

# Corporate Biodiversity Strategy 2015 – 2020 CONSULTATIVE DRAFT

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# Oxford City Council Corporate Biodiversity Strategy 2015 – 2020

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# 1 Introduction

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. This includes all species of plants and animals and the ecosystems that support them. Biodiversity is essential to making human life possible and is central to the natural processes that we all rely on, such as food and fuel production, maintenance of air, soil and water quality and the regulation of climate and flooding. Biodiversity and good quality natural environments contribute to good mental health, cohesive communities and strong local economies and it is vital in our response to climate change. It is an absolute essential element of sustainable development and key to 'Building a World Class City for Everyone'.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out Oxford City Council's commitment to building a world class City by influencing and encouraging biodiversity conservation and enhancement in its functions as:

- **Landowner and Manager** (e.g. estates, parks management),
- **Regulator and Policy Maker** (e.g. planning) and as,
- **Advocate and Facilitator** (e.g. volunteering, promotion).

The strategy will also demonstrate how Oxford City Council is fulfilling its duties as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

The aim of this strategy is not to duplicate existing policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF) and other City Council strategies, but it will reflect them and provide a tool for identifying opportunities to complement existing work. The strategy will highlight how the City Council contributes to biodiversity enhancement and conservation and commit further action within the remit of the organisation.

It is hoped that ultimately, the strategy will form the starting point to provide a joined up approach to natural asset management in the city with the view to working towards producing a Natural Assets Strategy.

## 2 The Policy Context

### 2.1 National Policy and Legislation

There are numerous legislative and policy controls that establish the importance of the natural environment and afford protection to it. These range from European legislation to protect habitats and species, to conservation objectives set out in local planning policies.

#### **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**

Oxford City Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the Act states that:

*"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity".*

The duty recognises that local authorities have a key role to play in the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and requires them to consider and action ways in which it can contribute to its conservation.

#### **Habitats Directive**

The European directive was transposed into UK law in 1994 and subsequently consolidated into the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010](#). Under the 2010 regulations local authorities in the UK have a duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the Habitats Directive.

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to ensure the protection of habitats and species that are of European importance and listed in the Annexes to the Directive.

The Regulations make it a criminal offence to deliberately capture, injure, kill, disturb, trade, or destroy the eggs or breeding site of the animals listed in the regulations or to pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in any of the plants listed.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) requires planning policies to ensure that impacts on biodiversity are minimised and that net gains to biodiversity are achieved through development wherever possible. It obliges planning authorities to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity in and around development and seek to ensure the wider benefits of ecosystem services are recognised. Importantly, the framework sets out that planning permission should be refused where a

development would have an adverse impact on a SSSI or would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats unless the need for the development outweighs the loss.

[Planning Practice Guidance](#), supporting the NPPF, makes clear that neighbouring planning bodies should work together to “consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity in the wider area.”

Oxford City Council’s Core Strategy 2026 sets out local planning policies for protecting and enhancing biodiversity in line with the NPPF.

## 2.2 Local Policy

### The Corporate Plan 2012 - 2016

There are strong links between biodiversity and the range of services that the city council provides. Efforts to conserve and enhance biodiversity can link to a variety of objectives and activities such as promoting wellbeing, recreation and social inclusion.

Oxford City Council Corporate Plan 2012 – 2016 sets out the corporate priorities for the city in order to achieve its ambition of building a world class city for everyone. Delivering on biodiversity contributes to all of the city’s core priorities.



<b>Vibrant and Sustainable Economy</b>	Ensuring that biodiversity conservation and enhancement is taken into account into all development decisions enables Oxford to develop sustainably.
<b>Meeting Housing Need</b>	The council is committed to providing sustainable houses that are designed to respect the environment and enhance residents overall quality of life.
<b>Strong and Active Communities</b>	Engaging with communities and the volunteering sector in local conservation helps develop strong local communities.
<b>Cleaner, Greener Oxford</b>	The council is committed to sustainability and carbon reduction, to which biodiversity is key.
<b>Efficient and Effective Council</b>	Improving knowledge on biodiversity in the city will enable better quality decisions to be made and contribute to improving the quality of life for everyone.

## **A Sustainability Strategy for Oxford**

The Sustainability Strategy for Oxford brings together all the Council's existing policies relating to sustainability within one overarching document and sets out a longer term framework to address key sustainability issues affecting Oxford such as waste, flooding, biodiversity and land and air quality. This corporate biodiversity strategy sits under this umbrella document.

