

Biodiversity Reporting Duty Report.

January 2026 - 2031

January 2026
Version 1

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Introduction

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduces.

This means that, as a public authority, we must:

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

This report outlines our approach to protecting biodiversity and how we intend to meet our Biodiversity reporting duties.

Background

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' which requires all public authorities in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Defra has published guidance on complying with the biodiversity duty.

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

The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23), published in January 2023, sets out the government's plans for improving the natural environment with the apex goal recognised as "improving nature and halting the decline in our biodiversity to achieve thriving plants and wildlife". This is recognised as crucial to enabling all the other relevant goals to be achieved.

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 2023, 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 conditions, securing their wildlife value for the long term.

This biodiversity report documents the policies and actions Milton Keynes City Council has carried out to comply with our biodiversity duty.

Timescales

We published our first consideration in 2025, by 1 January 2026 we are required to publish the first full report. After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period.

By law, the report must include:

- a summary of the action you've taken to comply with the biodiversity duty.
- how you plan to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period
- any other information you consider appropriate.

Reports from local planning authorities must also include the following biodiversity net gain (BNG) information:

- the actions we have carried out to meet BNG obligations.
- details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans approved.
- how we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period.

Section 1: Policies, objectives and actions

In this section, we explain the policies and objectives that have been set to meet the biodiversity duty and the actions completed that benefit biodiversity

Policies

Milton Keynes aims to be the world's "Greenest City", healthy functioning ecosystems and habitats are an essential part of this aspiration. The loss of biodiversity affects our lives in many ways, from the insects that pollinate our food to the green spaces that enhance our resident's health and wellbeing. The Council has a key role to play in conserving and enhancing biodiversity, through:

- Developing and implementing external and internal policies and strategies.
- Administering the planning system.
- Managing land and buildings including public open space, nature reserves, civic buildings, commercial property, and infrastructure.
- Engaging with business and the public.
- Conducting research and managing information.
- Procurement (goods and services).
- Implementing economic, environmental, and social initiatives, projects and programmes.
- Leading by example

Whilst the introduction of an enhanced duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity is a new requirement for public authorities in the exercise of their functions the Council does have several existing policies and objectives that show how we are, and will continue to, meet the biodiversity duty.

These documents help us to conserve and enhance our natural environment, landscape character, and local distinctiveness. Also helping us protect wildlife, encourage community involvement, promote our parks, and open spaces and promote sustainable development, they help shape our borough to be well designed, accessible and valued. These are listed below:

- Milton Keynes Local Plan: MK City Plan 2050 – At the time of writing a new plan is subject to Regulation 19 being and a draft is out for consulted, supported by [evidence, base](#) including:
 - [Milton Keynes Nature Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy \(2024\)](#)
 - [Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment \(May 2022\)](#)
 - [Open Space Assessment report \(January 2023\)](#)

Milton Keynes City Council: [Commissioning Net Zero](#). categorize activities into five pillars:

1. Economy: Driving a "circular economy" and encouraging the growth of green jobs and local materials production.
2. Energy: Transitioning to low-cost renewable sources. Significant projects include the Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park, which generates energy for over 11,000 homes
3. Emissions: Focusing on sustainable transport. This includes a transition to a fully electric waste and landscaping fleet and future [Mass Rapid Transit](#)
4. Environment: Protecting the "City of Trees" heritage. Policies include
 - the Urban Tree Action Plan to increase canopy cover.
 - revised grass-cutting schedule to boost wildflower growth and biodiversity.
5. Engagement: Working with the MK Climate Action Network and local parishes to ensure residents and businesses take part in the net-zero journey

The [Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#) Provides clear guidance on protecting and enhancing habitats within proposed developments.

Biosecurity Policy outlines Milton Keynes City Council's plans to improve plant biosecurity through reducing the spread of invasive non-native plant species, injurious weeds, and plant diseases across open spaces owned or managed by Milton Keynes City Council.

Since the early 2000s there has been an increase in the number of non-native invasive plant and animal species, pests, and diseases in the UK. Climate change and other factors are making it easier for some invasive non-native species (INNS) to become established and spread. INNS are a major cause for biodiversity loss and species extinction, affecting the health of habitats and causing significant changes to ecosystems and landscapes. Some INNS bring risks to property (Japanese Knotweed) and others pose risks to human health (Giant

Hogweed). There is a need to address these risks within the management of open spaces and the environment.

Pesticides Policy reinforces the management of ‘pests’ by the Authority within the city and the appropriate and proportional application of management techniques to combat them. The impacts can vary in severity from being merely unsightly through to building damage or loss of native biodiversity. It demonstrates the appropriate balance of utilising pest management and the methods used against the relative benefits provided of doing so.

Objectives

The biodiversity objectives focus on structured goals designed to protect, restore, and sustainably manage the biological variety across ecosystems, species, and genetic levels. To focus the objectives Milton Keynes City Council have commissioned studies with input from partners, stakeholders and the wider community to focus activity:

[“The Greenest City in the World”](#) outline the physical and natural environment core policy vision with accompanying [Action Plan](#)

The [Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan \(BAP\)](#) outlines the principal issues affecting wildlife in the area, and sets out targets for the restoration of habitats.

[Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes](#). A collaboratively developed vision for restoring and enhancing nature across our area. The strategy sets out:

- Priorities and Measures
- Species shortlist and niches
- Target areas for important species

[Green Infrastructure Opportunities Mapping](#) The mapping highlights the variety of larger, landscape-scale opportunities for green infrastructure.

These studies have

- Conservation of Biological Diversity: Identify and protect existing species populations
- Sustainable Utilization: Managing ecosystems so their productivity is maintained while meeting human needs.
- Monitoring and Assessment: Using well-defined indicators to measure habitat quality, species abundance, and the impact of stressors like climate change

Actions

This report provides further examples of how matters relating to biodiversity are translated into actions on the ground via the Council's Environment team:

