BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT AND ACTION PLAN 2025



CLEANER GREENER
SPELTHORNE

Contents

Introduction

What is Biodiversity Duty? 3

Purpose of the Biodiversity Duty 3

Aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan: 4

Overview of the Council's existing consideration of biodiversity 4

National strategies 6

Grounds management 7

Communications and public engagement 7

Biodiversity Net Gain preparation 8

Biodiversity Duty Action Plan 8

Land management across Council-owned land 9

Education, advice and awareness of biodiversity 11

Consideration of national strategies and targets from the EIP23 12

Preparation and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain 13







Introduction

What is Biodiversity Duty?

Statutory Biodiversity Duty was first introduced by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act in 2006 which required that 'every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. In 2021, the Environment Act (Section 102 and 103) strengthened this duty by amending Section 40 of the NERC Act and by requiring all public authorities in England to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.
As a public authority, the government guidance requires Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) to:

- Consider what you can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
- Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives.

Public authorities were required to complete their 'first consideration' of action to take for biodiversity by 1st January 2024 and agree policies and objectives after this as either an existing appropriate strategy or a new document. Local planning authorities are further required to publish a biodiversity report to communicate what they are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive changes that have been made. These reports must be published within a minimum of five years of the previous reporting period. The first reporting period must end by January 1st 2026 and the report must be published within 12 weeks (by the end of March 2026).

To comply with Biodiversity Duty, the Council should consider:

- Relevant strategies and how these strategies affect how SBC complies with Biodiversity Duty, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, species conservation strategies and protected sites strategies.
- How it can manage its land to improve biodiversity.
- How it can educate, advise and raise awareness of biodiversity loss.
- The review of internal policies and processes which could affect biodiversity, such as transport, waste, water, procurement, and light.
- How it can prepare for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Purpose of the Biodiversity Duty

To support national biodiversity goals (EIP23):
The State of Nature 2023 reported that the UK is the most nature-depleted country in the world and since the 1970s, the UK's biodiversity has halved as a result of human activity. The UK government published the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23) in January 2023 which sets out the government's plans to significantly improve the natural environment. Public authorities' biodiversity objectives and actions should seek to support the EIP23.

By 2030, the government has committed to:	Halt the decline in species abundance.
	Protect 30% of UK land.
By 2042, the government has committed to:	Increase species abundance by at least 10% from 2030, surpassing 2022 levels.
	Restore or create at least 500,000 ha of a range of wildlife rich habitats.
	Reduce the risk of species extinction.
	Restore 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term.

To support local biodiversity in Surrey and Spelthorne:
The State of Surrey's Nature 2017 reported that Surrey is experiencing severe biodiversity loss at higher rates than the national average of 2% (around 1 in 9 species in Surrey is now locally extinct), and:

- 4.4% of species were classified as threatened with extinction (based on IUCN criteria).
- 2.8% are near threatened.
- 13.8% of species are deemed rare.

Spelthorne is one of the most urbanised boroughs in Surrey, situated fifteen miles west of central London and bordering one of the world's largest airports (Heathrow) and the London Boroughs of Hounslow, Hillingdon and Richmond upon Thames. Approximately 35% of Spelthorne's land is urban, namely the principal towns: Staines-upon-Thames, Sunbury, Ashford, Shepperton and Stanwell. 65% of Spelthorne is designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, and one third of land cover is water – including reservoirs, lakes and rivers.

Spelthorne features a number of sites designated for nature conservation, including:

- Four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Dumsey Meadow, Staines Moor (including Shortwood Common and Pond, King George VI Reservoir and the Staines Reservoirs), and the Kempton and Wraysbury Reservoirs).
- The South-West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site which features internationally important overwintering bird populations.
- 26 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) (aka Local Wildlife Sites).
- One Local Nature Reserve (LNR): Ash Link.
- Common land in Staines, Sunbury and Shepperton. Most notably Staines Commons (CL31) which is still actively grazed by commoners.