## **Green Spaces Strategy 2013 – 2027**

The City Council's adopted Green Spaces Strategy seeks to provide a set of objectives that provide a strategic framework for the planning and management of parks and open spaces in Oxford. A principal aim of this strategy is to promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the city's biodiversity, sustainability and heritage.

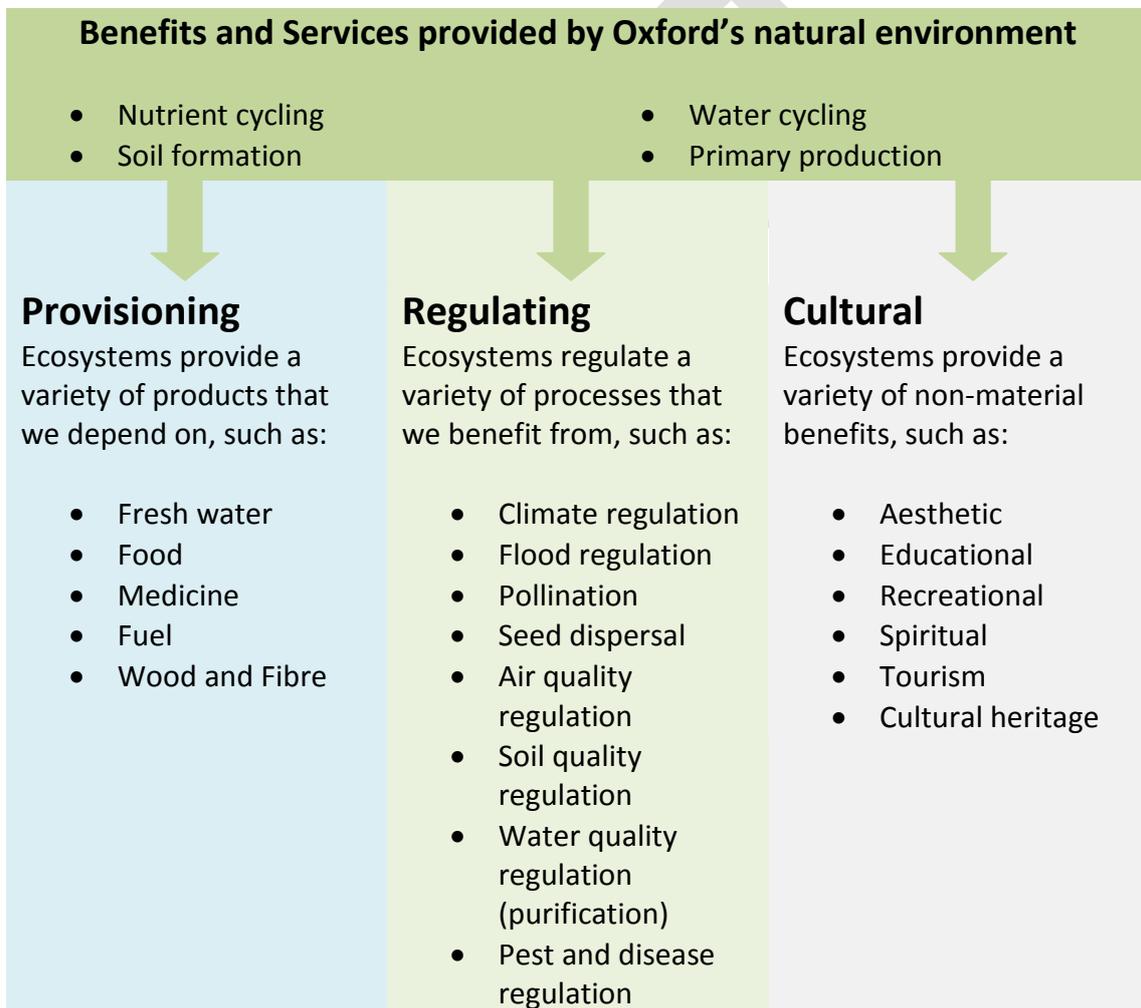
Objective 21 of the Green Spaces Strategy sets out the council's commitment to protect and enhance biodiversity in our parks and open spaces:

- To ensure the protection of internationally, nationally and locally important sites of biodiversity interest (Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation)
- To encourage delivery of the conservation objectives of the Conservation Area Targets within the City.
- To identify areas to create new habitats, enlarge existing ones, improve the management of sites so that they may become designated and joined up in line with the Lawton review
- To ensure wildlife corridors are protected, enhanced or created
- Protection of important and prosaic species in all sites.