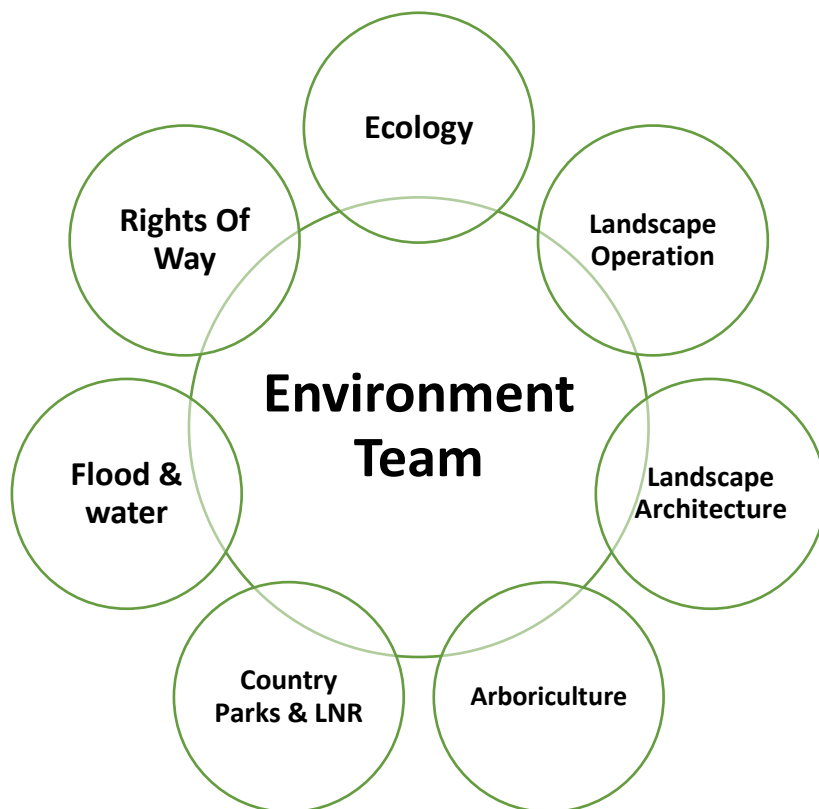


Fig 1. Environment Team. Teams work as units and as part of a wider holistic unit, across MKCC and interact with stakeholders and citizens.

Ecology – The team provide consultation responses for planning applications and support planning officers to ensure the best outcome for nature. This includes monitoring of biodiversity related to development, the detail of which is recorded on the Mycelium database. The team also input into strategic projects that impact Milton Keynes i.e. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy, East West Rail and MK to Bedford canal link. The team supports other parts of the Environment Team with advice, support and surveys.

Milton Keynes has one Local Nature Reserve: The Blue Lagoon. The team are working to a management plan to rejuvenate the reserve. Alongside this they are working on other habitat creation and management sites.

Delivered 2025

- 435 Planning consultations
- 1 pond restored Giffard Park and supporting local friends' group.
- 1 kilometre of native hedge planted and restored.

Since 2018 a dedicated officer has administers the [District Licence Scheme](#) for great crested newts. This licensing partnership is regulated by Natural England and allows us to assess and licence development projects that impact Great Crested Newts or their habitats.

Development projects seeking to use this licence undergo independent assessment of their impacts and make an impact-proportionate financial contribution to the licensing scheme. These contributions are used to secure the delivery, management, and monitoring of expertly designed compensatory habitat through the creation and restoration of ponds and terrestrial habitat through the [Newt Conservation Partnership](#).

Delivered (2018 – 2025)

- 45 clean water ponds created.
- 6 ponds restored.
- Over 137 hectares of high-quality terrestrial habitat created in Milton Keynes.

The team networks, supports and delivers alongside other groups, including resident groups, Parks Trust, Natural Environment Partnership, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and Buckinghamshire ([BBWOT](#)) and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre ([BMERC](#)).

Landscape operations - Manage the parks and open spaces belonging to the council through a contract with Glendale. Operational lead on the reduction of herbicides and trialling novel methods, removal and control of invasive plants such as Japanese Knot weed on council land and creation of meadows and other habitats.

Delivered 2025

- Worked to support volunteers and the community – Community trees and MK Green Gym .
- Planted 1000m² of new wildlife meadow with additional seasonal bulbs.

Landscape architects – as well as commenting on planning application regarding the visual impact on the landscape officers also seek to ensure applications enhance the green and blue infrastructure.

Along side this the team designs schemes for internal clients such as landscape and highways. Again, they seek to include biodiversity and sustainability as a key component.

Delivered 2025

- 466 planning consultations include visual impact assessment.
- Urban tree planting scheme utilising tree crates to prevent compaction and contain roots and absorb run off.
- Hundreds oof trees and native shrubs planted through landscape projects.

Arboriculture - provides consultation responses for planning applications and support planning officers to ensure the best outcome for trees and woodland. A register of Tree Protection orders is held to ensure the most notable trees have the highest level of protection.

The team inspects, records and carries out work on trees to create a sustainable tree canopy to deliver the widest range of ecosystem benefits for citizens. The team identifies locations and suitable species for tree planting schemes.

Delivered

- 2025 - 10 Forest gardens – 6000 trees – targeting low canopy areas
- 2025 – 300 Standard trees

Country Parks and Local Nature Reserve - A small team that works with others across the service to maintain Emberton country Park and the Blue Lagoon Local Nature reserve. The team manages and enhances the biodiversity on site and engages with the public on the value of the natural history.

Delivered 2025

Emberton Country Park

- 60th anniversary event, thousands of people came to celebrate
- 11 volunteer events carry out practical habitat works
- Moth group – once a month April to September – Bats group survey box monthly
- Wildlife walks – Bats, Dragonflies and Dawn chorus

Blue Lagoon Local Nature Reserve

- Red Light event – annual event where the Emergency services – Police, Fire and ambulance attend along with other departments of the council. Includes wildlife activities
- 3 ponds restored – these shallow ponds had not been dredged in over 20 years and were in danger of becoming dry – good populations of Great Crested Newts and Odonata.
- Tree works carried out to diversify the canopy structure and increase surveillance

Flood and Water Management Team -Milton Keynes City Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority (under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010) with a responsibility for managing the following types of flooding:

- surface water Flooding – this includes flooding from rainfall runoff from surfaces such as roads, roofs and patios.
- ordinary watercourses – this includes flooding from drains and ditches but excludes main rivers that are managed by the Environment Agency.

- groundwater flooding – this includes flooding caused by heavy and sustained levels of rainfall capable of increasing the groundwater table.

Flood and Water Management Team works on a number of projects to improve Milton Keynes' resilience and protect it from future flooding. The team acts as a technical experts and support various teams across the Council in delivering their statutory and non-statutory work alongside collaborating with external partners

Delivered 2023- 2025

- 600 (2023), 397 (2024), 327 (2025) planning consultations responded (statutory and non-statutory)
- 4 rain gardens and SuDS planters to reduce urban flooding (Coffee Hall and Cold Harbour School) and associated tree planting in Coffee Hall.
- feasibility studies which will lead into a delivery of flood alleviation schemes.

Rights of Way - The team manage 550km of public footpaths, bridleways and byways in Milton Keynes. The network is a keyway for the public to access the wider countryside and enjoy the biodiversity that it offers.

Through the adopted [Rights Of Way Improvement](#) plan we will:

- Encouraging healthy lifestyle choices through providing opportunities for exercise, leisure, open-air recreation and promotion of active travel.
- Improved linkages between rights of way to avoid the need to travel along roads to reach one right of way from another.
- Addressing accessibility issues and other barriers that those with mobility problems, the visually impaired, and under-represented groups face when using the public rights of way network.
- Coordinates the Local access Forum (Laf)

Delivered 2025

- 38 planning application responded.
- 5 bridges replaced or enhanced to improve access.
- 5 Kissing gates installed to replace styles and improve access.

The wider council

This report also includes projects, actions and initiatives that the Council has completed, or continues to deliver either alone or in partnership with others, which benefit biodiversity. In recent years.

We hope that this investment in the natural environment of Milton Keynes ensures these projects have a lasting positive impact and legacy for our communities, contributing to the quality of place, biodiversity and those ecosystem services that contribute positively towards people's health and well-being.