Furthermore, a significant area of the Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) resides in Spelthorne. The park is a mosaic of 43 square miles of farmland, woodland and water on the western urban fringe of London.
There are two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in Spelthorne. These are areas of Surrey which were identified by the Surrey Nature Partnership in 2010 where 'improved habitat management, as well as efforts to restore and re-create Priority habitats will be most effective in enhancing connectivity to benefit recovery of Priority species in a fragmented landscape'. These BOAs will be subsumed in the county LNRS. The BOAs which are located in Spelthorne are:

- TV03 – Staines Moor and Shortwood Common
- TV04 – Thorpe and Shepperton

Aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan:

Aims: > To set out the Council's consideration of what it is doing already to conserve and enhance biodiversity
> To identify additional specific objectives and actions the Council can take to improve outcomes for biodiversity

To achieve this, the Council has:
1. Reviewed what the Council already does for biodiversity across its services.
2. Undertaken internal discussions across departments to develop policies and actions which could be agreed to improve strategy to improve biodiversity.
3. Identified a monitoring mechanism and timelines for agreed policies and actions.

Overview of the Council's existing consideration of biodiversity
We have recognised the importance of conserving and enhancing local biodiversity and this is reflected across Council strategies, policies, partnerships and actions. The key relevant strategies are summarised below:

Strategy or policy document	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
Climate Change Strategy 2022–2030	Biodiversity is one of nine identified key sections addressed. It also addresses waste, transport and sustainable development.
Project Green Horizon Programme	The programme was initiated in June 2025 with the purpose of supporting the Council's journey to Net Zero and improving the Council's resilience to the impacts of Climate Change.
Corporate Plan 2024-2028	The Environment is one of the five strategic priorities identified. A summary of relevant actions includes: • The protection of areas that our communities love • Responding to climate change with the environment being intrinsic to everything we do • Managing our open spaces, tree planting, minimising flooding • Protecting and enhancing the environment, including biodiversity • Promoting and assisting environmental groups
Corporate Priority Environment Plan	This focused action plan is tied to the Environmental priority within the Corporate Plan and details the specific steps the Council is taking to meet its environmental commitments.
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2024–2034 (emerging)	The strategy influences land management practices in parks and open spaces in the context of the Environment Act 2021. This includes tree management, wild flora and urban biodiversity initiatives. The updated strategy is expected to be adopted late 2025.
Emerging Local Plan 2024–2039	In summary, the policies provide for: • The protection and enhancement of open spaces and biodiversity • The provision of a range of typologies of open space from play areas to sports facilities to areas for biodiversity etc. • A hierarchy of open spaces • Setting out the open space requirements for developers, including provision on and off-site and financial contributions • Biodiversity Net Gain requirement
Air Quality Action Plan 2024–2029	The plan outlines several key initiatives aimed at improving air quality across Spelthorne, including the promotion of sustainable travel, a robust air quality monitoring network, collaboration with Heathrow to mitigate aviation-related emissions and a regional coordination with neighbouring councils and National Highways.

