



Council Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2032

Vision

Through this Strategy and Action Plan, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will bring biodiversity to the forefront of service delivery and become an exemplar Council for conserving biodiversity on our estate.

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is all forms of life on Earth: from the microorganisms and worms in the soil to the badgers in the woods and whales in the sea, biodiversity also includes us. Biodiversity makes up the habitats around us and the ecosystems that every living thing depends on for survival. It can be found everywhere: sand dunes, rivers, peatbogs, woodlands. You can even find it in our urban landscapes: parks, gardens, road verges and hanging baskets.

Why is biodiversity important?

Without biodiversity, essentially, there would be no life on Earth. Biodiversity makes up ecosystems and healthy ecosystems provide us with things essential for a well-functioning and healthy society. These 'things' are known as ecosystem services.

Ecosystem services have been broken down into 4 main categories:

1. Provisioning: physical products we use from nature like raw materials (timber), food (fish), freshwater, medicines derived from nature to create pharmaceuticals.
2. Regulating: invisible processes which protect us or keep the environment stable like water filtration (peatbogs), storm protection (sand dunes), pollination.
3. Supporting: processes which make all other services possible like soil formation and nutrient cycling
4. Cultural: benefits which enrich our lives like recreation, mental health, natural beauty

For example, a healthy peatbog captures carbon from the atmosphere helping to fight climate change; filters water for cleaner drinking water; slows water flow preventing flooding; provides habitat for many species of plant and animal; provides recreational areas for our mental and physical wellbeing. Without a healthy peatbog, there would be



high costs to the economy to provide artificial functions of the services it freely and naturally gives. Unhealthy, damaged peatbogs can cost the UK economy “into the £billions” (Committee on Climate Change 2013).

“Nature is wondrous, fascinating and magnificent but most importantly it is our life support system. Northern Ireland has some of the rarest habitats in the UK, we must do all we can to cherish and protect them”. *Dara McAnulty, celebrated young conservationist and multi-award winning, autistic, author from County Down.*

Biodiversity in the Borough

The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area covers 14% of Northern Ireland and we boast a host of different habitats and species diversity. We are lucky enough to encompass coastal to upland and a variety of different habitats in between, each offering their own unique set of biodiversity and ecosystem functions. We have a considerable number of Priority Habitats in our area. These include excellent examples of coastal saltmarsh at the Roe and Bann Estuaries, lowland meadow only 5km outside Coleraine and the tranquil Breen oakwood. The habitats in our Borough support hundreds of species including Priority Species like Wood Crane’s-bill, a very rare, blue-purple flower; the jewel-bright Kingfisher and elusive Red Squirrel. Although the Priority Habitats and Species are important, we believe that all habitats and species are important and, through a holistic, landscape scale approach, we hope to conserve all that supports the biodiversity of our Borough. This is in accordance with the Biodiversity Duty in the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 (WANE Act) which states: “biodiversity duty extends beyond current legislative requirements for protected sites and species and requires all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their functions”.

We are proud to include 4 of the 8 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Northern Ireland: Antrim Coast and Glens, Binevenagh, Causeway Coast and Sperrins AONBs as well as Northern Ireland’s only Natural World Heritage Site, The Giants Causeway.

We also boast over 70 designated areas: 58 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), 12 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), 4 Special Protection Areas (SPA), 3 Ramsar sites, as well as 13 Nature Reserves, 3 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and 184 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI).

These designations reflect how important our Borough is for biodiversity, not only locally but regionally, nationally and internationally. This demonstrates the need for this strategy and for the Council to improve its environmental management to the best it can.

Biodiversity in Crisis

We are facing a global biodiversity crisis. Biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate on a global and local scale. In 2020, Northern Ireland was ranked 12th worst in the world for biodiversity loss according to the Biodiversity Intactness Index. 12% of our species are threatened with extinction (State of Nature Report 2023), a 1% increase since the 2019 report.

The main threats to biodiversity are:

1. Habitat loss and fragmentation.

Habitat loss is the destruction of a natural environment so it can no longer support its native species and functions. Fragmentation of habitats contributes to this loss as habitats become smaller and more disconnected, and wildlife is restricted to small areas causing species diversity and abundance to suffer. There has been a 43% decrease in abundance of farmland bird species, such as priority species linnet and yellowhammer, and 25% of regularly occurring bird species are now on the Red List. Land use changes, including different farming practices and development for housing, cause habitat loss. It is of utmost importance that we, as a society, implement changes to the way we use and develop land to alleviate pressures on biodiversity and allow for it to thrive.

76% of land in Northern Ireland is used for agriculture, meaning there is high potential for the farming community to contribute towards connecting and protecting biodiversity across the landscape. This is illustrated on Rathlin Island, where collaboration between farmers, the RSPB, and volunteers has enabled the return of the Corncrake—once extinct as a regular breeder on the island—with six calling males recorded in 2025. The project saw nettle rhizomes planted for early breeding cover on suitable land, alongside predator control to protect these ground nesting birds. This example demonstrates the positive impact that coordinated landowner action can deliver for biodiversity.