Section 2: Future actions

In this section we explain how MKCC plans to fulfil the biodiversity duty over the next 5 years.

The plan covers a broad range of natural environment projects focusing on species recovery and developing our wildlife corridors, delivering Biodiversity Net Gain, improving access to green space, tree and hedgerow planting, and supporting monitoring actions that will need to be put into place to ensure these actions are achieved. Responsibilities and timescales for carrying out actions are allocated by the Climate Change & Sustainability Group.

The Council will make use of available funding streams through the biodiversity funding received prior to the mandatory requirements, schemes via statutory agencies such as DEFRA and charitable sources to apply measures for better outcomes for biodiversity and will seek those that also deliver multiple benefits for both our people and wildlife. These are necessary to support some of the landscape-level measures required.

The Council will also make use of research agencies and universities where these assist us in review of and benefits of both strategic and directed aims to benefit biodiversity and that support natural capital. We will also work with all stakeholders to ensure a cooperative approach, eliminate duplication or conflict, learn from one and other and share in achievements.

Effective delivery of the plan depends on sustainable long-term management of the natural environment. This applies to all natural assets, including parks and green spaces and all other Council-owned and/or maintained land to ensure such areas can develop their full natural capital potential. For example, MKCC commitment to reduce the use of herbicide and action the bio-security protocols detailed with in the policy.

All new projects must include appropriate funding for maintenance and management for a minimum five years. The table below summarises the Council's current and planned actions that contribute towards the Biodiversity Duty and future actions which will be considered going forward but dependant on necessary funding or resource being identified.

Table 1. Future actions and outcomes

Biodiversity Duty - Thematic topic area	Planned actions that contribute towards meeting the objectives and policies (either alone or in partnership)	Expected outcomes
1 Planning and Development including Biodiversity Net Gain	• MK City Plan 2050 being prepared: - ensure biodiversity policies including those for the conservation of designated and protected international, national and local sites, habitats and species of importance and retained and enhanced where needed. Seek to protect and enhance ecological networks and to protect and enhance green infrastructure generally. Including open spaces. • Update and maintain the TPO register and tree survey. • Deliver high-quality in-house ecology advice including the assessment of planning applications in relation to ecological impacts and net gains in biodiversity. • Milton Keynes Infrastructure Study & Strategy (MKISS) • Seek opportunities to create a regional forest linking Marston Vale with Rockingham Forest along the Yardley Whittington Ridge	• Planning policies and Development Management will continue to protect and enhance habitat, species, ecological networks, trees and woodlands, green infrastructure and ensure BNG. • Ensure all relevant planning applications are treated in accordance with the Regulations. • Protection and maintenance of the most valuable trees and woodland in the borough through the imposition and assessment of Tree Preservation Orders • Ensure monitoring and enforcement of mandatory BNG through Mycelia • Delivery of new infrastructure in line with MKSS: - One new country park - Campbell Park green bridge to CMK - Waterway Park - River valley Linear Park • Regional forest to maximise biodiversity and link key habitats.
2 Education	• Citizen Sciences elements • Schools • Businesses • Parish and Town Councils	• Work with the Open University on projects such as TREEZILLA; TREELAB and PHD projects. • Support schools with assembly presentations,

	• Local biodiversity – resident projects	school grounds for biodiversity. • Run seminars and work with NEP partners. • Work with parish Councils to enhance local biodiversity • Encourage and support school visits to wildlife sites.
3 Improving our knowledge and monitoring of biodiversity Council owned land and buildings Positive management to enhance biodiversity and ensure that existing habitats and species are safeguarded and managed appropriately. To maximise the potential of the Council's estate - buildings, parks, open spaces, watercourses and tree stock etc to conserve and enhance biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs.	• Management of parks and green spaces for nature including the creation of areas of new habitats such as wildflower meadows and woodlands • Native and sustainably UK sourced trees and plant species are used in new planting. • Wildflower planting – Grid roads • Reduced the use of herbicides and pesticides. • No use of peat • Beneficial mowing (low mow) management practices • Beneficial woodland management practices as set out in Urban tree Policy. • Making successful bids for external funding to deliver biodiversity enhancements, for example the Local authority tree Fund • Great Crested Newt Monitoring and creation of new ponds	• Assess the potential for enhancing small scale habitats in Council owned land and buildings, including nest and roosting boxes, green walls, green or brown roofs. • Establish a programme of species and habitat surveys to record and monitor the ecological baseline for Council owned/managed land drawing on previous survey work and existing ecological data and emerging data through the LNRS to identify the need for further survey work to fill data gaps. • Using the data above, assess the potential for creating new and/or enhanced spaces for nature recovery, and movement between, within our parks and open/green spaces (links with the LNRS and BNG). • Bid for additional funding to deliver local nature recovery projects on council owned land. • Scope the potential for additional management and maintenance regimes for our parks and green spaces that maximise

		potential for biodiversity, carbon storage and sequestration. • Assess the condition and review the management of Council owned sites that are protected or designated as being of biological importance – Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites.
Improving our knowledge and monitoring of biodiversity Understand the existing extent and condition of our habitats and species to inform actions to increase their quality, diversity, and extent; enable the impact of Council activities to be measured; and identify any new threats and opportunities across the borough.	• Natural Capital and ecosystem services mapped. • Lidar data of tree canopy cover • Great Crested Newt risk mapping and compensation pond creation through district licencing • BMERC data collection and supporting recorders.	• Review and update biodiversity evidence base as necessary • Establish a programme of species and habitat surveys to record and monitor the ecological baseline for Council owned/managed land drawing opportunities to use new EDNA techniques and citizen science projects. • Evidence Base and information held by BMERC and emerging. data through the LNRS to identify the need for further survey work to fill data gaps. • Scope the potential for increasing the amount of land designated as Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in the borough aiming to meet the Natural England target of at least one hectare of LNR per 1,000 people) • Work with the Parks Trust and others to identify tree pest and diseases and respond in a coordinated way. • Undertake EDNA surveys of ponds on all species to increase evidence base.

4 Projects and Partnerships Working with others on joint biodiversity related strategies, initiatives, and projects, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	• Establish a Biodiversity Fund to deliver biodiversity enhancement at a range of scales. • Joint member of the Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Local Nature Partnership • Work in partnership with the Parks Trust and continue to fund a joint Green Infrastructure officer. • Work with and support parishes and Town Councils to enhance habitats and species. • Work with NGOs such as The Conservation Volunteers, Green Gym and MK Trees. • Develop the Railway Walk and associated assets into a LNR. • Work with Partners to develop a green grid for Bletchley linking key green and blue infrastructure for the benefit of biodiversity and citizens. • Provide planning advice when requested to ensure high quality schemes deliver for biodiversity. • Support and input into strategic infrastructure projects such as East West Rail, Mk to Bedford waterways project.	• Work with Parish, Town Councils, the Parks Trust, NGO's to deliver biodiversity projects. • Continue to work in partnership with Buckingham County Council to implement the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which will provide a strategic overview of the habitats throughout the County; and ensuring the LNRS is well understood across the Council and complements other relevant plans and strategies. • Continue to develop opportunities with the Parks Trust to enhance Biodiversity and mitigate the impacts on the two SSSI's. • Continue to collaborate with statutory agencies such as Natural England, The Environment Agency, The Canal, and Rivers Trust together with partners including The Forestry Commission. • Continue to support organisations who are working with and supporting communities to improve green spaces, habitat and species diversity such as Parks Friends groups, Green Gym and MK Trees
5 Workforce Development Training and Education for councillors and council employees to ensure that there is a sound understanding of biodiversity across the Council	• Biodiversity Officer post to manage the biodiversity fund and monitor new developments. • Training sessions for planning colleagues on BNG and species.	• Ensure compliance with BNG. • Raise general awareness, using available guidance and resources. Integrating biodiversity into staff briefings and, where necessary, providing specific training.