### 3 Natural Benefits and Services

The benefits provided by biodiversity and the natural environment are essential to making human life possible and it is therefore important we invest in it. Oxford’s natural environment provides a range of benefits and services to its residents and visitors. Access to green space is vital for health and wellbeing and a healthy natural environment provides us with food, clean air and fuel.

The table below shows some examples of the range of services and benefits provided to us and highlight why it is so important to maintain healthy ecosystems.



### 3.1 Natural Benefits Specific to Oxford

A large part of Oxford is covered by flood plain. Oxford is susceptible to flooding and we are dependent on our flood plains during these flood events. Flood plains retain many nutrients and often provide good quality agricultural land. They also provide recreational opportunities and support key habitats and endangered species. It is, therefore, important that we do not lose floodplain in Oxford and that we support biodiversity focused flood plain management.

Oxford has a large number of allotment sites and has a higher ratio of plots to population than most places. Many of Oxford's allotments are on flood plain land. Not only do they provide flood capacity and provide food but they are important for biodiversity. Equally, allotments are dependent on a healthy environment to provide pollinators, good soil and water quality in order to produce quality food. They also provide recreational opportunities and help to reduce our impact on climate change by reducing food miles.

In 2010 all of Oxford was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to high nitrogen dioxide levels in the city. Urban green spaces and trees are important for helping to improve air quality and reducing long term impacts. Recognising the contribution that our green spaces and trees make to improving air quality is important, particularly in Oxford.

Tourism is extremely important to Oxford with approximately 9.5 million visitors a year. This is largely due to Oxford University who, as well as maintaining the spectacular architectural heritage of the city also manage a large number of college gardens and parks that contribute to the city's green spaces. The Thames provides an important attraction for visitors to the city as well as recreational space for residents and vital habitats for a large variety of species.

#### **Why green roofs are great!**

Not only do they look great, but they perform an important role in providing new habitat for urban wildlife and help cities to adapt and respond to climate change. They contribute to capturing rainwater run-off, improving air and water quality, reducing sound transfer, reducing energy use, increase the lifespan of roofs, moderate the urban heat island effect, create new amenity areas and can provide educational opportunities.

