

# Hastings Borough Council Biodiversity Duty Report

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Reporting Period: 2021–2025  
Forward Plan: 2026–2031



# Introduction and Context

## 1. What is biodiversity:

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, including all living organisms, the genetic differences within species, and the ecosystems they form.

It covers:

- Species diversity – the range of different species.
- Genetic diversity – variation within species.
- Ecosystem diversity – different habitats and ecological processes.

## 2. What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?

The 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 and local planning authority, the Government guidance requires Hastings Borough Council (HBC) to:

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

To evidence the above we are legally required to publish a Biodiversity Report to communicate what we are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive changes that have been made.

## 3. Our role in nature recovery

Hastings Borough Council recognises the importance of biodiversity in supporting climate resilience, public health, economic wellbeing and quality of life. The borough's coastal and inland habitats form part of wider ecological networks across Sussex.

## 4. Designated sites in Hastings

### Local Wildlife Sites:

Hastings borough has 25 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) recognised for their wildlife value.

## Local Nature Reserves

Hastings borough has eight Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

- [Church Wood and Robsack Wood LNR: ~29.7 ha](#)
- [Summerfields Wood LNR: ~6.3 ha](#)
- [Marline Valley LNR ~ 43 ha](#)
- [Old Roar Gill & Coronation Wood LNR: ~7.6 ha](#)
- [Filsham Reedbed LNR: ~18.5 ha](#) (managed by [Sussex Wildlife Trust](#))
- [Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve: ~345 ha](#)

## 5. Management of streets and open spaces

Hastings Borough Council manages a diverse network of parks, gardens, play areas, allotments, cemeteries and other public open spaces across the borough. This includes sites designated primarily for nature conservation, such as Local Nature Reserves and areas within and adjoining Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, alongside more formal recreational spaces that are widely used by residents and visitors.

Collectively, these areas form a vital part of the borough's green and blue infrastructure, providing important opportunities to enhance the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats within a densely developed urban environment. Regardless of their size or primary function, all council-managed sites contribute to biodiversity, nature recovery and the delivery of best practice in habitat management. Through this approach, the council can also encourage and influence positive action by other landowners and partners across the borough.

The council also manages a number of ordinary watercourses and drainage features and is a riparian landowner along several streams and river corridors, including the Combe Haven. By managing these sensitively while fulfilling statutory drainage and flood risk duties, the council can protect and enhance habitats for freshwater and wetland species, including birds, invertebrates and aquatic mammals.

Where opportunities arise, the ecological impacts of historically engineered channels are reduced through measures such as softening hard banks, improving marginal vegetation, creating wetland features and strengthening habitat connectivity. These interventions support improved water quality, climate resilience and natural flood management, alongside biodiversity gains.

Coastal management also forms part of this integrated approach. For the first time, Hastings has achieved both Blue Flag and Seaside Award status for its Marina and Pelham beaches. Presented by Keep Britain Tidy, these awards recognise the highest standards of water quality, environmental management and cleanliness, reflecting the council's commitment to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of its coastline.

In addition, the council is custodian of significant areas of semi-natural grassland, coastal habitats and historic landscapes, including commons, downland and coastal green spaces. Sensitive management — such as appropriate grazing, mowing regimes and scrub control — helps retain their distinctive character while supporting species-rich habitats and contributing to carbon sequestration.

Through its tree management and planting approach, the council also cares for a substantial urban tree stock across streets, parks and housing land. Trees are a critical component of the borough's natural capital, providing wildlife habitat, urban cooling, air quality improvements and health and wellbeing benefits. Street trees and green corridors act as vital stepping stones for species moving through the built environment, helping to connect larger habitat areas across the town.

## **6. Management of our estate**

Hastings Borough Council's property estate includes a diverse range of assets, from industrial rental units, affordable housing with gardens and communal open spaces, to historic and civic buildings. Decisions on how we manage, maintain, renovate and invest in these assets can have significant impacts on existing wildlife and habitats, while also presenting major opportunities to protect and restore nature in the places where people live, work and visit.

Investment in energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures across the estate will support the council's net zero ambitions and help to reduce the impacts of climate change on the natural environment. Improvements in water efficiency, sustainable drainage and rainwater capture will help reduce pressure on local water resources and contribute to more resilient landscapes and green spaces.