		For example, all staff and Members to complete e-training such as biodiversity e-learning for councils Local Government Association • Remind staff of volunteering policy and opportunities to undertake voluntary conservation work.
6	Climate and Environment	• In 2019 Milton Keynes City Council agreed a climate emergency and is making strong progress on reducing its own emissions alongside ensuring city development is carefully considered and sustainable, such as requiring resilient designs that use zero carbon building materials and that make it easier for residents to keep • PLAN MK is developing a Climate and Environment Topic paper which will cover how the environment and climate change will be considered. • The real-world context and key drivers for change of this area of planning. • Emerging position with the information on key evidence base work we are preparing to inform future policy development. • Potential policy options and solutions proposed (best practice options review). • Promote nature-based systems through Ecology SPD and other policies.

Section 3: Biodiversity net gain information

This section of the report includes information on biodiversity net gain. It includes:

- a summary of the actions undertaken to meet biodiversity net gain obligations.
- details of biodiversity gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans approved.
- a summary of how the Council plan to meet biodiversity net gain obligations in the next reporting period.

MKCC's ongoing commitment to biodiversity conservation is a statutory duty strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, requiring both the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. We have taken action to meet biodiversity net gain (BNG) obligations through comprehensive local planning policies, strategic initiatives and the implementation of biodiversity monitoring through [Verna's Mycelium](#) software.

Summary of BNG

As of January 2026, there have been 58 applications which have triggered BNG through the development management process. Of these 6 have progressed to submitting a Biodiversity gain plan with an overall increase of 4.2 units. Of these 4 applicants have moved to the monitoring stage and have paid monitoring fees. No application has affected an irreplaceable habitat, a complete report is attached in the annex.

Several applications have been noted to provide a net loss of greater than 50%, to be mitigated off-site, we will be working with developers to minimise this further and ensure sensible decisions are made in relation to delivery of Council requirements e.g. strategic housing allocations and biodiversity losses and impacts; this must be a combined approach to achieve sensitive developments that incorporate the objectives of the LNRS. This will be reviewed for the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

Policy and Strategy Actions

Early adoption of no net loss within the Local Plan adopted in 2019, a precursor to the mandatory BNG rules introduced in 2024 has establish local experience and protocols for assessing ecological impacts and securing gains.

Mandatory BNG implementation: Since the national BNG mandate came into force for major developments in February 2024, we require planning applicants to submit Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Council is responsible for:

- Processing applications to ensure they meet the 10% BNG target.
- Securing off-site biodiversity delivery through legal agreements (Section 106).
- Monitoring compliance over a minimum of 30 years.

Mitigation hierarchy: The Council ensures developers follow the mitigation hierarchy, which prioritizes avoiding harm to habitats. On-site gains are pursued first, followed by off-site units and then, as a last resort, the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits.

Habitat banks: MKCC has little land either available or suitable for Biodiversity off setting. Presently there is one habitat bank operating in the Borough and interest has been shown by others. However, given the nature and scale of developments in Milton Keynes it is considered likely that most will avoid the best habitats and enhance and create within the development. This is the preferred option, it follows the mitigation hierarchy and ensures people can live with and in nature. This must be appropriately managed, and ecology and landscape officers are there to ensure that is the case.

Habitat creation and enhancement: MKCC implements habitat projects directly and through developer contributions. Actions include:

- Establishing and enhancing habitats like wildflower meadows, ponds, and wetlands.
- Using sustainable drainage systems (SUD's) in new developments to create ecological features.

Species recovery: The Council identifies links to specific species recovery plans as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, collaborating with partners to aid priority species like the white-clawed crayfish, water vole, and hazel dormouse.

Green infrastructure and wildlife corridors: Milton Keynes (MK) wildlife corridors are planned linear green spaces, like rivers, hedgerows, and verges, designed to connect important habitats, allowing plants and animals to move safely across the city, enhancing local biodiversity, and supporting the "Greenest City" vision, with initiatives focusing on creating new corridors and improving existing ones through enhanced management for pollinators and other species. They are a key part of MK's planning policy (Plan:MK) to link larger Local Wildlife Sites and support the movement of wildlife.

- **Management:** The Parks Trust maintain most of the wildlife Corridors under a 999-year lease from the Council. However, they also contain features such as the Redways (cycle pedestrian routes) and verges maintained by the highways department and canals managed by the Canals and Rivers Authority.
- **Habitat Enhancement:** Turn everyday spaces, like road verges, into functional habitats.
- **Planning Policy:** Protected and created through planning policy (Plan:MK) to ensure new developments integrate with the natural environment.

Section 4: About Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes was designated as a new town in 1967 to relieve London's overspill, became an independent unitary authority in 1997 and was granted city status in 2022. Known for its innovative grid-road system, extensive green spaces, linear parks, Redways (cycling/walking routes), and economic success with major company Head Quarters, attracting investment and events, while also being one of the UK's fastest-growing areas with ambitious plans for future transport and development.

Milton Keynes has seen significant population growth since its inception, growing from about 60,000 to over 287,000 by the 2021 Census, with continued expansion projected to reach 410,000 by 2050.

Key Characteristics:

- At designation, its 89 km² (34 miles²) area incorporated the existing towns of Bletchley, Wolverton and Stony Stratford along with another fifteen villages and farmland in between, this forms today's urban area. The total area for the city is now 308 km² (119 miles²)
- Approximately 90% of the population lives within the urban area, which accounts for about 20% of the total borough area.
- Green Infrastructure: Around 25% of the urban area is parkland.
- The Parks Trust, set up to manage the linear parks, which includes the city's two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs):
 - Howe Park wood, ancient woodland
 - Oxley Mead, wet meadow

Growth & Future

The UK's New Towns Taskforce identified Milton Keynes (MK) as a key location for "renewed town" development, aiming for around 40,000 new homes, significant infrastructure investment like a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system, and stronger regional links, with a focus on sustainable, connected growth. While proponents see it as a chance to tackle housing shortages and improve public transport (addressing original MK car dependency) through streamlined planning powers for Development Corporations.

The Taskforce's recommendations, accepted by the government, propose a new Development Corporation model for funding and delivery, with detailed implementation expected in 2026.