2. Invasive Non-Native Species.

Invasive non-native species, introduced by human activity, outcompete native flora and fauna for space and resources, posing a significant threat to biodiversity and our economy. The estimated annual cost of invasive species to Northern Ireland is £46.5million (Williams et al. 2013). They continue to be introduced, through accidental



and intentional releases, chance transport on imported goods and escape from gardens and estates.

Key invasive terrestrial plant species in the Borough are Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, cherry laurel and giant hogweed. These plants can cause issues further than the loss of biodiversity. Himalayan balsam, for example, causes riverbank erosion after it dies back in the winter and there is no remaining root system to hold banks together. It is the intention of the Action Plan to map and control, if not eradicate, populations of these and other terrestrial plants on Council's estate across the Borough.

Other examples of invasive species are the Grey Squirrel, one of the biggest threats to our native Red Squirrel alongside habitat loss and fragmentation. This larger, North American, cousin of the Red Squirrel was introduced into County Longford in 1911 and has since spread across most of the island. We are lucky that North County Antrim is one of the best places where the Red Squirrel is still doing well. These shy creatures can be seen in Cottage Wood, Cushendun and Cregagh Wood, thanks to the efforts of the Glens Red Squirrel Group.

3. Pollution

Pollution affects biodiversity in multiple ways, ranging from visible issues such as microplastics, sewage discharges and fly-tipping, to less visible pollutants including chemicals released into water, air and soil, as well as light and noise pollution that can disrupt wildlife behaviour.

Nitrogen pollution is a particular concern. It degrades peatlands, contributes to eutrophication and progressively reduces species diversity within sensitive habitats. Although Northern Ireland represents only 6% of the UK's land area, it produces 12% of the UK's ammonia emissions, a nitrogen-based pollutant. It also contains the highest proportion of nitrogen-sensitive habitats, with bryophyte (mosses & liverworts) abundance declining by 54% as a result of nitrogen impacts.

To reduce pollution across our estate, the Council will seek to minimise chemical use wherever possible. The Council also has enforcement powers to deter fly-tipping, including on-the-spot fines of £400 and court-issued fines of up to £50,000 or imprisonment.

Fly-tipping can be reported to Environmental Health at environmentalhealth@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk or 028 2766 0200.



4. Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global temperature and weather patterns. While natural factors, such as solar activity, play a role, human activity has been the dominant driver since the 1800s. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies the burning of fossil fuels as a primary source of greenhouse gas emissions, which trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to rising global temperatures. In Northern Ireland, agriculture accounts for 27% of total greenhouse gas emissions (State of Nature Report 2023) followed by transport at 18%.

Climate change not only alters global weather patterns but also poses a serious threat to biodiversity. It disrupts ecosystems and habitats that countless species rely on, weakening nature's resilience to climate impacts and reducing the ecosystem services vital to human wellbeing. Biodiversity and the climate are inextricably linked; healthy, functioning ecosystems remain one of the most effective natural defences against climate change. This is recognised in the Council's Climate Change Action Strategy and Council will be working collectively to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Through Council's Climate Strategy and this Biodiversity Strategy we aim to restore the peatland within Council's estate. Healthy peatlands store more carbon for longer periods than any other ecosystem worldwide (Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy) and their protection and restoration is a key, nature-based, solution to the climate and biodiversity crises.

5. Exploitation of natural resources and habitat degradation

We rely on the natural world around us to survive and use natural resources for all aspects of our lives. Sadly, this frequently leads to overexploiting the resources around us to the detriment of the ecosystems and the services they provide. In addition to the effect on species and habitats, overexploitation holds hidden costs. For example, the annual mental health benefits of visiting woodlands in Northern Ireland amounts to £6million (State of the UK's Woods and Trees). This is a benefit we gain for free but if our woodlands continue to be overexploited, these costs will be transferred to our health system.

It is in the Council's best interests to protect our natural assets. In the Causeway Coast and Glens, tourism is our main economic driver, and nature is the destination's defining asset. The Council's Destination Management Strategy 2026-2036 (DMS) recognises this and will strive to prioritise low-impact, nature-based tourism. It is the intention of the DMS to disperse visitor movement across the Borough to alleviate pressure on tourist hotspots, for example by producing inland itineraries to divert away from the coast. The DMS and this Biodiversity Strategy both endeavour to embed environmental principles across Council to ensure a fully collaborative approach.



Legislation: Biodiversity is our duty and responsibility

There are many laws, regulations and guidance in place to protect biodiversity.