## 4 Oxford's Biodiversity

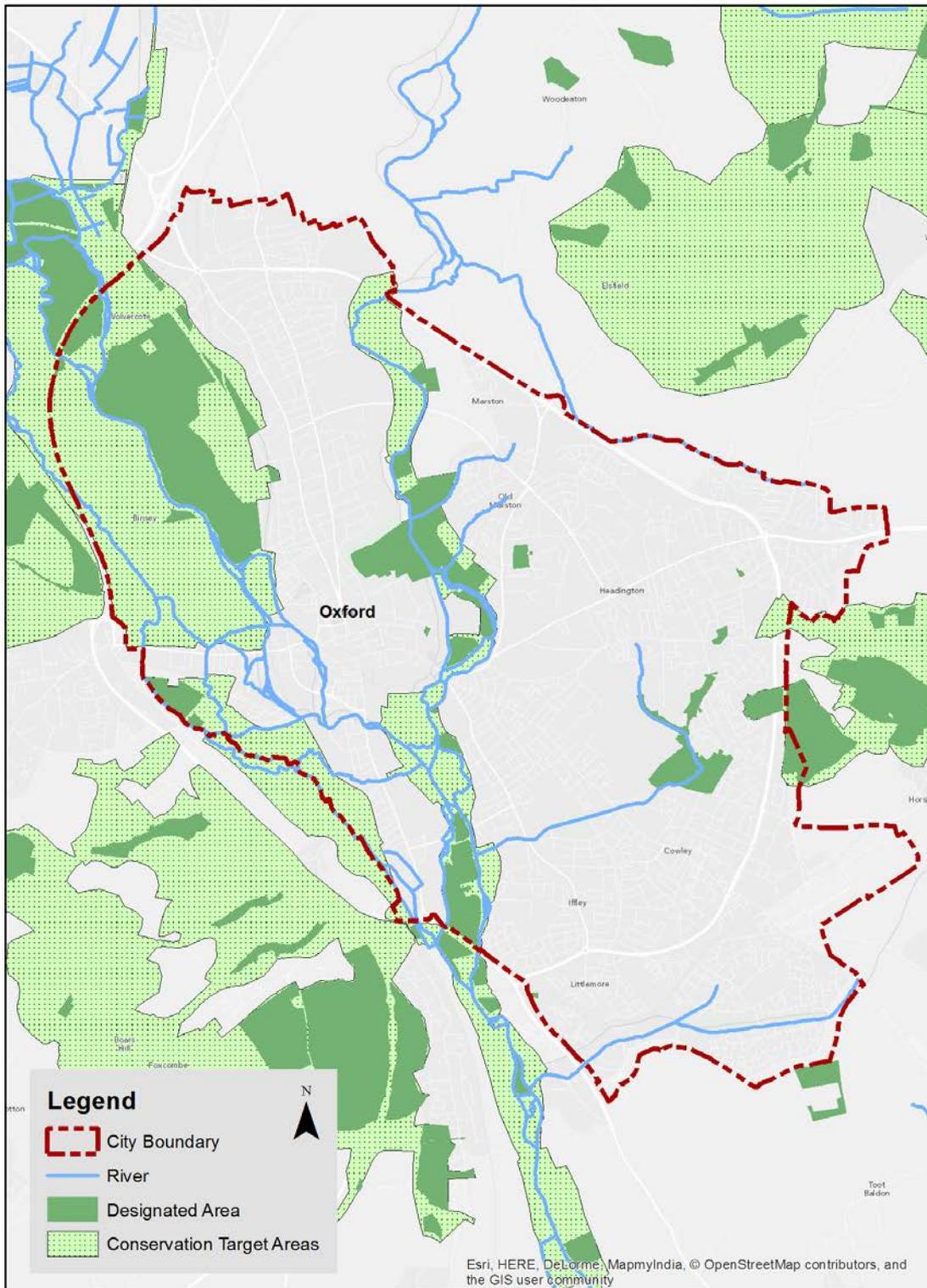
Section 41 of the NERC Act refers to the published list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and for which local authorities have a special responsibility to conserve. Oxford is home to a large number of protected species and priority habitats included in this list.

Many of the city's areas of biodiversity interest consist of traditional meadows, which have not been improved by fertilizers and herbicides. The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), part of which is within Oxford's boundary, is designated by the European Commission as being of European importance for its biodiversity interest. The Oxford Meadows are also vital flood plain land.

There are many wetland habitats of importance including the City's watercourses, ponds and the nationally rare fen habitat, which is found in Lye Valley. The overall nature conservation interest of the City is reflected in the fact that there are 12 SSSIs wholly or partially within the City, along with many other sites with a local nature conservation interest. We also have a number of European protected and notable species including great crested newts, water voles, swifts and bats.

Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has established the Conservation Target Area (CTA) approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Oxfordshire. CTAs take a landscape-scale approach and are defined as areas of biodiversity interest where conservation work will achieve the greatest results. The BAP identifies the priority habitats and species important in an Oxfordshire context. The principle aim of the CTAs is to maintain, restore and create BAP priority habitats. However, it is important to note that biodiversity efforts in the City are not limited to CTAs and BAP priority species and habitats. CTAs are an excellent start to achieving "more, bigger, better, joined" as advocated by the [Lawton Review](#). Map 1 shows CTAs and designated areas in Oxford and neighbouring districts.

**Map 1 - Conservation Target Areas and Designated Areas**



## 5 Aims and Objectives

### 5.1 Strategy Vision

Ensure that Oxford City Council enables a future where its residents can enjoy climate resilient, healthy and species rich ecosystems which contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in all its forms.

### 5.2 Strategy Aim

To ensure that our responsibilities to conserve and enhance biodiversity are integrated into all Oxford City Council's policies and service areas and that there is a clear understanding across all staff on the importance of biodiversity and how it relate to their own decisions and actions.

### 5.3 Strategy Objectives

Objective 1: To act as a responsible **landowner and manager** for the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

Objective 2: To undertake our duties as a **regulator and policy maker** to ensure the continued protection of biodiversity resources in accordance with legislation and to ensure that new policies are formulated to promote new development that allows biodiversity to flourish.