Key Proposals for Milton Keynes:

- "Renewed Town" Status: Positioning MK for significant expansion, building on its original new town design.
- Housing: Delivering approximately 40,000 new homes, with a target of 40% affordable housing.
- Infrastructure: Major investment in a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system to reduce car reliance and enhance connectivity.

- Development Corporations: Empowering unelected corporations with powers (like compulsory purchase and planning decisions) to fast-track development, as outlined in the [New Towns Taskforce report](#), published September 2025.

Clearly such as large-scale development will present challenges, especially for biodiversity. However, the city has shown through integrated planning and design humans can live within a biodiversity rich urban landscape.

Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) is a unitary authority responsible for nearly all local government services, including education, housing, highways, social care, waste collection, parks, libraries, and planning, aiming to create a cleaner, safer, and more prosperous city for its residents. Its role involves setting policy, managing budgets, and delivering services through elected councillors who represent local wards, focusing on areas like economic growth, tackling inequality, housing, and climate action.

Key Roles & Responsibilities

- Service Delivery: Providing around 250 essential services, from collecting bins and maintaining roads to supporting vulnerable people and managing libraries.
- Planning & Development: Acting as the primary planning authority, processing applications, and overseeing urban development.
- Social Welfare: Handling children and adult social care, homelessness prevention, and supporting families.
- Education: Serving as the local education authority, including special educational needs (SEND).
- Environment & Transport: Managing parks, street cleaning, waste disposal, promoting sustainable transport and flooding.
- Regulation & Enforcement: Protecting residents' health, safety, and interests through enforcement policies.

How it operates

- Unitary Authority: Covers all local government functions, unlike areas with separate county and district councils.
- Elected Councillors: 57 councillors elected by residents make decisions on policy and budgets in public meetings: From May 2026 there will be 60 councillors:
 - 21 Wards in total.
 - 19 wards with 3 councillors each.
 - 1 ward (New Bradwell) with 2 councillors.
 - 1 ward (Hanslope) with 1 councillor.
- Cabinet System: The council operates a Cabinet/Executive system for decision-making, supported by committees.
- Governance: Responsible for good governance, ensuring public money is used effectively, and continuous improvement.

How The Council Can Affect Biodiversity

The Council can affect biodiversity through its land use, land management practices and policies, planning, development management and environmental strategies. This influence can be both positive, such as by preserving and conserving habitats, enhancing green infrastructure, and promoting sustainable development, and negatively (although mitigated by policies and supporting strategies), by permitting development that can lead to habitat loss, fragmentation, and increased pollution through its decisions on planning applications and local development plans.

The Council has policies to address these issues, including mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements and strategies for green infrastructure and natural capital, aiming to balance development with ecological protection.

Positive Effects

Strategic Planning: The Council's Local Plan incorporates policies and strategies to protect, enhance and connect the natural environment and conserve and enhance biodiversity, such as protecting designated sites, priority habitats, hedgerows and green infrastructure. This safeguards valuable green and blue spaces, including Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), ancient woodlands, rivers, and canals.

Green space strategies: Through its Green Spaces Strategy, the Council aims to create and maintain accessible, high-quality green spaces, which include Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

Green Infrastructure: The Council actively promotes and invests in [green infrastructure](#), including corridors and stepping stones, to connect habitats and improve the health of the natural environment across the borough.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): the Council mandates BNG, requiring developments to achieve a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity through on-site or off-site measures, contributing to habitat restoration and creation. This ensures that new developments not only mitigate harm to habitats but also leave the environment in a measurably better state than before.

Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Creation: Through its planning functions, the Council protects and manages locally designated sites and other ecologically important areas, ensuring positive conservation management. The collaboration with other organisations through our partnership and outreach work also ensures joined up land management considerations to minimise impacts and maximise benefits.

Wildlife corridors: The Council's Local Plan and other policies develop and strengthening wildlife corridors, such as semi-natural habitat along watercourses and green bridges. This helps combat the isolation and fragmentation of habitats caused by development and further supports development with green infrastructure built in.

Urban meadows and tree planting: The Council promotes the creation of urban meadows and the planting of trees and hedgerows, which connects and increases biodiversity in urban

areas and offers wider environmental benefits, such as flood mitigation and reduction in urban heat island effects.

Water quality: The Council works with other organisations to ensure water quality measures are considered through planning, and Council or external projects and processes and through generic home ownership responsibilities. This being fundamental to the development of protected site strategies for our SSSI river and wet meadow habitats.

Air Quality: The Council reviews air quality in relation to both people and biodiversity and is working towards review of our designated sites where air quality impacts can be mitigated.

Partnerships and Community Engagement:

Internal and cross-boundary cooperation: The Council collaborates both internally and with neighbouring authorities and contributes both finance and time to the [Natural Environment Partnership](#) (NEP). The NEP coordinates and brings together a diverse range of individuals, businesses and organisations to drive positive change in the local natural environment. It also includes the Parks Trust and BBOWT ensure delivery of projects and community engagement is holistically delivered.

Community involvement: Both internal and external projects often encourage community involvement, raising awareness of local wildlife and promoting conservation initiatives. Groups we work with include the [Green Gym](#), resident groups and [Community Trees MK](#).

Public Access and Engagement: Initiatives to improve footpaths and public access encourage people to connect with nature, potentially leading to greater appreciation and support for biodiversity.

Negative Effects

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation: Although mitigated by policies, the consenting of new developments can still lead to the loss or fragmentation of habitats, which negatively impacts wildlife populations.

Pollution and Waste: Development, particularly if not managed sustainably, or insensitive land management practices can increase waste and pollution, which can harm water quality and other ecosystems.

Development Pressures on the Countryside: Whilst protection exists through planning policy insensitive or inappropriate development can still damage the character and ecological value of the countryside and can reduce habitat availability and corridor function for natural species movements like migration or necessary species movement in response to climate change.

Increased Recreational Pressure: Potential population growth and changes in trends of recreational activity could increase visitor numbers to sensitive areas, such as canals and rivers, potentially impacting water quality and local flora.

How the Council Manages These Impacts

In-house Ecologists: An in-house ecologist advises on planning applications and policy development, ensuring ecological considerations are integrated into decision-making processes.

Policies: The Council's Local Plan aim to protect and enhance natural assets for their intrinsic and human benefits, addressing key issues like climate change and biodiversity loss.

Planning Conditions & Obligations: The Council uses conditions and planning obligations within planning permissions to require appropriate mitigation and compensation measures for developments. It also addresses environmental harm where this occurs and consults with the necessary statutory authorities to ensure remedial action is undertaken.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): Requires developments to achieve a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity through on-site or off-site measures, contributing to habitat restoration and creation. This ensures that new developments not only mitigate harm to habitats but also leave the environment in a measurably better state than before.

Educate, Advise and Raise Awareness: Increasing understanding of biodiversity and why it is important to conserve and enhance. This is a necessary and relevant need for the borough, actions within our NCIS are being undertaken to support this, not only for the benefit of biodiversity but also for local people, farms, schools, businesses and other organisations to improve their understanding and knowledge of the land they own or manage and support them and link them to other national or regional initiatives, where these are provided. This can encourage land managers, businesses, and citizens to take action to benefit biodiversity.