International, National, Regional

Put into timeline graphic

1. Ramsar Convention 1975 (conservation and wise use of all wetlands)
2. Birds Directive 1979 (oldest piece of nature legislation of the EU, emphasises protection of habitats for endangered and migratory birds, Special Protection Areas derive from this)
3. Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (Amendment) 1995 (protection of birds, other animals and wild plants)
4. EU Habitats Directive 1992 (overall objective: "maintain and restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora", Special Areas of Conservation derive from this)
5. **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992 (first global agreement to conserve biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components)**
6. UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1994 (UK's response to CBD 1992, first country to produce national biodiversity action plan)
7. The Environment Order (NI) 2002 (focuses on pollution)
8. Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (2002) (proposed measures to support conservation of biodiversity from 2001-2016, placed responsibility on society as a whole)
9. **Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 (WANE Act) (places statutory duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity)**
10. Marine (NI) Act 2013 (framework for sustainable marine management in NI inshore region)
11. Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (NI) 2019 (regulations and criminal offences regarding introduction and spread of invasive species)
12. **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (published 2020, long term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems)**
13. Environment Act 2021 (framework of environmental governance including establishing an Officer for Environmental Protection and Environmental Improvement Plans)
14. **Nature Positive 2030 report (five statutory nature conservation bodies produced this report looking at best practice across the UK, presenting solutions that can be scaled up to achieve change)**
15. All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020, followed by 2021-2025, awaiting publishing 2026-2030 (a shared plan of action to restore pollinator populations to healthy levels)
16. Green Growth Strategy (launched 2022, sets long term vision for tackling climate crises, balancing climate, environment and economy)
17. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (target of at least 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, requires 5-year Climate Action Plans on how target to be achieved)
18. Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2022-2040 (framework to conserve and restore peatlands)
19. **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2022 (sets the pathway to a world "living in harmony with nature" by 2050, targets for 2030 include the protection and conservation of 30% of land and sea by 2030 aka 30x30)**
20. Environmental Improvement Plan (2024, "will form the basis for a coherent and effective set of interventions that can deliver real improvements in the quality of the environment")
21. **Draft Nature Recovery Strategy (Biodiversity Strategy required by legislation, how Northern Ireland intends to meet international and national ambitions for the conservation of biodiversity)**



What we already do

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and the cluster councils before it, have been carrying out positive actions for biodiversity over the years. Here are some highlights of the many actions already taken.

Original Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018 – a comprehensive showcase of the biodiversity across the cluster councils before they amalgamated in 2015. It highlighted actions and community projects for priority habitats and species in the area.

Don't Mow Let It Grow – established in 2016 with funding from Heritage Lottery Fund and Landfill Communities Fund and working in partnership with Transport NI, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, volunteers and council staff. This large pilot project identified areas of grass verge and amenity grassland suitable for a change grass in management from regular cuts to meadow management. The project has been very successful and its legacy lives on with the original areas flourishing and new sites continuing to be added.

Conservation Grazing – introduced at Benone within the last 10 years and now across 4 coastal sites. Coastal sand dunes are sensitive and diverse sites which require careful management. Native breeds of cattle are used in low numbers over the winter to maintain the dune and coastal grassland habitats. The grazing animals prevent scrub forming on the dunes and grasslands and open up areas of vegetation to allow other specialist and rare species to grow.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan – Council signed up as a partner of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) in 2022, formalising the commitment to sustaining pollinators across the Borough. Many actions already taken by the council contribute to the AIPP and we continue to refer to the guidance to increase our positive actions for pollinating insects and the habitats they require.

Hi-colour flower mixes – First sown out 2017 to improve plant availability for pollinating insects. These beautiful cornfield annuals are not true wildflower meadows but certainly have their place in town centres and roundabouts. They act as a bridge between the formal flowerbeds and native wildflower meadows to help change the mindset of viewing wildflower meadows as 'messy' to beautiful, natural and essential.

Dune restoration – a pilot dune restoration project was successfully completed at Runkerry Beach, Portballintrae in 2023. Coconut coir rolls were used to stabilise a blowout in the dunes which was then backfilled with sand and planted with marram grass. This effective method will be tailored and used in other areas identified as necessary for restoration.

Why we need this strategy and action plan

We need this Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duty to protect biodiversity. Beyond legal responsibility, it is vital that we safeguard nature for its intrinsic value and preserve biodiversity for future generations. This Strategy recognises that biodiversity is fundamental to the wellbeing of our communities, our environment and our local economy.

To achieve meaningful progress, biodiversity must be embedded into the everyday work of the Council. This requires a cultural shift—from viewing biodiversity as an afterthought to placing it at the forefront of service delivery. This Strategy and Action Plan sets out clear, deliverable actions, offering a structured approach rather than the piecemeal or ad-hoc efforts of the past. By doing so, it supports the restoration and maintenance of healthy, functioning ecosystems, benefiting both wildlife and the people who rely on these natural systems.

Where this strategy sits within Council

The CBSAP is written to align with, strengthen and support the delivery of other strategic documents which inform the Council's business planning.

A Better Future Together Community Plan 2017-2030

Biodiversity encompasses all living things, meaning our community is inherently immersed in it. As such, this Strategy underpins the key outcomes of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan: a Thriving Community, a Healthy and Safe Community, and a Sustainable, Accessible Environment.

Intermediate Outcome 6 — that the Causeway Coast and Glens is widely recognised and celebrated for its unique natural and built landscapes — is directly aligned with this Strategy. There are also strong linkages to Intermediate Outcomes 1, 4, 5, and 8, all of which depend on an environment where biodiversity thrives and is prioritised.