Declaration of a Climate Emergency 2020	The declaration agreed that across the Council's services, all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions will be aligned with the goal of achieving a shift to carbon neutrality. The Climate Change Strategy was subsequently created to support the prioritisation of this agenda.
Supporting partner of Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	The LNRS is a statutory responsibility introduced by the Environment Act 2021. SBC is a supporting partner of the LNRS, (which is being prepared by Surrey County Council) and has contributed to the development of the document by attending update meetings, responding to the consultation and supporting on community outreach events.
Partner of Surrey Nature Partnership's Biodiversity Working Group	A knowledge sharing network for Surrey boroughs and districts which helps to protect biodiversity in Surrey in alignment with national biodiversity policy and its implementation.
Partner of Surrey wide Ecologists Working Group	A knowledge sharing network co-ordinated by Surrey County Council for ecology and biodiversity officers in Surrey boroughs and districts.
Partner of Surrey Nature Partnership's Parks and Countryside Forum	A knowledge sharing network for parks and countryside professionals across the Surrey boroughs and districts for conservation and public enjoyment.
Supporting partner of Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS)	The TLS work to protect and enhance the natural and man-made landscape, manage biodiversity and improve recreational opportunities whilst encouraging community involvement. TLS run volunteer habitat management on SBC floodplain land.
Supporting partner of River Thames Scheme (RTS)	The RTS is a partnership of the Environment Agency, Surrey County Council and other local borough partners which seeks to minimise the impact of flooding, enhance green spaces, enhance habitats and biodiversity, promote sustainable economic growth and support carbon-reduction goals. SBC supports through information sharing at partner meetings and contributing to consultations.
Partner of Colne Valley Regional Park Trust (CVRP)	CVRP Trust works collaboratively with SBC to protect and enhance green space in the Colne Valley through volunteer days and project support. CVRP aims to enhance the landscape, safeguard the countryside, conserve and enhance biodiversity, provide opportunities for recreation, achieve a sustainable rural economy and encourage community participation.
Holder of Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) Agreements for four sites.	CSHT is a grant scheme offered by Defra which supports landowners to deliver environmental management in order to enhance biodiversity and promotes sustainable land use.
Supporting partner of Surrey's 'Adapt' Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy	Surrey Adapt is a strategic blueprint for building climate resilience across the county. The strategy is under consultation (at the time of this report) and yet to be adopted.

National strategies
Government guidance states all local authorities must consider relevant national strategies and how these will affect how the organisation complies with biodiversity duty. This includes the LNRS (aka Surrey Nature Recovery), species conservation strategies and protected site strategies.

Natural England is the government's adviser for the natural environment in England and are responsible for developing species conservation and protected site strategies. As a Local Planning Authority, the Council has a legal duty under Section 110(5) of the Environment Act to cooperate with Natural England in these efforts.

LNRS
The LNRS is a spatial strategy mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It identifies locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits including carbon sequestration, flood risk mitigation, accessibility to green space to promote social well-being. The LNRS which concerns Spelthorne is being developed by Surrey County Council and the public consultation is scheduled to run from August – September 2025. As a supporting authority, SBC has contributed to the development of the LNRS through attending update meetings, providing local information (such as mapping and survey data) and by responding to the consultation. The strategy is scheduled to be finalised between October and December 2026 and to be adopted in February 2026.

The LNRS will:
> Set out priorities for nature's recovery
> Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
> Map specific measures for creating and improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals

Species conservation strategies
Since 2023, SBC has held a District Level License for great crested newts. The license was administered by NatureSpace on behalf of Natural England and it benefits great crested newts through the creation of high-quality habitats in targeted areas to increase and re-connect populations at a landscape scale. Great crested newts are a Protect species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 2017.

Protected sites strategies
There are four SSSIs and one SPA in Spelthorne. Of these, only Dumsey Meadow and (part of) Staines Moor are managed by SBC. The EIP23 states that by the end of 2023 all public authorities should have management plans in place to support their sites to reach favourable condition. Dumsey Meadow and Staines Moor are both reported by Natural England to be in favourable condition and are both under Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier agreements with the Rural Payments Agency (on behalf of Defra). These agreements set out the management requirements of the sites. In August 2025, the Staines Moor Strategic Plan was finalised and published by the Staines Moor Steering Group which will further support the positive management of the site.



Grounds management
The borough hosts over 750 acres of parks and open spaces which are largely managed in-house by Neighbourhood Services. Seven of the open spaces are managed under the Biodiversity Officer in recognition of their ecological importance and the management focuses on increasing biodiversity through targeted habitat enhancement. The grounds maintenance team manage all parks, other open spaces, verges, cemeteries, playgrounds and the grounds of many of the Council assets such as the Council offices. The Council already manages land with consideration for nature; for example, deadwood is increasingly retained on site to create habitat for invertebrates and fungi, nest boxes for birds, bats and hedgehogs have been installed across the borough, areas of long grass or perennial native wildflower meadows have been designated across more than 30 sites, and glyphosate (and other synthetic pesticides) is decreasingly used and has been completely banned across the Council cemeteries since 2023.