Policies, Objectives and Actions that have, and will continue to contribute to the Biodiversity Duty include:

- Public consultation and engagement.
- Including the public in projects that improve biodiversity.
- Engage with schools and young people.
- Work with community and friends' groups.
- Feature biodiversity in public or internal communications.
- Putting information boards in green spaces or offering guided walks.
- Including biodiversity considerations in advice for internal and external clients and service users.
- Educating staff on the biodiversity actions and why they are important.
- Supporting the work of external organisations where these promote protection of local habitats and species, or where these seek to restore or enhance habitats for these species to thrive.
- Data sharing, being that important link between organisations and disseminating this or supporting them in their actions.
- Updating policies that support protection, enhancement and restoration of our sites and habitats for local species.

Review Internal Policies and Processes:

Local authorities have internal policies and processes for staff and facilities that could affect biodiversity. The Council has and will continue to periodically consider how our policies effect biodiversity and we will seek to review and improve these outcomes.

Examples of relevant policies and processes that currently contribute to biodiversity include:

- Transport - promoting a range of travel options including sustainable travel.
- Procurement - buy sustainable materials and supplies to reduce the demand on natural resources.
- Street Lighting - the Ecology team works with the Street Lighting team and the Highways and Major Infrastructure projects teams to ensure artificial lighting designs minimise effects on nature.
- Drainage – the Council has produced a [Design Guide](#) (2022) to be used by all involved in the planning, design, construction, implementation, operation and maintenance of sustainable drainage (SUD's).

Section 5: Achievements and community engagement

This section of the report provides a summary of what Milton Keynes Council, as a local authority, has achieved:

Major Projects and Policies

The top achievements in conserving and enhancing biodiversity are driven by the Council's key priorities (Council Plan), strategic policies and objectives. As well as the successful implementation of city-wide habitat improvement projects, a significant tree and habitat expansion through the Council's commitment to large-scale tree planting campaigns and the active involvement of community and volunteer groups. The report acknowledges the major contribution of the Parks Trust and its delivery across the city.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy: facilitated by the Natural Environment Partnership we worked alongside Buckinghamshire Council (lead authority) to deliver this key strategy. Over two years an in-depth engagement process was undertaken with hundreds of participants from all sectors. There two outputs are:

1. *A statement of biodiversity priorities* - This describes the area's important landscapes, habitats, and species as well as the pressures on nature and opportunities for nature recovery. It also includes a shortlist of priorities for nature recovery and potential measures (actions) to achieve those priorities.
2. *A local habitat map* -The mapping element of the LNRS contains two maps. The first is a baseline map to show areas of particular biodiversity importance now - the "Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity" (APIB). The second map is a targeted map showing future nature recovery opportunities, known as the "Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity" (ACB) map.

The combination of these two elements ensure resources and measures are focused in the best locations to achieve nature recovery priorities whilst protecting and enhancing the most valuable habitats.

Large scale habitat creation.

The Council were able to acquire 10ha of land via an adjacent housing development in 2022. The land had been under arable cultivation putting the remains of the Roman town, a scheduled ancient monument at risk. Since this time a meadow has been created, hedge rows restored and improvements made to the Public Right of Way. A smaller site nearby was adopted in 2025, again as a result of development. These wildlife assets are adding to a green grid for the area and will eventually link with the Local Nature Reserve and the Linear park network.

Tree planting

The Council undertakes annual tree planting as a part of the ongoing tree survey with some 200 standards being planted a year. Additional in 2025 a forest gardens project was undertaken. This created 10 gardens, each comprising of 600 hundred closely planted native trees and an area of raised beds and fruit trees. Other smaller projects are either supported or facilitated.

Community and Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer Involvement: Community groups and residents were actively involved in Projects and sites across the city, contributing to habitat creation and neighbourhood regeneration.

Practical Conservation Volunteers: continue to promote and support practical conservation volunteer groups. Green Gym groups have emerged from seed funding projects, one is now fully self-supporting and carries out a variety of projects including on the Railway Walk, a key Green Infrastructure asset. The second group works in Central Milton Keynes. Working alongside the Council, [Fred Roche Foundation](#) and [My MK](#) the posthumously named Fred Roche Gardens has been awarded a [Green Flag](#).

Emberton Country Park: The Park team lead each volunteering event, planning activities, focusing on conservation and biodiversity in the park as well as offering social opportunities and wellbeing for our wonderful volunteers. It provides an opportunity to learn new skills, meet likeminded people in a stunning outdoor environment.

Corporate volunteering

We've also partnered with [The Conservation Volunteers](#) who help to attract Corporate groups and lead volunteering with support from the parks team.

Multi-agency Projects and Partnerships: Working with strategic partners such as the Parks Trust, Environment Agency and other environmental agencies such as MK Swan Rescue, Wildlife Trust and Community trees MK who are instrumental in community-led environmental projects and raising awareness about the natural environment.

Section 6: Monitoring and evaluating

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records (BMERC)

BMERC is a not-for-profit organisation, funded by partners include Milton Keynes City Council, Buckinghamshire Council, and the Environment Agency. With in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes plus information about local sites such as Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites, Milton Keynes Wildlife Corridors and Road Verge Nature Reserves.

BMERC collects, collates and manages over 3.5 million wildlife records of flora and fauna and environmental information. It gathers data from a network of volunteer recorders and professional surveyors and consultants in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. Data is also held on the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#) Habitats of Principal Importance (S41) and other conservation areas such as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

BMERC provides environmental information with regularly updated species and sites information and undertake surveys of local wildlife sites to. This data informs responsible decision-making in planning, development and wildlife conservation.

Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are some of the most important areas for wildlife in the county. They often support rare or threatened species and habitats that are important and distinctive in Milton Keynes. Collectively, these sites act as wildlife havens, corridors, and “stepping stones” for animals, birds and insects in isolated, intensively managed or urban environments.

About the Local Wildlife Sites Project

There are around 470 Local Wildlife Sites identified in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, together amounting to just over 7,000 hectares. The project aims to encourage the continuation of this trend so that wildlife is retained and enhanced for the future. The project is delivered by the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre (BMERC) and supported by the council and the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP).

Biological Notification Sites, a previous and similar designation of locally important wildlife sites, are reviewed and assessed by Local Wildlife Site Officers to see if they are of reasonable quality to meet the LWS wildlife site criteria.

Where possible, more Local Wildlife Sites will be designated, if they meet the strict nationally adopted guidelines using specific survey methodology.

The project is also working towards:

- resurveying the county’s Local Wildlife Sites to assess their condition and species presence
- collecting data about these sites so that they have more weight in the planning process – we can then give more detailed advice to landowners who work with us to conserve these sites, and the public who wish to visit them.

How wildlife sites are selected:

- a list is made of potential Local Wildlife Sites
- subject to landowner or tenant permission for access, sites are surveyed to record their flora and fauna
- the data is used to assess each site's wildlife value in a county context, considering all plants and animals
- sites are judged against criteria and, after consultation with landowners, a list and maps of Local Wildlife Sites is drawn up
- a report is produced for the landowner and for presentation to the Local Wildlife Sites selection panel.