By embedding biodiversity considerations into asset management and refurbishment programmes, the council can enhance ecological value across its estate while delivering wider social, environmental and economic benefits.

## **7. Community empowerment**

Through our community engagement and neighbourhood-focused services, Hastings Borough Council works with local residents, Friends Groups and voluntary organisations such as [Groundwork South](#) to support volunteering and community involvement in parks, open spaces and the wider public realm. These partnerships play a vital role in caring for local green spaces, enhancing biodiversity and fostering a strong sense of local stewardship.

As a local authority, the council is often a key partner in locally led initiatives and projects. By raising awareness of biodiversity and nature recovery, and by supporting communities to take action, we can help ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance and appreciate nature are accessible to all.

## **8. Planning and growth**

Through its role as the local planning authority, Hastings Borough Council shapes and delivers planning policies and decisions that guide sustainable growth and

development across the borough. The planning system provides a critical mechanism for protecting existing habitats, avoiding harm to sensitive sites, and securing opportunities to restore and enhance biodiversity.

The emerging [Draft Local Plan](#) is central to this approach, providing the strategic framework through which biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure, habitat protection and nature recovery principles are embedded into spatial planning policy. Once adopted, the Local Plan will strengthen the council’s ability to secure measurable environmental improvements through development and ensure that growth contributes positively to the borough’s ecological network.

By embedding nature recovery, green infrastructure and climate resilience into planning policy and development management, the council can ensure that new development contributes positively to the natural environment. Working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities, statutory bodies and local partners will help address cross-boundary ecological challenges and support a coherent approach to protecting and enhancing nature across the wider area.

## Our policies, objectives and actions for biodiversity

### 9. Nature Emergency

In July 2025 Hastings Borough Council officially declared a Nature Emergency, the successful motion to council ensured joined-up action to reverse biodiversity loss, action to protect our local wildlife, and embed nature recovery into all areas of council policy.

To address this, we have recognised and incorporated the importance of conserving and enhancing local biodiversity across numerous strategies, policies, partnerships and actions.

### 10. Our corporate strategies and policies for biodiversity

Internal strategies and key reports	
<b><u>Hastings Borough Council Corporate Plan 2025-30</u></b>	<b>Priority 4</b> - Take action to tackle the climate and nature crisis
<b><u>Nature Emergency Action Plan – Incorporated within the Hastings Borough Council Climate Strategy 2026</u></b>	<b>Commitment 5</b> – Biodiversity, Blue-Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery:  Commitment to manage more land for nature, explore the creation feasibility of local habitat banks, integrate biodiversity into planning, and restore habitats, strengthen Hastings blue-green infrastructure, community engagement, food growing initiatives

	and investment in green skills to create opportunities for residents to take part in nature recovery and benefit from healthier, greener spaces.
<b><u>Hastings Borough Green and Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy 2023</u></b>	Objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance designated sites and priority habitats</li> <li>• Deliver biodiversity net gain through development</li> <li>• Improve ecological connectivity</li> <li>• Increase community engagement and awareness</li> </ul>
<b><u>Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve Management Plan 2020 - 30</u></b>	The management plan sets out the broad management principles for the reserve for the next 10 years.
<b><u>Draft Local Plan – under development – Regulation 18</u></b>	<p>The Hastings Draft Local Plan sets out how our town will grow and change up to 2041. It provides the framework for delivering new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and community facilities, while protecting Hastings' economy, iconic historic character and natural environment.</p> <p>The policy provides the strategic and high-level context for protecting the distinctive landscape and ecosystems of the borough. The policy ensures the ecosystems and biodiversity of the borough are protected from harm, and where possible strengthened. The policy aims to improve public access for all to nature and green and blue spaces to maximise health and wellbeing benefits.</p>
<b><u>East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy</u></b>	Hastings Borough Council supports and aligns with the East Sussex LNRS by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to habitat opportunity mapping.</li> <li>• Supporting delivery of identified priority habitats.</li> <li>• Working with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary ecological connectivity.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting <a href="#">30x30 national ambition</a>.</li> </ul>
<b><u>2020 Review of Local Wildlife Sites in Hastings Borough</u></b>	This report was commissioned to update the existing evidence base for the borough to inform the review and update of the Hastings Local Plan.
<b><u>Hastings Strategic Open and Play Space Assessment</u></b>	The report published in July 2020 provided evidence within a strategic context to inform any future related strategies, planning policy and developer contributions.
<b><u>Alexandra Park - Bathing Water Management Plans (2016 - 2026)</u></b>	The report's biodiversity-related objective is to restore and manage Alexandra Park's streams, ponds, and wetlands so they function as natural water-treatment systems that support healthier, more diverse aquatic and riparian habitats.