Objective 3: To promote the benefits of conserving and enhancing our biodiversity resource to local communities through our role as an **advocate and facilitator**.

## 6 Landowner and Manager

The city council maintains a substantial housing stock, a number of offices and depots and manages extensive areas of green space including parks, woodland and countryside. A good understanding of our biodiversity resource and our responsibilities for it are essential for effective management.

This section outlines how the council will manage its responsibility and realise opportunities.

### 6.1 What have we achieved to date?

Awareness of our impact on the environment is growing and some great initiatives have been undertaken by the City Council for the benefit of biodiversity and the wider environment, particularly in regard to how we manage our parks and open spaces. Labour intensive, water thirsty bedding plants have been replaced with low maintenance, perennial plants in many of our parks and landscaped areas. This not only benefits biodiversity but provides a cost saving to the council. Furthermore, changes to parks maintenance regimes to reduce the amount of close mown grass have resulted in larger areas of tall grass which is particularly beneficial for invertebrates.

A Hedgehog Action Plan has been completed for Florence Park following the discovery of a surprisingly healthy population of these threatened animals. We are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of bees to our local environment and the city council are taking steps to help protect this vital species. See box 1 for more information on why bees are important and what the council is doing. An insect lodge has been installed at Wolvercote Cemetery and if it proves successful, more will be introduced at other city council managed cemeteries.

All of our Green Flag status parks have comprehensive management plans that incorporate actions for biodiversity enhancement and protection. There are also management plans in development for sites such as Shotover and Port Meadow due to their national designations and conservation status. In September 2014, Oxford was awarded gold for the city category of the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom Association, part of the Britain in Bloom campaign. Judging takes into account all round horticultural achievement including biodiversity conservation and enhancement and community involvement. However, there is always more that we could do and we need to ensure that biodiversity is considered beyond our own green space management.

Progress has also been made in raising awareness amongst staff of protecting bird species. During recent routine roof maintenance works to a row of council houses, a nesting swift colony was discovered. Our housing team worked in partnership with the RSPB to ensure that the swifts were not disturbed and to encourage them to continue to nest there in the future.

### **The Swift –an amazing bird!**

Swifts have seen huge declines in cities and towns across the UK, with around 40% of the population lost over the past 15 years. One of the reasons for the decline is due to a reduction in nesting sites in buildings as they are renovated and replaced.

Swifts use the same nest site throughout their lives and will fly directly from Africa to a nesting site in Oxford, year after year! Swifts pair for life, meeting up each spring at the same site. The nest is located high up in the roof space under the eaves of houses and churches where the birds are able to drop into the air from the nest entrance. If the nest site is blocked off or destroyed they will still try and enter and can kill or hurt themselves in the effort to gain access. This is why it is so important we consider swifts when we make repairs or build new houses.

A range of swift bricks and boxes are available which makes it easy and cheap to accommodate swifts into our building design.

#### 6.2 What the council will do

- Ensure that awareness of biodiversity continues to grow in our staff and that we continue to improve our knowledge of the impacts that our services have on the natural environment. We will do this by introducing a 'Biodiversity Champions Scheme' which seeks to identify champions in each service who will become a central source of knowledge, advice and staff engagement.
- Ensure that notable habitats and sites housing protected species within our land ownership are appropriately identified and managed in partnership with Natural England and BBOWT where appropriate.
- Implement the biodiversity actions identified in the council's Green Spaces Strategy 2013 -2027.
- Ensure that biodiversity is incorporated into staff training programmes and that clear guidance is available for relevant service areas.
- Ensure legally protected species and their habitats are not harmed during repairs to housing stock/management of land and/or property. This includes undertaking ecological surveys where necessary.
- Ensure consideration is given to the timing of work to take into account breeding seasons etc.
- Ensure biodiversity is considered in the early stages of any council new build or regeneration programmes and seek to realise opportunities for incorporating green roofs/walls. This will include early engagement with the planning department on proposals that might affect biodiversity.
- Provide bird and bat boxes in existing and new council buildings wherever possible and economically feasible.
- Identify underused/undevelopable council land and identify opportunities for biodiversity provision.