The Local Development Plan is currently being prepared and will promote biodiversity enhancement and complement this Strategy.

Council Plan 2026-2031

The Council's Corporate Plan highlights that our Borough has a unique natural environment, and we must ensure it is enhanced and protected. Specifically falling under Priority 4 is the commitment to protect, enhance and sustainably manage our natural and built environment alongside addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.



Climate Change Action Strategy 2025-2032

The Council's Climate Change Action Strategy recognises that biodiversity and climate change are inextricably linked. The impact of climate change on biodiversity is clearly demonstrated within the strategy, and the action plan reflects this, seeking nature-based solutions. There are many aligned actions that both the Climate and Biodiversity Strategies will be striving to deliver.

Destination Management Strategy

The Council's Destination Management Strategy appreciates that our natural assets are the key feature of our tourism appeal. It clearly sets out that Council must adopt an environmentally sensitive approach to destination management. The actions in this strategy support the Destination Management Strategy's approach.

Recovery and Renewal – an economic strategy for the Causeway Coast and Glens 2020

The Council's economic strategy acknowledges the negative impact of environmental degradation on the local economy, stating that the success of a modern economy, amongst other things, is dependent on an attractive living environment.

Vision

The vision of this Strategy and Action Plan is to ensure biodiversity is embedded at the forefront of all Council activity. Biodiversity considerations should become second nature for staff when planning projects and developing annual work programmes. While this cultural shift will take time, with appropriate support and organisational commitment, it is fully achievable. Biodiversity must be regarded as a core responsibility rather than an optional or peripheral element. This Strategy seeks to make biodiversity integration straightforward and achievable for all staff, forming an essential part of routine decision-making rather than an additional burden.

Themes running through Action Plan

To focus our actions, they will fall under 5 themes:

Restore – repairing damaged habitats, this includes invasive species control.

Enhance – actions to improve quality of the biodiversity and habitats in the Borough, for example carrying out habitat restoration projects.



Protect – preserve and manage the biodiversity we already have, ensuring no more biodiversity loss on our estate.

Increase – increase the abundance and variety of biodiversity across Council's estate, including through native tree planting and installing bird boxes.

Connect – a two-pronged theme: physically linking habitats *and* re-connecting people with the environment. "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced." *Sir David Attenborough*

How we will measure our progress

To achieve the 5 themes for biodiversity action, the actions laid out in the action plan are all SMART targets. They are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.

In our natural estate, baseline surveys will be conducted to measure what biodiversity already exists, so we know we are, at the very least, maintaining the same level and not reducing it. We will use existing information from the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) and similar data sets, as well as on-site surveys to monitor the sites regularly.

Council will carry out annual progress reviews, internally reporting achievements and addressing any issues which may impede fulfilling the actions.