## 11. Our visions and objectives for biodiversity

### Vision:

Our vision is that by 2030 Hastings will deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the borough, contributing to local, regional and national nature recovery ambitions. The extent, condition and connectivity of priority habitats will be improved, and populations of priority species supported to recover.

High-quality wildlife habitats along the coast, in our parks and gardens, woodlands, wetlands, road verges and urban spaces will be protected, enhanced and better connected, forming part of a coherent Local Nature Recovery Network across Hastings and the wider East Sussex landscape.

Everyone who lives, works or studies in Hastings will have access to high-quality natural green and blue spaces close to where they live or work. There will be greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity, with clear opportunities for residents, businesses, landowners and institutions to get involved in nature recovery, community growing, skills development and local monitoring.

Our strategies and actions support Hastings Borough Council's declaration of a Nature Emergency and provides the strategic framework to accelerate nature recovery while delivering health, wellbeing, climate resilience and economic benefits for the borough.

### Strategic objectives:

Action to protect and enhance biodiversity in Hastings was set out in the 2023 Green and Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy completed by the Surrey

Wildlife Trust. This set out the below ten key objectives, to support green, blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain for Hastings.

Number	Objective
1	<b>Protect, restore and enhance</b> the GBI network
2	<b>Create</b> high-quality multi-functional GBI
3	Provide and encourage <b>community</b> growing spaces.
4	Increase <b>connectivity</b> of green and blue infrastructure for people and wildlife
5	Maximise <b>tree protection</b> and encourage planting the <b>right tree in the right location</b>
6	Deliver an ambitious biodiversity net gain target
7	Minimise urban heating
8	Incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity opportunities across all developments.
9	Provide benefits to the community through inclusive designs for all users, irrespective of social group or abilities and promote health and well-being across the GBI network
10	Work with partners to build and secure funding, effective governance and stewardship for new and existing green and blue infrastructure to ensure their long-term <b>sustainability</b>

The above objectives were strengthened in 2025, following the council’s nature emergency motion which introduced additional actions within a [Nature Emergency Action Plan](#) for the council to work towards to protect and enhance biodiversity across Hastings. These are the key drivers of action of biodiversity action taken in Hastings.

To deliver this vision, Hastings Borough Council will continue to work towards the following strategic objectives:

- i. Secure measurable biodiversity net gain across the borough, supporting the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and national targets such as [30x30](#).
- ii. Protect, restore and connect designated sites and priority habitats, ensuring they are in good ecological condition and resilient to climate change.
- iii. Embed biodiversity across all council functions, ensuring nature recovery is integral to planning, development, procurement, regeneration and service delivery.
- iv. Strengthen policy and planning mechanisms so that new development contributes positively to nature recovery, including the use of biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage.

- v. Maximise the biodiversity potential of council-owned land and assets, including parks, open spaces, allotments, community gardens, road verges, watercourses, buildings and tree stock, while balancing their multifunctional use.
- vi. Empower communities, businesses and partners to play an active role in nature recovery through collaboration, volunteering, community growing, citizen science and behaviour change.
- vii. Establish long-term monitoring and accountability, using surveys, indicators and transparent reporting to track progress, identify emerging threats and guide future action.

## 12. Our partnership for biodiversity

We recognise that nature recovery cannot be delivered without working in collaboration with others. The table below lists some of our key partnerships for nature.

