open habitats such as rides, glades and transitional woodland edge habitats, through selective felling, coppicing and ride management to increase the extent, diversity and connectivity of understory in woodlands and limit over-shading, Increasing standing and fallen dead wood (where safe to do so), Inoculating habitats with appropriate native species from suitable agreed donor sites.

W1.3 Introduce low impact woodland management and low impact management practices including sustainably managed Continuous Cover Forestry to diversify age range and structure of woodland.

W2.1 Establish riparian woodland and trees along watercourses, riparian corridors and floodplains, through appropriate planting or natural colonisation, where biodiversity gains and improved habitat connectivity can be achieved.

W2.2 Expand and enhance wooded clough habitats, through natural regeneration or appropriate planting if necessary, where biodiversity gains and improved habitat connectivity can be achieved.

W2.7 Create appropriate semi-natural habitats to buffer, expand or connect existing woodland, incorporating natural colonisation wherever possible.

Species:

6.2.1. *Atlantic salmon*

AS1 Work with land managers in upper river catchments to reduce the impact of the use of Diazinon (an insecticide used in sheep dip) on nearby watercourses which has a significant impacts on olfactory function in Atlantic salmon, by ensuring sheep do not access or cross watercourses following dipping and by ensuring that they are dipped in an area which drains to tank, rather than surface water drains. This is particularly important as sheep dip tends to be applied between September and November, a time when Atlantic salmon are arriving at their spawning locations in upper river catchments, hugely increasing the risk of impacts from this chemical.

AS3 Work to improve habitat quality in likely spawning areas to help provide a greater area of suitable spawning habitat both within the main stem of rivers and within tributaries for spawning adults for example, natural pool/riffle sequences and refugia (large wood, overhanging trees, complex habitat etc).

6.2.2. *Black-tailed godwit*

BTG1 Erect predator exclusion fences or implement legal predator control of species that may seek to prey upon eggs and chicks at existing and potential breeding sites.

BTG2 Manage potential impacts from human activities during the breeding season (from March when birds are prospecting nest sites to July inclusive) at existing and potential breeding sites for example by, restricting recreational activities such as dog walking, fishing and the use of drones/UAVs and providing information for the public.

BTG3 Management and enhancement of wet features at existing and potential breeding sites for example ditch reprofiling and soil spreading to retain reasonable amounts of muddy edge to feed on.

BTG4 Creation of a series of wet features at potential breeding sites for example, scrapes and pools where mud is exposed for feeding ground through spring and early summer. These may need to be fed by a constant source of water for example, from a spring or stream to feed wet features in dry springs to ensure wet mud is available throughout the breeding season.

BTG5 Removal of trees (ensuring appropriate consultation, assessment and compliance to avoid any detrimental impacts on other species or the habitat) at existing and potential breeding sites that may act as perches for avian predators and ensure no tree planting is undertaken in these areas.

6.2.3. *Lesser black-backed gull*

LBBG3 Protect existing urban nesting sites from interference for example ensure no netting is erected to avoid entanglement resulting in the loss of existing nesting areas for lesser black-backed gulls.

References

ⁱ Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework 2022: <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

ⁱⁱ UK Environment Act 2021: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

ⁱⁱⁱ Biodiversity Duty guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>

- iv Lancashire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy:
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/environmental/local-nature-recovery-strategy/>
- v LNRS Local Habitat map: Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity and Potential Measures:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/92a5cd8951b84c65b9cd842f5ffc2333>
- vi Preston Local Plan 2012-2026: [https://www.preston.gov.uk/media/1952/Preston-s-Local-Plan/pdf/Preston-Local-Plan-2012-2026-_\(8\).pdf?m=637056240884300000](https://www.preston.gov.uk/media/1952/Preston-s-Local-Plan/pdf/Preston-Local-Plan-2012-2026-_(8).pdf?m=637056240884300000)
- vii Preston Local Plan 2023-2041:
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- viii Local Nature Reserves in Preston:
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- ix Major Development and Advice Service:
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- x Validation Checklist for Planning and Other Applications:
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- xi Biodiversity Net Gain Metric Guide:
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- xii Natural England Gains Site Register:
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- xiii Government guidance on how to register a habitat bank:
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- xiv Government guidance on how to set up a Conservation Covenant:
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- xv Government guidance on selling biodiversity credits as a land manager:
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- xvi Record allocation of offsite biodiversity gains to a development:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/record-allocation-of-off-site-biodiversity-gains-to-a-development>

ⁱ Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework 2022: <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

ⁱⁱ UK Environment Act 2021: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

ⁱⁱⁱ Biodiversity Duty guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>

^{iv} Lancashire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/environmental/local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

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- v LNRS Local Habitat map: Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity and Potential Measures: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/92a5cd8951b84c65b9cd842f5ffc2333>
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