In 2024, the Council installed a new tree nursery with an irrigation system and capacity for 500 trees. The nursery enables the Council to fulfil its objectives of replacing dead or felled trees and planting new trees every year based on individual site needs. Species are predominantly native.

Across the Council's allotment sites, tenants are encouraged to use environmentally friendly methods of pest and weed control to minimise harm to the local ecosystem. In spring 2025, the Council launched a new community allotment at the Groveley Road site, aiming to expand opportunities for residents to engage in sustainable food growing and community-based horticulture.

Communications and public engagement
The Council is committed to engaging residents in biodiversity and conservation, aiming to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the threats it faces. This objective is firmly embedded in the Council's Corporate Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. We actively support and collaborate with 'Friends of' and other community organisations across the borough to deliver biodiversity initiatives, such as wildflower meadows and bulb planting, that bring people closer to nature.

The Leisure and Community Development service deliver self-led walks for residents across Council sites, including sites of ecological interest to encourage residents to explore and appreciate natural environments. In addition, the Independent Living service promotes the benefits of spending time in green spaces through social prescribing initiatives, including for patients recently discharged from hospital.

Biodiversity information is also regularly shared across a range of communication channels, including on-site interpretation boards, social media, the Council bulletin and the staff intranet. We promote information about local biodiversity events, celebrate achievements and align with national and internation campaigns to inspire wider community involvement. Internal sustainability action.

In line with government guidance the Council has reviewed internal policies and processes for staff and facilities that could affect biodiversity. Under the Climate Change Strategy and the Corporate Priority Environment Plan, the Council has taken significant steps for ensuring staff and facilities are environmentally mindful.

For example, there are two electric pool cars and two electric bicycles available for staff use to carry out work-related site visits. This forms part of a wider transition towards a low-emission vehicle fleet, with a long-term goal that all Council vehicles will operate on electric or alternative fuels. It has already progressed this goal, introducing three electric Spelride community transport buses and two electric vans across 2024–2025.

Solar panels are being rolled out across Council assets; across our municipal and community buildings, six sites already have solar panels. In October 2024, the Eclipse Leisure Centre opened in Staines-upon-Thames. This flagship Council asset was built to Passivhaus standards and delivers significant reductions in energy and water consumption. Following the declaration of the Climate Emergency in 2020 and the subsequent Climate Change Strategy, all Spelthorne Borough Council employees undergo Carbon Literacy training in order to foster a culture of climate awareness and to empower staff to take action to reduce their environmental impact. In December 2024, the Council became a Bronze-level Carbon Literate Organisation and is now working towards Silver.

Recycling facilities are available across all Council offices, supporting improved and responsible waste management practices.

Biodiversity Net Gain preparation
The Environment Act 2021 introduced Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), a policy which requires all new developments to create a 10% uplift in overall biodiversity. The Spelthorne Draft Local Plan 2022–2037 aligns with national policy; it pledges to offer stronger protection for urban green spaces and positions biodiversity as a key concern, stating the Plan 'positively tackles the impact of climate change in our borough and ensures important biodiversity is protected'. It requires a 10% minimum increase in BNG, enforces full use of the mitigation hierarchy, and pledges to assess our own land to act as potential off-site BNG delivery units.

The Council has established an internal officer working group to coordinate Council preparation and implementation of BNG. As part of this, officers have commissioned baseline BNG surveys of Council-owned sites to explore opportunities for local habitat bank creation. This would enable off-site uplift in biodiversity to be delivered within the borough, supporting local nature recovery.

To support effective BNG delivery through the planning process, the Council has invested in a BNG module on the software Exacom to assist with the management and monitoring of BNG-related applications.