<b>External / partnership strategies and actions</b>	
<p><b><u>Groundwork South</u></b></p> 	<p>Across Hastings, Groundwork South runs Greener Futures, offering family nature-based sessions and well-being conservation volunteering and allotment gardening. We also work in Combe Valley Countryside Park and Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve where they support with habitat management, conservation volunteering, education, and community engagement, school programs, and events like Creative Mondays. Both parks support biodiversity and provide inclusive access to nature through hands-on activities and environmental education. They also manage Bale House Visitor Centre, the first public straw-bale building in the South East and the Discovery Centre in Combe Valley.</p>
<p><b><u>Friends of Hastings Country Park and Nature Reserve</u></b></p>	

<p><b><u>St Helen's Park Preservation Society</u></b></p>	 <p><b>ST HELEN'S PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY</b></p>
<p><b><u>Friends of Alexandra Park</u></b></p>	 <p><b>FRIENDS OF ALEXANDRA PARK</b></p>
<p><b><u>Alexandra Park Greenhouse</u></b></p>	 <p><b>ALEXANDRA PARK GREENHOUSE</b> CHARITY NUMBER: 1177523</p>
<p><b><u>Sussex Wildlife Trust</u></b></p>	 <p><b>Sussex Wildlife Trust</b></p>
<p><b><u>Hastings Voluntary Action</u></b> – Green Space Volunteers</p>	 <p><b>community nature connections</b></p>

### 13. Our actions for biodiversity (2021 – 2025)

During the 2021–2025 reporting period, Hastings Borough Council delivered a range of biodiversity conservation and enhancement actions across council-managed land and through collaborative partnerships. Key achievements include securing a long-term Countryside Stewardship funding agreement that will support habitat restoration and diversification at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, designating new Local Nature Reserve status for the ecologically valuable Hastings Castle green space, and enabling volunteer-led planting and habitat enhancement activities with community partners.

The council's [Climate Strategy and Nature Emergency Action Plan](#) provide the strategic framework for embedding biodiversity outcomes throughout land management, blue-green infrastructure planning and operational practices. These actions are complemented by strengthened planning policy through the [Draft Local](#)

[Plan](#), which reinforces statutory biodiversity net gain requirements and long-term ecological management. The combined efforts of the council, statutory partners and voluntary groups are contributing to measurable improvements in habitat quality and connectivity, increasing opportunities for wildlife and supporting community engagement in nature recovery.

In accordance with [Section 40](#) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), Hastings Borough Council has taken the following steps during the reporting period to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the exercise of its functions.

#### **14. Land and open space management**

During the reporting period, the council advanced a range of habitat management and enhancement initiatives to strengthen biodiversity across the borough.

In partnership with Groundwork South, the council secured funding through Natural England's Species Recovery Programme to deliver a [two-year project supporting native bee species](#). Wildflower areas are being established at sites including Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, West Hill, Summerfields Woods and Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. These works are complemented by habitat enhancements such as native hedgerow planting and the creation of bee banks. Summer surveys will monitor changes in local bee populations to assess the project's impact.

The council also secured a [ten-year Countryside Stewardship agreement](#) from the UK Government to support enhanced management and biodiversity outcomes at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve. This funding will enable the restoration of threatened habitats, the transition of arable land to wood pasture, diversification of grassland flora, and the restoration of heathland and former quarry habitats.

Conservation grazing and wider land management improvements have continued at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, with less intensive agricultural practices helping to create conditions in which threatened native flora and fauna can recover. In addition, a new Local Nature Reserve is being (?) has been designated at Hastings Castle and the surrounding green space. This recognises the site's ecological value and strengthens statutory protection for urban biodiversity.

Volunteer-led habitat improvement work has also played an important role, delivered in collaboration with partners including Groundwork South. Activities have included planting wildflower areas, establishing native hedgerows, and creating features such as bare earth scrapes and scalloped woodland edges to increase habitat diversity and ecological resilience.

#### **15. Tree planting and urban forestry**

The council's preparations and commitments under the Nature Emergency declaration include expanded tree planting and green infrastructure work, with the aim of improving biodiversity and increasing urban woodland cover. While specific

tree counts are not yet reported, this commitment sits alongside core biodiversity actions outlined in the Climate Strategy.