Action Plan

Sector	Action no.	Lead	Action Title	Action Description	Timeframe	Outcome	Theme
Built Environment	1	Civic facilities, Estates, BHMO	Urban provision	Install provision for biodiversity on Council buildings eg bird boxes, green walls	2027-2032	2 commodities a year. Create/increase habitat for biodiversity on our buildings.	Increase, Connect
	2	Harbours, BHMO	Blue provision	Install pilot green/blue infrastructure into harbour or marina (eg reef wall, oyster ropes)	2026-2032	1 installed by 2032. Enhance harbour habitat for aqua-biodiversity.	Enhance, Connect
	3	Harbours, Operations	Litter escape prevention	Develop and install litter prevention scheme to prevent litter entering water	2026-2032	1 installed by 2032. Protect marine environment from litter exposure.	Protect
	4	Climate change, Capital, BHMO	Green infrastructure	Prioritise native species in selection for green infrastructure	2026-2032	Ensure that all green infrastructure is suitable for native biodiversity	Enhance, Increase, Connect
Urban Greenspace	5	BHMO, Estates, Asset holders	Grounds management	Habitat management plans written for Council estate and adjustments to management made	2026-2032	Land appropriately managed for biodiversity and public use	Enhance, Increase, Connect
	6	Asset Management, Estates, GIS, BHMO	Grass management	Review grass management across council estate to determine areas suitable for less intensive management	2026-2027	Flowering species from seed bank re-appear. Food and habitat for insects. Financial savings from fewer cuts a year	Restore, Enhance
	7	Asset Management, BHMO, Asset holders	Unused land and biodiversity	Determine if unused land can be used to enhance biodiversity provision and management plan put in place	2027-2032	waste' ground revitalised and managed for biodiversity	Restore, Enhance, Increase, Connect
	8	Environmental Resources, BHMO, Operations	Recycling centre biodiversity	Provide for biodiversity in recycling centres by reusing and repurposing discarded items	2027-2032	1 item repurposed a year. Biodiversity in recycling centres increase. Public awareness of possibilities increased	Increase, Connect
	9	Estates, BHMO	Flowerbeds	Review flowerbed planting regime to increase sustainability and biodiversity provision	2027-2029	Financial savings on planting. Best possible plants for pollinators used.	Enhance, Increase, Connect
	10	BHMO, Estates, Caravan Parks	Caravan park habitats	Develop and implement habitat management plans for all caravan parks	2026-2027	All plans actioned by 2027. Increase biodiversity in caravan parks.	Restore, Enhance, Increase, Connect
	11	BHMO, Sports & Wellbeing, Caravan Parks, Estates	Biodiversity trails	Establish biodiversity trails in sport centre grounds, parks and caravan parks	2028-2032	3 by 2032. Increase public awareness of biodiversity. Provide education and physical wellbeing in natural space.	Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	12	BHMO, Estates	Memorial trees	Develop memorial tree species list for public to select from	2026-2027	Appropriate species may be selected for memorial trees according to location of planting	Increase, Connect
	13	Estates	Peat free	Go completely peat free in all planting and procurement	2026-2027	Peat free council by end 2027	Protect, Connect
Rural Greenspace	14	Coast & Countryside, Operations, Estates	Biodiversity park	Create a biodiversity park either on unused land, newly bought land or capped landfill	2027-2032	1 planned by 2032	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	15	GIS, external stakeholders, BHMO	Biodiversity corridors	Map strategic areas to develop biodiversity corridors	2029-2032	Strategic corridors highlighted to inform future projects for linking habitats.	Connect
	16	Coast & Countryside, Climate Change, Funding	Altarichard restoration	Establish restoration project for Altarichard Bog	2026-2032	Funding secured by end 2029. planned and implemented by 2032.	Restore, Protect, Connect
	17	Tourism & Destination Management, Coast & Countryside	Tourism hotspots	Establish ways to reduce pressure on tourism hotspots	2027-2032	Visitors dispersed across Borough. Responsible and sustainable outdoor recreation achieved	Protect
	18	Coast & Countryside	Sensitive outdoor recreation	Sensitively manage recreational use of natural sites	2026-2032	Reduced impact of use of sites	Protect
	19	BHMO, Coast & Countryside, Estates	Habitat management plans	Develop and implement habitat management plans for estate over 1ha in size	2026-2032	2 per year until all complete. Begin appropriate management of all Estate over 1ha for biodiversity.	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase
	20	Coast & Countryside, Estates, NIEA	Designated site management	Implement NIEA management plans on designated sites in Council estate	2026-2032	Ongoing site management using NIEA plans	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase
	21	Estates, BHMO	Replace lost trees	Actively seek to replace storm damage or felled trees, for every 1 lost, plant 2. Do not include trees felled due to woodland thinning management	2027-2032	Ensure we maintain and increase the number of trees in the Borough	Increase
	22	BHMO	Priority species or habitat campaign	Annual selection of flagship priority species or habitat to celebrate through awareness raising campaign	2027-2032	Raise awareness of key species or habitats. Public and staff knowledge increased.	Connect
	23	Coast & Countryside	Priority species and habitats	Maintain good relations with external organisations and local experts to deliver best practice for priority species and habitats	2026-2032	Continuous sharing of best practice for the management of priority species and habitats	Enhance, Protect, Connect