Guidance on BNG has been published for residents, developers and landowners to promote understanding. Planning Officers have also received training from Surrey Wildlife Trust to ensure they have the required knowledge and expertise to implement BNG. Surrey Wildlife Trust also provide expert ecological input via their Ecology Planning Advice Service into planning decisions, including BNG as part of an agreement.

Biodiversity Duty Action Plan
Officers across Council services have explored additional opportunities to enhance biodiversity outcomes beyond current strategies and ongoing initiatives.

These objectives have been structured around key policy areas:
1) Land management across Council-owned land
2) Education, advice and awareness of biodiversity
3) Consideration of national strategies and targets from the EIP23
4) Preparation and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain

The objectives and actions in the table below will be reviewed and reported on, in line with government requirements, before January 1st 2026 and published before the end of March 2026. The Biodiversity Duty Report and Action Plan will then be reviewed and reported on every five years.



Land management across Council owned land					
Objective	Actions	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Department(s)/ Officer(s)	Future Actions
1. Enhance the management of trees across the borough by improving the management of existing tree stock and adopting a more strategic approach to new tree planting. Future planting will be planned to maximise the ecosystem services provided by trees, including benefits to biodiversity, climate resilience (e.g. carbon sequestration), and community wellbeing.	1.1 Adopt a new digital system to collect and manage tree data across the borough to enable improved monitoring of tree health and to support more informed decisions on management and future tree planting proposals.	Oct-25	System installed and number of staff trained to use the system. The percentage of Spelthorne sites uploaded onto the system.	Grounds Maintenance (Neighbourhood services)	Input all existing data into new software, including all the tree surveys in the past 3–5 years. Identify any gaps in tree surveys and act, as soon as possible, to survey these sites to ensure all sites are surveyed every 3–7 years. Utilise the system to better understand the distribution of species, ancient and veteran trees, and to identify areas which would benefit from additional planting.
	1.2 Optimise the environmental and social benefits of tree planting on Council land by applying the 'Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason' principle. Planting plans will be informed by evidence-based tools and guidance, including the Woodland Trust's Tree Equity Score and Woodland Creation Guide, as well as Defra's Trees Outside Woodland programme and the Forest Research Ecological Site Classification System. The Council will prioritise strategic, location-sensitive planting that enhances biodiversity, climate resilience, and community value. Wherever possible, tree planting initiatives will actively involve local volunteers. The Biodiversity Officer and Parks and Open Spaces Manager will meet prior to each planting season to discuss and agree appropriate species and locations for the upcoming winter.	March 2026 (after first tree planting season)	Number of trees planted and the number of planting projects which involved the community. Meetings between the Parks and Open Spaces Manager and Biodiversity Officer to discuss tree planting.	Biodiversity Officer/ Parks and Open Spaces Manager (Neighbourhood services)	Review at the next Biodiversity Duty reporting period.
2. Promote biodiversity-friendly practices on Council assets, which are not directly managed by the grounds maintenance team, by providing biodiversity advice and awareness information directly to the tenants of that land.	2.1 Promote biodiversity friendly gardening approaches among allotment tenants by providing education and guidance. Update the allotments tenancy welcome information and allotments rules to introduce an allotments-wide ban on glyphosate and other synthetic pesticide use and introduce a dedicated section of biodiversity considerations and good environmental practices.	Oct-26	Publication of the welcome information and site rules. The number of welcome packs shared with new tenants, and the number of reports of breaches of the glyphosate (or other synthetic chemical) ban.	Allotments Officer/ Biodiversity Officer (Neighbourhood Services)	The updated welcome pack and rules to be distributed with all new tenants and the Allotments Officer to review the pack and site rules information at the next Biodiversity Duty reporting period.