## **16. Watercourses and blue infrastructure**

The council's Climate Strategy and Nature Emergency Action Plan framework embed nature-based solutions that link blue-green infrastructure improvements with biodiversity outcomes, including measures to alleviate flood risk.

## **17. Estate management**

Across council-managed land (including parks, cemeteries and road verges), wildlife-friendly practices such as reduced chemical use and selective mowing regimes have been promoted as part of the council's broader biodiversity agenda.

## **18. Cemetery**

Cemetery areas have been allowed to naturalise, creating diverse habitats that support pollinators and other wildlife.

## **19. Planning and Development Management**

While formal quantified reporting for individual planning applications during this period is not yet published, the [Draft Local Plan](#) and existing planning policies reinforce the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain in line with statutory requirements. Policy DM5 of the Draft Local Plan requires developments to achieve minimum net gain and long-term management through ecological statements and 30-year monitoring plans.

The council continues to embed biodiversity considerations in pre-application advice, development management and local planning policy alignment.

## **20. Community and partnerships**

The council and partners have delivered community-focused biodiversity work including:

- **Funding from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme**, delivered in partnership with Groundwork South to provide additional food resources and nesting habitats for pollinators.
- **Support for volunteer habitat creation and planting events**, which have engaged local residents and groups in practical conservation activities.
- **Ongoing collaboration** with local environmental organisations and stewardship partners to support projects at Hastings Country Park and other nature reserves, strengthening landscape-scale biodiversity outcomes.

## **Future actions (2026–2031)**

### **21. The ambition of the Emerging Local Plan**

The emerging Hastings Local Plan represents a significant step change in the council's approach to biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable growth. Once adopted, it will provide the primary statutory mechanism through which biodiversity conservation and enhancement is secured across the borough.

The Plan embeds biodiversity as a central component of spatial strategy rather than as a secondary environmental consideration. It strengthens policy requirements for biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure provision, protection of designated sites and priority habitats, and integration of nature-based solutions within new development. Through its development management policies, the Plan will require proposals to demonstrate measurable ecological enhancement, long-term habitat management and alignment with local and national nature recovery priorities.

Importantly, the Local Plan supports delivery of the East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the national [30x30](#) ambition by safeguarding ecological networks, identifying opportunities for habitat restoration and ensuring that development contributes positively to the borough's green and blue infrastructure network. The Plan also reinforces climate adaptation objectives by promoting multifunctional green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems and urban greening measures that provide benefits for biodiversity, flood mitigation, cooling and community wellbeing.

The ambition of the Local Plan extends beyond compliance with statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. It seeks to ensure that growth in Hastings is genuinely nature-positive, delivering ecological connectivity and resilience across an urban and coastal environment with significant environmental sensitivities. Through robust policy wording, clear expectations for developers, and strengthened monitoring mechanisms, the Plan will provide a long-term framework to secure measurable environmental improvement alongside housing and economic development.

Once adopted, the Local Plan will therefore be a key delivery vehicle for the council's Nature Emergency declaration and biodiversity duty obligations, embedding environmental enhancement at the heart of decision-making and shaping a more resilient, biodiverse and sustainable Hastings to 2040 and beyond.

### **Strategic delivery framework**

#### **22. Future action will be guided by:**

- The adopted Local Plan (upon adoption).
- The Nature Emergency Action Plan.
- The Green and Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy.
- The East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

The council will embed biodiversity objectives within corporate planning, service delivery and capital investment programmes.

### **23. Protecting and enhancing designated sites:**

The council will:

- Maintain all council-managed Local Nature Reserves under active ecological management in accordance with approved management plans.
- Work with Natural England and partners to support favourable condition status of SSSIs within the borough.
- Review and update management plans for key reserves, including Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve.

### **24. Habitat creation and restoration:**

Actions include:

- Continued delivery of Countryside Stewardship habitat restoration projects.
- Creation of species-rich grassland, scrub mosaics and woodland edge habitats.
- Expansion of pollinator-friendly planting across parks, verges and cemeteries.
- Identification of opportunities for wetland creation and enhancement along watercourses.
- Increasing habitat connectivity through green corridors and stepping-stone habitats.