	24	Coast & Countryside, external stakeholders	County Antrim Geopark	Explore and support potential for a geopark in Country Antrim	2026-2032	Investigation into a unified geographical area that is managed holistically	Protect, Connect
	25	Coast & Countryside, external stakeholders	Binevenagh Biosphere	Explore and support potential for a biosphere at Binevenagh	2026-2032	Investigation into an area where science, culture and inclusive governance come together. Demonstration of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development work together	Protect, Connect
	26	Coast & Countryside	AONB management plans	Continue to support delivery of AONB management plans	2026-2032	Ongoing support of the organisations who help manage the AONBs in the Borough. Contribute to AONB management plan consultations.	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Connect
Coastal openspace	27	Climate Change, Coast & Countryside, Estates	Coastal defence	Establish natural and green infrastructure coastal defence options	2029-2031	List of plausible options to choose from for coastal defence	Protect
	28	Coast & Countryside	Dune restoration	Identify and restore areas of dunes through natural and 'green engineering'	2026-2032	Dune erosion due to human activity is addressed and restored naturally. Projects are highlighted publically to raise awareness and ensure continued protection	Restore, Protect, Connect
	29	Coast & Countryside, Harbours & Marinas	Marine life encounters	Adhere to guidance from DAERA regarding marine life encounters and help to guide public	2026-2032	Council and public awareness raised on how to encounter marine life appropriately	Protect
	30	Coast & Countryside	Coastal conservation grazing	Implement coastal conservation grazing across appropriate sites as a standard to site management	2026-2032	Light touch, non-mechanical site management. Collaboration with local farmers for conservation purposes.	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Connect
	31	Coast & Countryside	Coast & community	Support community coastal projects	2026-2032	Coastal community projects are supported. Closer links made between council and community	Connect
	32	Coast & Countryside	Coastal management	Manage our coastal sites according to guidance from coastal forum working group	2026-2032	Best practice sought and implemented for coastal management	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
Engagement	33	Estates	Wildlife gardening	Train apprentices in wildlife gardening	2028-2032	2 trained by 2032, knowledge within Estates team is increased and can be shared to improve estate planting for biodiversity.	Connect
	34	Estates, BHMO, Climate Change, Community & Culture, external stakeholders	Tree planting	10k permanent native trees planted across the Borough annually. Count in collaboration with external stake stakeholders and community	2026-2032	10k permanent native trees annually in appropriate locations	Enhance, Increase, Connect
	35	GIS, BHMO	Tree planting map	Working map developed of annual tree planting	2030-2032	Story map developed to show tree planting across Borough	Connect
	36	Harbours, BHMO	Harbour & marina environment education programme	Deliver annual environmental education programme highlighting the biodiversity of the harbours and marinas	2027-2032	Awareness is raised of the local biodiversity and impacts of harbour activity	Connect
	37	Coast & Countryside	Beach environmental education programme	Deliver annual environmental education programme highlighting the biodiversity of the beaches and surrounding area	2027-2032	Awareness is raised of the local biodiversity and impacts of beach use. Blue Flag Award criteria is reached.	Connect
	38	BHMO, Harbours	Harbour & marina biodiversity displays	Develop and erect harbour and marina biodiversity posters for all harbour and marina offices	2030-2032	Awareness is raised for locals and visitors of the local biodiversity	Connect
	39	BHMO, Community & Culture	Community biodiversity	Support community groups with biodiversity projects	2027-2032	Provide advice for biodiversity related projects for 3 groups a year	Connect, Enhance
	40	BHMO, Community & Culture, external stakeholders	Volunteering opportunities	Promote local environmental volunteering opportunities within all communities	2026-2032	Raise awareness of opportunities, increase number of volunteers for the environment	Connect, Protect
	41	BHMO	Biodiversity in school grounds	Support schools to increase biodiversity in school grounds	2027-2032	Provide 3 schools a year with biodiversity plans for their school grounds	Connect, Enhance, Increase
	42	Community & Culture, BHMO	Biodiversity promotion in the Arts	Explore biodiversity project opportunities in Council Art Centres and Museums	2030-2032	Biodiversity display developed in collaboration with external stakeholders, awareness raised	Connect
	43	Tourism & Destination Management, Coast & Countryside, Caravan Parks	Eco-Tourism Opportunities	Explore options of promoting eco-tourism opportunities	2029-2032	Tourism impacts reduced, biodiversity projects supported	Connect, Enhance, Protect, Restore
	44	Events, BHMO, Estates, external stakeholders	Biodiversity in events	Develop and implement biodiversity hub at key events	2029-2032	All key Council events promote biodiversity	Connect
	45	BHMO, Tourism & Destination Management, Caravan Parks	Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and Caravan Park biodiversity displays	Develop biodiversity posters for VICs & Caravan parks, highlighting biodiversity and impacts of tourism	2030-2032	Awareness raised in visitors and actions they can take to reduce their impacts	Connect, Protect