	2.2 Promote biodiversity friendly actions among tenants of Council-owned assets by providing supplementary information on biodiversity at the start of their tenancies. The information will aim to encourage small, simple actions which support biodiversity, such as wildlife-friendly weed management and plants for pollinators.	Dec-26	The number of tenants who receive the supplementary biodiversity information (new tenants).	Biodiversity Officer/ Assets/ Legal	Biodiversity Officer, Assets and Legal will discuss and confirm suitable mechanisms the information can be shared, considering welcome packs, AST (tenancy documents) and the addition of a clause in the leases of municipal properties. Biodiversity Officer to draft the biodiversity information for Assets and to review it at the next Biodiversity Duty reporting period.
	2.3 Explore opportunities to introduce biodiversity initiatives (such as community wildflower meadows or planting spaces) around the Council Day Centres for their members. Initiatives should be under the ownership of the day centre community. Consider a project in Shepperton Recreation Ground by the Greeno Centre (in agreement with the Grounds Maintenance team).	Sep-26	The number of biodiversity initiatives created, and the number of volunteers engaged.	Parks and Open Spaces Manager/ Biodiversity Officer (Neighbourhood Services) / Independent Living	Review success of the project and promote ongoing maintenance and ownership from the day centre community. Assess similar opportunities for the other day centres.
3. Explore opportunities to create new designations for open spaces (such as Local Nature Reserves or Local Wildlife Sites) to support the protection of the site's local natural interest and to enhance its value for wildlife and the community.	3.1 Assess whether any Council sites (such as Studios Walk and Bronzefield) meet the criteria to be designated as LNRs or LWSs. Consider the current biodiversity status, community interest, finances and any strategic significance in relation to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Sep-26	Number of sites assessed, and number of sites designated.	Biodiversity Officer (Neighbourhood Services)	Post-assessment, progress with any identified and agreed sites following the government guidance on designation creation (gaining committee approval and sending a declaration document to Natural England). Review upon the completion of the assessment.

Education, advice and awareness of biodiversity					
Objective	Actions	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Department(s)/ Officer(s)	Future Actions
4. Actively promote residents' awareness and understanding of biodiversity through the delivery of regular and structured material via Council communication channels.	4.1 Design a communications plan for biodiversity to be shared on Council social media, magazines and any other media channels. The plan will include a calendar of significant biodiversity dates, the promotion of local, national and international campaigns, and updates on local nature initiatives.	Jan-26	Completion of Biodiversity Communication Plan. Engagement with biodiversity posts on social media.	Biodiversity Officer / Communications Officers	The annual communications plan to be refreshed at the start of each year by the Biodiversity Officer to include any new significant dates/ events/ campaigns.
	4.2 Promote nature-related activities and events through the Leisure Service. The Biodiversity Officer will feed more resources on local biodiversity to Leisure Officers (such as the Spelthorne Biodiversity/Climate Biodiversity Map) to facilitate the incorporation of nature-related health activities. For example, the Biodiversity Officer could work closely with Lesiure to promote nature walks at Staines Moor and other open spaces to support Sport England's ongoing investment with Active Surrey in Stanwell.	Dec-28	Number of nature related activities and events provided by Leisure.	Leisure / Biodiversity Officer	The Biodiversity Officer and Leisure to discuss ideas and share information throughout the year and to meet at least annually.
	4.3 Encourage residents to carry out responsible pest management which minimises unintended harm to non-target wildlife or the local environment. Achieve this by updating guidance on the Spelthorne website and promoting this information through Council communication channels. Residents should prioritise non-chemical, ethical and site-specific techniques in line with advice from the government and the British Pest Control Association.	Dec-26	Number of reports of harmful or damaging residential pest control incidents.	Environmental Health	Advice on responsible pest control should be reviewed at each biodiversity duty reporting period to ensure guidance is up to date and continues to be promoted.
5. Increase and support conservation volunteering opportunities for local businesses, residents, schools and youth groups to increase nature engagement and awareness. Explore a linked-up approach with Voluntary Support North Surrey to coordinate a range of volunteer opportunities annually.	5.1 Seek out opportunities to engage with local businesses via conservation volunteering in their local area, such as Shepperton Studios/ Thames Water/ Staines BID. For example, arrange volunteer days with Shepperton Studios at Studios Walk.	Dec-26	Measurable by the number of businesses involved, number of volunteers, and the days volunteering annually.	Biodiversity Officer	Assess/review the successes of the volunteering and tailor future volunteering based on that review with each biodiversity duty reporting period.