The panel sits twice a year and is made up of a group of wildlife experts, county wildlife recorders and representatives from various environmental organisations and statutory bodies. The panel reviews the reports and decides whether the site is of sufficient quality to meet the rigorous Local Wildlife Sites criteria. If approved, the site is then designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

Naturespace

NatureSpace GCN (Great Crested Newt) is a district-level licensing scheme which allows developers to meet their legal obligations for newt protection by contributing to landscape-wide habitat creation and management, streamlining projects, and protecting biodiversity. The Council has a dedicated Countryside Officer; funded by the scheme, focussing on the conservation of GCN. We advise planners and developers on consideration, mitigation, and enhancement for Great Crested Newts through the planning system and support local communities and Parishes with advice and habitat management recommendations.

Key aspects of the scheme in Milton Keynes:

- Strategic Licensing: Instead of individual newt surveys and bespoke mitigation, developers pay into the NatureSpace fund – areas mapped for their likely presence of GCN based on multi-variant analysis.
- Habitat Delivery: NatureSpace and partners create, restore, and manage ponds and terrestrial habitats across the district, providing a net gain for newts.
 - 45 new ponds created in MK
 - 137 Ha of high-quality habitat
 - 80 ponds surveyed on rotation

Benefits for Wildlife: Creates interconnected habitats, making populations more resilient and benefiting other species.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): Since 2024, BNG is mandatory for most new developments, requiring a minimum 10% gain. The biodiversity metric quantifies the impact of developments on habitats by measuring biodiversity units, enabling the assessment of both on-site and off-site habitat creation or restoration.

- Impact assessment: Developers must conduct ecological surveys and assessments to calculate the pre-development biodiversity value and assess this against the post-development scenario, using the statutory metric.

- Compliance monitoring: The Council uses a data base: [Mycelium](#), to monitor compliance with BNG conditions and legal agreements associated with planning permissions Biodiversity net gain

Waterlife Recovery Trust: The Trust is a charity, registered in 2022, with origins in the [Waterlife Recovery East](#) (WRE) project. WRE started in 2019 when partners from the long running East Anglian Mink and Water Vole Group joined with others from the fields of wildlife conservation, water management, game shooting and fishing. All shared the goal of bringing life back to the waterways and wetlands of East Anglia, through the removal of one highly damaging invasive, non-native species: the American Mink: *Neogale vison*.

Underpinning the vision is an effective model to promote mink control. To make this vision a reality the trust facilitate a ‘family’ of catchment-based mink projects working throughout the country to eradicate it from the widest geographical scale. MKCC works with the trust and have hosted humane traps on our land, the traps are placed on floating rafts and once activated the monitoring device sends a signal. The Trust provide us with detail of captures.

We know we have otters back on the local rivers, the hope is that water voles will also make a return once the mink have been eradicated.

Section 7: Biodiversity challenges and opportunities

This section of the report highlights the anticipated challenges may be over the next 5 years. MK faces significant challenges from urban development, habitat fragmentation, and climate change. However, these challenges also create opportunities if development is well planned and resourced.

Diverse Habitats: MK features a rich variety of natural assets, including remnants of ancient woodlands, wetland, parkland and grassland, which support a wide range of species and habitats.

Rich and varied green infrastructure: The cities green (and blue) infrastructure extends beyond large parks to include gardens, street trees, rivers, canals, and public rights of way, creating a connected network of natural spaces.

Development pressure and countryside loss

The original master plan for MK was sensitive that a critical part of building an attractive city includes landscape and trees (green infrastructure) integrated with roads and pavements (grey infrastructure) to create an attractive living city. This vision is encapsulated in the “city in the Trees”. The Urban area is likely more biodiverse than the countryside which surrounds it; however, this observation is nuanced by the cities capacity to provide habitat for some species and a level of nonnative species, whilst some agricultural practices could be moderated by regenerative techniques.

Mk faces intense development pressure on its countryside. While policies exist to mitigate impacts, development has the potential to result in the direct loss of habitats, degrades the historic landscape, and fragments ecological networks, threatening biodiversity. Changes to national planning policy alongside both the Local Plan and Local nature Recovery strategy will be key policy drivers the best possible outcomes for nature.

Balancing growth and conservation: MK 50, the local plan, aim for substantial growth, requiring careful management to minimise negative impacts on natural assets while maximising opportunities for sustainable development. This includes navigating the complexities of integrating biodiversity into new transport infrastructure and managing the impacts of regional development such as neighbouring growth, Universal Studios and the MK to Bedford canal.

Habitat fragmentation and loss: While policies exist to mitigate impacts, development still results in the direct loss or fragmentation of habitats. Inadequate consideration of cumulative impacts from multiple developments can have significant long-term effects on ecological networks

Opportunities: *Developing with nature*

Integrating ecological principles into development to create spaces that benefit both people and wildlife, focusing on biodiversity, sustainability, and connecting with the environment through native planting, green infrastructure, and nature-based solutions, aiming for net gains in nature rather than losses.

Key Principles in Development

Biodiversity Net Gain: Ensuring developments leave nature in a better state than before, prioritizing on-site enhancements.

Nature-Based Solutions: Using natural processes (like wetlands for flood management) to solve societal challenges.

Connectivity: Creating green corridors so wildlife can move freely through landscapes.

Mitigation Hierarchy: Avoiding harm, minimizing unavoidable impacts, and then creating gains.

Multi-functionality: Designing spaces that serve multiple purposes, such as recreation, food production, and habitat.

Trees: Urban trees are being increasingly recognised for the many benefits they provide, such as removing carbon dioxide and pollutants from the air, providing habitats for wildlife, and making our urban areas more attractive, enjoyable and healthy places to live and spend time in. To help manage and understand this important resource, Trees for Cities, Brillianto, Woodland Trust and Forest Research have hosted a citizen science project to [map the canopy cover of towns](#) and cities across the England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

From these maps we can see that the urban area has overall a greater canopy cover than the rural areas. This can be translated in to benefits for residents through a [tree equity score](#). Therefore, it is important that with development we ensure that new tree planting is

an embedded into design, providing habitat and food sources for nature whilst helping to cool urban environments and create attractive places for people to live.

Linear park network: a key design feature of MK, connecting wildlife and people across the city and into the countryside. The Local Plan has kept this principle, and the park network will extend into new developments.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs): SUDs has become a feature of all new developments to help regulate storm events but through good design they can do much more:

- *Water Quantity:* Controls the rate and volume of surface water runoff to reduce flood risk, mimicking natural flows and nourishing the water cycle.
- *Water Quality:* Manages runoff to prevent pollutants and sediments from contaminating watercourses, protecting the environment.
- *Amenity:* Creates attractive and usable spaces for people, offering recreation, education, and social value through features like paths, play areas, and green spaces.
- *Biodiversity:* Designs features like wetlands and swales to create and sustain habitats for plants and animals, improving local ecosystems.