46	BHMO, Coast & Countryside	Public Biodiversity Forum	Establish biodiversity forum for public, Council and elected members to share updates, knowledge and expertise on biodiversity across the Borough	2026	Bi-annual forum established to share knowledge on biodiversity matters across Borough	Connect
47	BHMO, Coast & Countryside	Council Biodiversity Forum	Establish internal biodiversity forum	2026	Internal platform to ensure implementation of CBSAP	Connect
48	BHMO	Biodiversity talks	Continue to deliver talks on biodiversity across the Borough	2026-2032	Deliver 2 biodiversity related talks a year	Connect
49	Environmental resources, Coast & Countryside	Flytipping awareness	Develop and deliver a flytipping awareness campaign	2028-2029	Public awareness raised of cross-disciplinary issues of flytipping	Protect, Connect
50	BHMO, external stakeholders	Peatbog awareness campaign	Develop and deliver an educational resource on peatbogs	2030-2032	Awareness raised of importance of peatbogs and what landowners can do to restore, maintain and protect them	Protect, Connect, Enhance, Restore
51	Estates, BHMO	Wildflower video	Develop publically available educational video on the wildflower and Don't Mow Let It Grow Projects	2030-2032	Awareness raised of why and how wildflowers are managed, increased understanding of the messy stage of wildflower meadows	Connect
52	BHMO	Rathlin biodiversity	Support Rathlin residents in delivering their Local Biodiversity Action Plan	2026-2032	Connections between island and mainland maintained and strengthened.	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
53	Environmental Resources, BHMO, Operations, Community & Culture	Repurpose for biodiversity	Produce an educational video on reusing and repurposing discarded items to increase biodiversity in small spaces	2029-2031	Produce 1 educational video	Connect, Enhance, Increase
54	Procurement, Climate Change, BHMO	Green procurement framework	Develop and implement green procurement policy	2026-2030	Sustainable procurement	Protect
55	BHMO, Estates, Procurement	Plant hierarchy list	Develop plant procurement hierarchy. Hierarchy on plant value to biodiversity.	2026-2032	All plants to be procured according to plant hierarchy	Enhance, Increase
56	Planning	Bird nesting provision	Based on decline in bird population, explore possibility of incorporating bird nesting provision in new and refurbishment developments	2026-2032	Bird nesting provision included in LDP	Increase
57	Planning	Biodiversity gain	Advocate for all new applications to enhance biodiversity within the development	2026-2032	Biodiversity provision/gain included in LDP	Increase
58	GIS	Share biodiversity data	Share biodiversity data across relevant Council departments and projects, such as invasive species locations, grass management schedules	2027-2032	Fluid communication across departments	Connect, Enhance
59	ICT, BHMO	Biodiversity webpage update	Update biodiversity information on Council and tourism websites	2028-2030	Updated information, easier access	Connect
60	Coast & Countryside, Environmental Services	Toolbox talks	Deliver annual toolbox talks to relevant staff on biodiversity and biosecurity related matters	2027-2032	Operational staff annually trained in relevant biodiversity and biosecurity matters	Connect, Protect, Restore
61	Estates, BHMO	Alternative herbicides and pesticides	Investigate alternatives to herbicides and pesticides, including alternative operational practices that avoid spraying	2026-2029	Information collated on reduction of herbicide and pesticide use in estate management with the aim to reduce use across estate management by 2032	Protect, Restore
62	Estates, BHMO	Herbicide and pesticide free sites	Identify sites which can be maintained without the use of herbicides and pesticides	2027-2029	1 site per legacy area herbicide and pesticide free	Protect
63	Estates, BHMO	Tree policy	Develop tree policy, investigate the need for Tree Officer	2026-2032	Tree policy produced	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase
64	All departments	Biodiversity agenda	Include biodiversity on agenda for team meetings	2026-2032	Biodiversity brought to forefront of service and delivery	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
65	BHMO, Capital, Estates, Project Sponsor	Biodiversity point system	Develop and implement point system for biodiversity provision in projects	2026-2029	Biodiversity included in planning stages of projects, brings biodiversity to forefront of delivery	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
66	Harbours, BHMO	Alternative slipway cleaning	Investigate alternative to chemical slipway cleaning	2026-2028	Information collated on reduction of chemical use in slipway cleaning	Protect, Restore
67	Tourism & Destination Management, Coast & Countryside	Sensitive tourism	Embed light touch, leave no trace ethos in Destination Management Strategy	2026-2027	Environmentally sensitive tourism approach implemented. Visitors dispersed across Borough.	Protect, Connect
68	BHMO, Events	Events biodiversity safeguarding	Develop and implement biodiversity safeguarding procedure for all Council events, including wildlife monitoring procedures	2027-2028	Set of procedures established and implemented for all Council events.	Protect
69	BHMO	Baseline data	Establish baseline biodiversity data for all Council estate	2026-2032	Baseline data set to enable monitoring of actions	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect

Governance	70	Coast & Countryside, Estates, GIS	Play and protect	Develop and implement integrated site plans for recreation and biodiversity	2029-2032	1 site management plan a year on recreation sites over 1ha	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	71	Prosperity & Place, BHMO	Biodiversity rich living	Embed biodiversity in town and village plans for a specific focus on biodiversity, separate from environmental sustainability	2030-2032	Establish biodiversity theme in town and village plans	Connect, Enhance, Increase, Protect
	72	Prosperity & Place, BHMO	Regeneration project	Biodiversity to be included in regeneration projects, aiming to increase biodiversity by 10%	2030-2032	10% biodiversity gain on all regeneration projects from 2030	Enhance, Increase
	73	Funding, BHMO	Capital Grants Programme	Develop and implement biodiversity requirements in Capital Grants Programme using biodiversity points system	2028 - 2029	Biodiversity provision within wider community	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	74	Environmental Resources, Funding, BHMO	LiveSmart criteria	Revise LiveSmart grant criteria to align with good biodiversity practice	2026	Specific biodiversity requirements met by grant applicants, eg peat free planting	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	75	Coast & Countryside, Funding	Biodiversity grant	Investigate the possibility of developing a biodiversity grant	2026-2027	Establish whether a publically available grant to restore, enhance, protect increase and connect biodiversity across the Borough can be developed within Coast & Countryside	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	76	All Council departments	Business plans	Each department business plan to include line: We will consider the impact on biodiversity in all work and endeavour to restore, enhance, protect or increase biodiversity.	2027-2032	Cultural shift across Council to recognise importance of biodiversity	Connect
	77	Planning	LDP review	Review LDP to ensure adequate protection of priority habitats and species	2026-2032	LDP reviewed	Restore, Enhance, Protect, Increase, Connect
	78	BHMO	Biodiversity safeguarding	Develop environmental survey glossary and checklist for safeguarding biodiversity in development projects	2026-2028	List and description of all potential surveys needed	Protect
	79	Operations, Estates	Wood use	Explore possibility of selling or making available scrap wood and felled trees for firewood	2026-2032	Utilise valuable wood resource instead of putting to landfill	Connect
	80	Events, BHMO	Fireworks and wildlife	Review the use of fireworks in Council events. Explore alternative options to firework displays	2026-2028	Stringent measures in place for firework displays. Alternative options sought and put to Council for decision	Protect
	81	Land & Property, BHMO	Use of Council Land	Insert paragraph to user agreement of Council estate for external organisations and utilities to restore ecosystem functions and biodiversity to previous or better condition after event or works	2026-2027	Stringent measures in place to preserve site biodiversity and ecosystem functions of land used by external organisations and utilities companies	Protect
	82	Planning	Ecologist in planning	Explore option of appointing a qualified ecologist for planning department	2026-2028	Assistance with consultations on natural heritage issues, dispensing the need to consult NIEA unnecessarily and streamlining the process.	Protect
	83	Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, BHMO	Green energy	Ensure green energy does not compromise biodiversity , ie no solar panels installed on green space, utilise built areas	2026-2032	Biodiversity and climate change actions complement one another	Protect
Biosecurity	84	BHMO, Estates	Invasive Species Strategy and Management Plan	Develop and implement strategy and plan to address invasive species on Council estate	2029-2032	Strategic plan to deal with invasive species on our estate	Restore, Protect
	85	Harbours, BHMO, external stakeholders, Funding	Biosecure Ports	Deliver biosecurity project for Ballycastle and Rathlin harbours	2026-2028	Biosecurity measures in place in Ballycastle and Rathlin harbours. Biosecurity education pack developed. Integrity of LifeRaft project maintained.	Protect, Connect
	86	Harbours	Invasive species survey	Work with DAERA to retrieve results of annual DAERA invasive species survey of harbours and marinas and action the results	2026-2032	Harbours and marinas prevent invasive species infestations	Protect
	87	Planning	Invasive plants in landscaping	Prohibit planting of non-native invasive species as per Part 2 of the Schedule of Invasive Alien Species Order (NI) 2019 and Part 2 Schedule 9 of The Wildlife (NI) Order	2028-2032	Include statement in LDP. Enforce for all planning applications.	Protect
	88	Planning	Invasive plants in landscaping 2	Dissuade against planting of non-native invasive species and refer developers to 'plant hierarchy list'	2028-2032	Statement in LDP against planting certain species. Greater weight given to applications without these plants.	Protect