- Ensure a programme for the management of road verge cutting is in place for the benefit of biodiversity.
- Continue to ensure any planting schemes undertaken by the council favours a variety of native species that are climate resilient.
- Continue to identify opportunities for managing city council cemeteries to benefit biodiversity.

## **Why bees are important**

Bees are vitally important for pollination and they are in grave danger! About two thirds of our food crops are dependent on pollination by bees. They also pollinate the crops that we feed to our livestock and which provide natural food sources for wild animals. They maintain the biodiversity of our flowering plants and produce important products such as wax and honey.

Bee numbers are declining at an alarming rate due to the use of pesticides, loss of habitat and diseases. It is essential that we take steps to halt the loss of bees. Oxford City Council has committed to working together with Oxfordshire Friends of the Earth and local beekeepers to produce a Bee Action Plan. Actions for the city council will include further reducing the amount of close mown grass across the city, adapting the way bedding plants, hanging baskets and flower meadows are managed and to strictly manage the use and type of pesticides.

## 7 Regulator and Policy Maker

Development can have significant positive or negative impacts on biodiversity depending on how it is managed. Robust planning policies and decisions relating to biodiversity will create higher quality developments with improved quality of life for its residents.

The local planning authority has a key role to play in ensuring that biodiversity conservation and enhancement is taken into account in policy making and the development control process.

### 7.1 What have we achieved to date?

Policy CS12 of the City Council's Core Strategy 2026 sets out the sites which are protected for their biodiversity interest and how the City Council seeks to secure biodiversity enhancements through new development.

Policy CS12 explicitly states that sites with a national or international designation must be protected from any development which may have an adverse impact on it. Development which would have a significant adverse impact on a locally designated site will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where it is possible to secure compensation for any loss or damage. The policy also recognises that species and habitats of importance exist outside of designated sites and that these must be protected from harm.

Policy CS12 states that opportunities will be taken to enhance Oxford's biodiversity resource by improving the network of unimproved flood meadows within the Thames and Cherwell Flood Plains, contribute to meeting Biodiversity Action Plan targets and meet the objectives of Conservation Target Areas; create links between natural habitats and identify a strategic Oxford habitat network; and ensure the inclusion of features beneficial to biodiversity within new developments.

The efficacy of policy CS12 is monitored through the annual monitoring report process. The change in areas of biodiversity importance is recorded with a target of no net reduction in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value, i.e. SAC, SSSI's, RIGS and locally designated sites.

The full wording of Policy CS12 can be viewed in the [Core Strategy 2026](#) document which is available on the City Council's website. ["Background Paper C\(iii\): Oxford's Biodiversity"](#) explains the background to the development of CS12 and is also available to download on the City Council's website. The Core Strategy is due to be reviewed within the next 5 years and this is likely to require assessment and mapping of our ecological areas and assessment of the management of biodiversity and green infrastructure. Evidence will need to be collected on a rolling basis to inform this review of the core strategy.

Having a strong evidence base and sound knowledge of our biodiversity resource is essential for good planning. It helps develop policy and enables robust decisions to be made through development control. It is also essential as a way to monitor our impacts on our biodiversity and develop indicators for its health. The council supports the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) who collect, analyse and share biodiversity information with us. Furthermore, survey information undertaken in our parks or countryside and nature reserves is shared with TVERC. However, there is more we could do, such as ensuring that all ecological surveys submitted as part of the planning process are shared with TVERC.

Trees are vital for a healthy and high quality environment and contribute to Oxford's unique landscape character. The City Council in its role as planning authority has the power to issue Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). TPOs can be made to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity. Amenity value includes criteria such as its size and form, its historic value, its contribution to the local landscape character, nature conservation or response to climate change. A TPO makes it illegal to damage or destroy a tree.

The city council also has a duty to ensure that planning conditions are imposed on planning permissions to preserve existing trees or to provide for the planting of new trees.

The planning department screens planning applications for their biodiversity impact and conditions are used to secure mitigation or enhancement where this is appropriate.

## 7.2 What the council will do

The council are committed to facilitating the following actions:

- Technical Advice Note on biodiversity to be developed and published in order to provide advice to developers on how to conserve and encourage biodiversity.
- Continue to support the development and maintenance of a good evidence base managed by TVERC.
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of our biodiversity resource in preparation for the review of the Core Strategy.
- Ensure that all ecological surveys submitted through the planning process are shared with TVERC.
- Continue to ensure that all planning applications are screened for impact on trees and biodiversity and appropriate conditions and obligations imposed where relevant.
- Prepare a comprehensive Tree Strategy for trees in the city which includes an assessment of the nature and extent of the existing tree population, providing information about the structure and composition of the urban forest and quantifying the benefits it currently provides in terms of carbon storage, carbon sequestration and pollution removal. The Tree Strategy will

include an Action Plan which will help ensure long term sustainable delivery of the ecosystem services that trees provide.