### **25. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):**

The council will strengthen implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Biodiversity Net Gain, actions will include:

- Ensuring 100% of applicable planning permissions secure at least 10% statutory net gain.
- Encouraging developments to exceed the statutory minimum where feasible.
- Securing robust 30-year habitat management plans via Section 106 agreements.
- Establishing monitoring processes to track delivery of biodiversity units over time.
- Exploring opportunities for strategic off-site habitat creation within the borough.
- Reviewing whether council-owned land could contribute to habitat banks where appropriate.

### **26. Embedding biodiversity across council functions**

To ensure compliance with the strengthened biodiversity duty, biodiversity will be embedded across all service areas.

The council will:

- Integrate biodiversity considerations into asset management, regeneration and procurement processes.
- Review grounds maintenance contracts to ensure biodiversity-friendly practices are embedded.
- Minimise pesticide use where practicable.
- Incorporate nature-based solutions within climate adaptation and flood risk management schemes.
- Provide training for officers and members on biodiversity legislation and policy.

## **27. Tree canopy and urban greening:**

Hastings has a tree canopy cover of 24.1%, which is higher than the 12.8% average for England, based on 2023 analysis for [Friends of the Earth](#) by [Terra Sulis](#).

Recognising the importance of urban trees for biodiversity, climate resilience and public health, the council will:

- Seek opportunities to increase tree canopy cover across the borough, prioritising areas of low canopy and high deprivation.
- Seek to protect veteran and mature trees through planning and management policies.
- Promote community tree planting initiatives and the creation of micro-woodlands, working closely with neighbouring councils.

## **28. Supporting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS):**

The council will align its spatial planning and land management decisions with the East Sussex LNRS by:

- Identifying LNRS priority areas within the borough.
- Supporting habitat creation in mapped opportunity areas.
- Facilitating cross-boundary ecological connectivity.
- Sharing monitoring data where appropriate.

## **29. Community engagement and participation:**

Community involvement will remain central to biodiversity recovery. The council will:

- Look to expand volunteer habitat management programmes.
- Support citizen science and species monitoring initiatives.
- Promote biodiversity awareness campaigns.

- Support community growing and food resilience projects that deliver ecological benefits.
- Improve access to high-quality natural greenspace across the borough.

### **30. Addressing risks and climate pressures:**

The council will continue to respond to emerging risks, including:

- Coastal erosion and sea level rise.
- Urban development pressure.
- Recreational disturbance impacts.
- Invasive non-native species.
- Climate-related habitat stress.

Nature-based solutions and adaptive management approaches will be prioritised to build long-term ecological resilience.

### **31. Forward commitment**

Through these actions, Hastings Borough Council commits to delivering measurable biodiversity enhancement and support the recovery of nature locally and across East Sussex.

The council recognises that nature recovery is a long-term undertaking requiring sustained investment, partnership working and continuous improvement. The period 2026–2031 will focus on scaling up delivery, strengthening monitoring and embedding biodiversity at the heart of decision-making.

## **Biodiversity Net Gain information and reporting**

### **32. Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations:**

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements came into force for major development in February 2024 and for small sites in April 2024. During the reporting period, Hastings Borough Council established internal processes to implement these requirements, including validation checks, ecological review procedures and securing biodiversity gain plans through planning conditions and legal agreements where applicable.

Officer training and procedural updates have been undertaken to ensure compliance with statutory biodiversity net gain requirements under [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#).

### **33. BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans approved:**

During this initial implementation period, no biodiversity gain plans were formally approved that resulted in measurable biodiversity units being secured. This reflects

the transitional nature of the reporting period following commencement of mandatory BNG requirements.

### **34. How we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period**

The council will:

- Ensure all applicable planning permissions secure at least the statutory 10% biodiversity net gain, in accordance with national requirements.
- Require submission and approval of biodiversity gain plans prior to commencement of development, as required by legislation.
- Secure 30-year habitat management and monitoring through planning conditions and Section 106 agreements where biodiversity units are delivered on-site or via bespoke off-site agreements. Where units are purchased from a registered habitat bank, the 30-year management and monitoring will be secured and undertaken by the habitat bank operator in accordance with the approved national framework.
- Develop monitoring procedures to track delivery of biodiversity units.
- Explore opportunities for strategic off-site habitat provision within the borough.