The Local Flood Authority, embedded within the council play a crucial role:

- Producing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to manage surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater flooding
- Ensuring that new developments are designed and built in a sustainable manner which does not increase flood risk and which reduces flood risk whenever possible

Habitat Features: The MKCC Ecology supplementary planning document sets out the requirement for habitat features. Bird and bat features should be built into the fabric of the buildings to ensure permanence. They should be installed in the appropriate location for the target species and consideration given to any light sources or sources of disturbance. Additional features such as hedge hog passes, green walls and roofs and native planting should be incorporated.

The inclusion of biodiversity into developments should not be seen as burden, rather as a way to promote the homes to future residents. The community group [Wolverton Swifts and Martins](#) shows what positive contribution the presence of these species can have on the local community. The group focus on protecting and increasing populations of endangered swifts and martins through awareness, building nest boxes, and organizing events, with involvement from the Stony Stratford Town Council and RSPB.

Indirect Impacts

Increased visitor pressure: Improved accessibility to green spaces can increase visitor numbers, which may place pressure on sensitive habitats if not managed correctly. For example trampling in Howe Park Wood, a SSSI has damaged the understory of the wood, with blue bells being particularly affected. Fishing can also be an issue where it is not managed leading to wildfowl being caught in discarded lines.

Climate Change: Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events directly alters ecosystems and drive a cascade of indirect effects, like shifts in species ranges and increased spread of diseases. The Council has a [Net Zero Action Plan](#), but climate change still poses a significant threat to biodiversity.

Pollution: Emissions from agriculture, industry, and transport, including greenhouse gases, nitrogen, and phosphorus, pollute air and water, leading to acid rain, nutrient imbalances, and toxic effects on ecosystems.

Decline of priority habitats: Some key habitats are in poor condition. For example, many rivers are in an "unfavourable" state due to water quality and invasive species. Rare habitats like traditional meadow have significantly declined due to urbanisation and agricultural land conversion.

Tree health and resilience: While tree planting is a priority for the Council, threats like ash dieback and oak-specific diseases (e.g., Acute Oak Decline) put significant pressure on the borough's tree population, reducing its resilience to future threats. *Invasive Species:* The introduction and spread of invasive species, which outcompete native species and disrupt ecosystems pose a threat to our native biodiversity.

Declining Species Populations: the UK is experiencing significant species decline, with an average 19% drop in wildlife abundance since 1970, and nearly one in six species (16%) facing extinction risk, driven primarily by intensive farming, habitat loss, climate change, pollution, and unsustainable fishing, leading to major losses in butterflies, birds (especially farmland birds), and plants, with only 14% of key habitats in good condition ([2023 State of Nature report](#)). Whilst development of primarily agricultural land has an impact on larger mammals and ground nest birds such as sky larks there is great potential to benefit some species with developments if they are well planned with nature in mind. Whilst nature has a right to exist in and of itself it has been demonstrated homes in a "green" setting are more desirable and at a premium.

Annex

Climate and Environment

Integrated Water Management Study

- [Milton Keynes Integrated Water Management Study Phase 1 Final Report \(June 2024\)](#)
- [Milton Keynes Integrated Water Management Study Phase 2 Final Report \(October 2025\)](#)

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan

- [Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan technical report](#)
- [Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan May 2023](#)

Review of Local Landscape Designations

- [Milton Keynes Review of Local Landscape Designations \(May 2024\)](#)

Valued Landscapes Policy Review

- [Valued Landscapes Policy Review \(December 2022\)](#)

Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- [Milton Keynes City Council – Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Final Report \(February 2024\)](#)
- [Appendix A- Historic Flooding](#)
- [Appendix B- Watercourses](#)
- [Appendix C- Flood Zones](#)
- [Appendix D- Fluvial climate change](#)
- [Appendix E- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water](#)
- [Appendix F- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water climate change](#)
- [Appendix G- Groundwater flooding](#)
- [Appendix H- Reservoir flooding](#)
- [Appendix I- Flood Defences](#)
- [Appendix J- Flood Warning and Alerts](#)
- [Appendix K- Data Sources](#)
- [Appendix L- User Guide](#)
- [Appendix M- Flood Risk Summary](#)
- [Appendix N- Site Screening](#)
- [Appendix O- Sequential Test Methodology](#)
- [Appendix P- Critical Drainage Catchments](#)
- [Appendix Q- Surface Water Flood Zones](#)

Sequential Test

- [MKCC Sequential Test \(October 2025\)](#)

Carbon & Climate Study

- [Carbon & Climate Study Executive Summary \(April 2024\)](#)
- [Carbon & Climate Study Baseline Report](#)
- [Carbon & Climate Study Analysis Report](#)
- [Carbon & Climate Study Recommendations Report](#)

Summary of the strategic surface water drainage network

- [Summary of the strategic surface water drainage network in Milton Keynes \(26 June 2024\)](#)

Nature, Green and Blue Infrastructure Study

- [Milton Keynes Nature Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy \(August 2023\)](#)

Landscape Character Assessment

- [Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment \(May 2022\)](#)
- [Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment \(May 2022\) Low resolution version](#)

Energy Efficiency Standards Study

- [Energy Efficiency Standards Study \(December 2024\)](#)

Open Space Assessment

- [Open Space Assessment report \(January 2023\)](#)
- [Annex 1 All Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22](#)
- [Annex 2 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Amenity Greenspace](#)
- [Annex 3 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Cemeteries, Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds](#)
- [Annex 4 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Civic Spaces and Formal Gardens](#)
- [Annex 5 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Common Land and Village Green](#)
- [Annex 6 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Country Parks](#)
- [Annex 7 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – District Parks](#)
- [Annex 8 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Formal Outdoor Playing Fields](#)
- [Annex 9 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Green Access Links](#)
- [Annex 10 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Linear Parks](#)
- [Annex 11 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Other Natural and Semi-natural green spaces](#)
- [Annex 12 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Local Parks](#)
- [Annex 13 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Paddocks](#)
- [Annex 14 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Pocket Parks](#)
- [Annex 15 Open Spaces weighted score site visits 21-22 – Food growing Area](#)
- [Annex 16 Overall accessibility All Open Spaces by accessible routes within 400m](#)
- [Annex 17 Overall accessibility all open spaces by accessible routes within 400m and Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)
- [Annex 18 Overall accessibility all open spaces weighted score by accessible routes within 400m](#)
- [Annex 19 Overall accessibility all open spaces by accessible routes within 400m and Yr6 obesity](#)
- [Annex 20 Overall accessibility all open spaces by accessible routes within 400m and Mid-Year Population Estimates by ward 2020](#)
- [Annex 21 All Open spaces by typology and historic environment](#)
- [Annex 22 Accessibility to Amenity Greenspaces, Local Parks, Pocket Parks and Civic Spaces and Formal Gardens by accessible routes within 710m](#)
- [Annex 23 Accessibility to Food Growing Areas by accessible routes 600m](#)

- [Annex 24 All open spaces by typology and historic environment](#)

Impact Assessments

- [Milton Keynes City Plan 2025 - Equalities Impact Assessment 2025](#)
- [Milton Keynes City 2050 - Health Impact Assessment September 2025](#)
- [Habitats Regulation Assessment September 2025](#)