	89	Estates, Operations, Events, Coast & Countryside	Embed biosecurity measures in service delivery	Produce biosecurity procedures for day to day service delivery. Identify hotspot sites.	2028-2032	Bespoke biosecurity procedures written. Procedures followed by all relevant staff	Protect
	90	Estates, Operations, Events, Coast & Countryside	Biosecurity kits	Biosecurity kits bought and distributed amongst relevant staff	2026-2027	Biosecure practice embedded into service delivery.	Protect
	91	Harbours	Biosecure Ports 2	Utilise learning from Biosecure Ports to roll out to all Council harbours and marinas	2029-2032	All Council harbours and marinas follow biosecurity best practice by 2032	Protect

Glossary

Biodiversity – the variety of all living things on Earth

Species – a specific, individual kind of plant, animal or living thing

Native species – any plant or animal that naturally belongs in a specific region

Non-native species – any plant or animal that have been intentionally or accidentally introduced to a new region

Invasive non-native species – a non-native species which is problematic and pushes out native species by using up resources like space and nutrients

Priority species – a species which has been officially highlighted as needing urgent protection

Priority habitat – a habitat which is critically threatened and highly valuable to nature and has been officially highlighted as needing urgent protection

Habitat – the home where a plant, animal or other living thing lives. Habitats can be as vast as an ocean or as small as a plant pot

Ecosystem – a community where living things (plants, animals, bacteria) interact with each other and their non-living environment (soil, water, weather)

Ecosystem services – the direct and indirect life-supporting benefits that the natural environment provide to humans for free

Climate Change – long term shift in weather patterns, mostly caused by human activity (such as burning fossil fuels)

Mitigate – actions to reduce the causes of climate change

Biosecurity – measures in place to lower the risk and prevent spread of invasive non-native species and diseases

Urban Green Space – areas of nature in a village, town or city

Rural Green Space – any vegetated, natural or semi-natural land in the countryside

Eutrophication – a nutrient build-up in water which leads to algal blooms that suffocate other aquatic life

Flora – plant life

Fauna – animal life

Red list – regional assessment of plants, animals and birds most at risk of extinction or severe population decline

Designations

AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a special landscape recognised for their natural beauty and unique character. Protected and managed to conserve and enhance their natural and cultural heritage. National Designation.

ASSI – Area of Special Scientific Interest, protected areas that represent the best of our wildlife and geological sites. National Designation.

SAC – Special Area of Conservation, strictly protected site designated to safeguard rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species. European/International Designation

SPA – Special Protection Area, strictly protected site designated to safeguard the habitats of rare, vulnerable and migratory birds. European/International Designation

Ramsar site – specific wetlands recognised as being significant for the whole world. International Designation

Nature Reserve – represent the best examples of our wildlife, habitats and geology. National Designation.

LNR – Local Nature Reserve, protected area of land designated by local council to protect nature, geology and recreational value. Local Designation.

SLNCI – Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance, identified as supporting habitats, species and earth science features. Identified through Local Development Plan.