	5.2 Engage with local youth groups and schools, such as Scouts to set up volunteer sessions in Spelthorne. Seek out engagement projects in proximity to their youth club or scout base to encourage long term ownership of projects. For example, with a Miyawaki tree planting project in a Council Park.	Dec-26	Measurable by the number of numbers of youth groups or schools, individual volunteers and days volunteering annually.	Biodiversity Officer / Communications Officers	Assess/review the successes of the volunteering and tailor future volunteering based on that review with each biodiversity duty reporting period.
	5.3 Engage Spelthorne employees in biodiversity and local conservation by organising internal volunteer days, encouraging staff to utilise their paid volunteer days, and sharing news on Spelnet and in staff meetings.	Dec-26	Measurable by the number of volunteer days and individuals involved.	Biodiversity Officer/ Neighbourhood Services	Assess/review the successes of the volunteering and tailor future volunteering based on that review with each biodiversity duty reporting period.
6. Improve political commitment to nature by formally recognising the ecological crisis and embedding biodiversity within climate governance structures.	6.2 Rename the Climate Change Working Group the Climate Change and Nature Working Group to formally recognise the interconnectedness of the climate and biodiversity crises.	Nov-25	Committee approval and adoption of name change.	Climate Change Officer / Biodiversity Officer	Biodiversity initiatives will be more closely considered/ discussed at the CCNWG.
	6.3 Consider re-declaring the climate emergency as the climate and ecological emergency to consolidate this recognition of biodiversity loss.	Sep-26	Committee approval and declaration of biodiversity emergency.	Climate Change Officer / Biodiversity Officer	Biodiversity initiatives will receive more political attention.

Consideration of national strategies and targets from the government's EIP23					
Objective	Actions	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Department(s)/ Officer(s)	Future Actions
7. Support the delivery of target p45 of the Government's EIP23 which seeks to restore 75% of protected sites to favourable condition by 2042.	7.1 Continue to maintain sites within SSSIs under Council management in a favourable condition. When the new application phase opens for Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship, engage with the landowners of Shortwood Common (SSSI) to set up a new management agreement in order to support the recovery of the condition to favourable.	Mar-26	Successful set-up of a new HTCS.	Biodiversity Officer (Neighbourhood Services)	Manage the site as per the management agreement using the agreement grant money. The agreement will cover a five- or ten-year period. At the end of the agreement SBC should consider its renewal (in agreement with the landowners).

Preparation and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain					
Objective	Actions	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Department(s)/ Officer(s)	Future Actions
8. Confirm Biodiversity Net Gain Reporting Process as required by statutory Biodiversity Duty.	8.1 Establish a data collection and reporting mechanism. Establish the responsible officers within the planning department to carry out this task.	Jan-26	Number of applications reported on through BNG reporting requirements.	Planning	Reviewed with each BD reporting period.
	8.2 Complete successful installation and usage of Exacom as a tool to assess, track and monitor BNG applications.	Jan-26	Number of applications reported on through Exacom to meet the BNG reporting requirements.	Planning	Assess the usefulness and successes of the software with each BD reporting period and compare to other software available. Ensure new officers are trained and use the software.
9. Support the creation of Habitat Banks in the borough to create local biodiversity uplift from Spelthorne developments which require off-site units.	9.1 Explore opportunities on both Council sites and with private landowners to create Habitat Banks. Assess benefits of working with third parties such as Wild Capital to facilitate the process.	Dec-26	Measurable by the number of sites investigated and/ or number of units registered on the national register.	Biodiversity Net Gain Officer Working Group – Biodiversity Officer / Strategic Planning/ Climate Change Officer / Projects	Reviewing demand for units and tailoring and future habitat bank opportunities to the demand.