- Assess the potential for adopting BS 42020:2013 “Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development”. This is the first British Standard on Biodiversity Management and has been developed to help local authorities integrate biodiversity into all stages of the planning process.
- Identify opportunities for improving wildlife and habitat connectivity, including cross-boundary networks in line with Planning Practice Guidance.
- Assess opportunities for formalising the use of biodiversity offsetting in Oxford following the completion of the national pilot project.

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## 8 Advocate and Facilitator

The city council has an important role to play as advocate and facilitator of biodiversity conservation and enhancement in the city. The council has opportunities for partnership working and for influencing a range of stakeholders including local community groups, businesses, land managers, third sector organisations and the general public.

### 8.1 What have we achieved to date?

The city council has been working in partnership with a range of organisations for the benefit of biodiversity. The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) is working in partnership with Oxford City Council to deliver the “Wild Oxford” project. This project seeks to bring together communities and nature in three of the city’s nature reserves: Lye Valley in Headington, Rivermead Nature Park in Rose Hill and Chilswell Valley in South Hinksey. The council’s involvement in projects like this helps to increase participation and understanding of biodiversity conservation in local communities.

Other examples of partnership working include the Oxford Green and Blue Spaces Networking Group. This was initiated by the council’s Leisure, Parks & Communities service and focuses on enabling partners to work more collaboratively to improve accessibility, volunteering and awareness of Oxford’s green spaces and blue corridors. The network is attended by a representative group of agencies and land owners from across Oxford.

The City Council has supported the Oxford Festival of Nature since its inception in 2012. This family event attracts over 1500 local people each year and provides fun activities whilst collecting important environmental data. The event incorporates a 24 hour “bio-blitz” where as many species as possible are identified and counted and the collected data is provided to TVERC.

The Council has a small grant aid programme supporting voluntary and community groups in the city. Promoting and protecting the natural environment and biodiversity is one of the selection criteria for the funding. In recent years the council has supported the Oxford Festival of Nature and the Oxford Urban Wildlife Group through this fund.

The Leisure, Parks & Communities service has a network of volunteers who undertake important wildlife management work in our green spaces as well as surveying. Other vital volunteering activities are the Friends of Parks Groups. These groups are independent but are supported by the City Council. There are over 15 such groups in Oxford that help to manage our parks for the benefit of the community and biodiversity.

However, there is always more we could do to make the most of our position to raise awareness and provide advice on biodiversity through our interaction with local businesses, local land owners, developers and the general public.

## 8.2 What the council will do

- Continue to expand our volunteering programmes in our nature reserves and countryside parks.
- Continue to ensure that the council's grants for community and voluntary groups benefits local biodiversity initiatives.
- Incorporate a biodiversity theme into the council's successful Cleaner Greener Campaign programme, by for example advising the public on how to encourage wildlife into their gardens.
- Take opportunities through tenancy management work and resident involvement to raise awareness and encourage biodiversity friendly gardening etc through the "Tenants in Touch" newsletter, a council publication reaching around 7,000 households.
- Improve staff engagement with biodiversity by introducing a "biodiversity champions" scheme that influences all departments in the council.
- Raise awareness of and encourage local people, businesses and organisations to use bat and bird boxes and green roofs and walls where appropriate.
- Ensure the City Council engages with the Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire.

## 9 Next Steps

This strategy sets out a realistic and achievable set of actions and provides a starting point for developing a more detailed programme of actions, owned by individual service areas. Actions have been allocated to specific service areas and they are responsible for their implementation. Where longer term actions require work, individual service areas are responsible for developing the detail and implementation. The City Council's Environmental Policy Team will provide support and advice to service areas and will monitor progress of the actions. Please see Annex 1 for a breakdown of actions by service area.

A tracker document, managed by the Environmental Policy Team, sits behind the strategy in order to monitor progress. Progress of the actions in the strategy will be reported to the Cleaner Greener Board annually. The overall strategy will be reviewed every 5 years.

We will continue to develop relationships with stakeholders and partners and to identify potential funding opportunities and extend actions beyond those identified in this document if opportunities arise

It is hoped that ultimately, the strategy will form the starting point to provide a joined up approach to natural asset management in the city with the view to working towards producing a Natural Assets Strategy.

# Annex 1

## Actions by Service Area

Service Area	Actions	Timescale
<b>Environmental Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a 'Biodiversity Champions Scheme' which seeks to identify champions in each service who will become a central source of knowledge, advice and staff engagement.</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure biodiversity is incorporated into staff training programmes and that clear guidance is available for relevant service areas.</li> </ul>	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the council's grants for community and voluntary groups benefits local biodiversity initiatives.</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate a biodiversity theme into the council's successful Cleaner Greener Campaign programme</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of and encourage local people, businesses and organisations to use bat and bird boxes and green roofs and walls where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with and support the positive development of the Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire.</li> </ul>	Short

Service Area	Actions	Timescale
<b>Leisure, Parks &amp; Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure consideration is given to the timing of work to take into account breeding seasons etc.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to ensure any planting schemes undertaken by the council favours a variety of native species that are climate resilient.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to identify opportunities for managing city council cemeteries to benefit biodiversity.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to expand our volunteering programmes in our nature reserves and countryside parks.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that notable habitats and sites housing protected species within our land ownership are appropriately identified and managed in partnership with Natural England and BBOWT where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the biodiversity actions identified in the council's Green Spaces Strategy 2013 -2027.</li> </ul>	Medium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Bee Action Plan for Oxford and ensure actions are implemented.</li> </ul>	Short

Service Area	Actions	Timescale
<b>Direct Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure legally protected species and their habitats are not harmed during repairs to housing stock/management of land and/or property. This includes undertaking ecological surveys where necessary.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure consideration is given to the timing of building work, to take into account breeding seasons to avoid harm to breeding animals such as swifts.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a programme for the management of road verge cutting for the benefit of biodiversity.</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure any planting schemes undertaken by the council favours a variety of native species that are climate resilient.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify underused/ undevelopable council land and identify opportunities for biodiversity provision.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

Service Area	Actions	Timescale
<b>City Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Advice Note on biodiversity to be developed and published in order to provide advice to developers on how to conserve and encourage biodiversity (with input from Environmental Development)</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the development and maintenance of a good evidence base managed by TVERC.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all ecological surveys submitted through the planning process are shared with TVERC.</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all planning applications are screened for impact on trees and biodiversity and appropriate conditions and obligations imposed where relevant.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the potential for adopting BS 42020:2013 “Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development”.</li> </ul>	Medium/Long
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess opportunities for formalising the use of biodiversity offsetting in Oxford following the completion of the national pilot project.</li> </ul>	Medium/Long
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of and encourage local people, businesses and organisations to use bat and bird boxes and green roofs and walls where appropriate through the planning process.</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities for improving wildlife and habitat connectivity, including cross-boundary networks.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a comprehensive Tree Strategy for trees in the city.</li> </ul>	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive assessment of our biodiversity resource in preparation for the review of the Core Strategy.</li> </ul>	Medium/Long

Service Area	Actions	Timescale
<b>Housing &amp; Property</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure legally protected species and their habitats are not harmed during repairs to housing stock/management of land and/or property. This includes undertaking ecological surveys where necessary.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure consideration is given to the timing of work to take into account breeding seasons to avoid harm to breeding animals such as swifts.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure biodiversity is considered in the early stages of any council new build or regeneration programmes and seek to realise opportunities for incorporating green roofs/walls. This will include early engagement with the planning department on proposals that might affect biodiversity.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide bird and bat boxes in existing and new council buildings wherever possible and economically feasible.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify underused/ undevelopable council land and identify opportunities for biodiversity provision.</li> </ul>	Medium/Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take opportunities through tenancy management work and resident involvement to raise awareness and encourage biodiversity through the “Tenants in Touch” newsletter, (with support from Environmental Development).</li> </ul>	Short
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early engagement will be made with City Development on proposals that might affect biodiversity.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

The timescales are defined as:

- Short Term: Delivery within 1 year
- Medium Term: Delivery within 3 years
- Long Term: Delivery within 5 years

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