Ribble Valley
Borough Council

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Biodiversity Duty Report

v.1

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Policy administration

Policy ownership

For any queries about this policy, please contact the plan owner.

Department	All
Owner	Lyndsey Hayes / Erika Eden-Porter
Committee	Economic Development / Planning & Development Committee

This policy is maintained and published on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council. A copy of this policy will be published on the Council Intranet and will be reviewed and updated as stated below.

Version control and review date

Version	Date	Reason for Publication	Approved by Committee / Date	Review Date
V1	January 2026	Biodiversity Duty Report	Economic Development / Planning & Development Date	January 2031 (within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period.

This policy will be reviewed, as a minimum, on an annual basis. However, consideration should be given to reviewing the policy should there be any changes in legislation or guidance. The policy/procedure owner will ensure the document is reviewed as stated.

Equality implications

	Action	Yes / No
An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed		No – EIA Checklist completed
EIA Hyperlink	**N/A**	

Supporting documents or legislation relating to this policy

Please include any supporting documents / legislation
1. The Environment Act 2021
2.. The UK Government Environmental Improvement Plan 2023
3. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)
4. Guidance Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK
5. Guidance Reporting your biodiversity duty actions - GOV.UK

1. Purpose of this report

1.1. The Council has published its Biodiversity Duty First Considerations Report setting out the approach the Council might take to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout its corporate strategies, objectives, actions and continued operations.

1.2. This report represents the first formal reporting period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025 on the Biodiversity Duty, following the publication of the First Considerations Report, taking account of the relevant Government Guidance (Reporting your biodiversity duty actions - GOV.UK).

2. RVBC's policies, objectives and actions

Policies and objectives set to meet the biodiversity duty. See also Section 6. Summary of actions completed:

2.1 RVBC Corporate Plan 2023-2028. The purpose of the Corporate Plan is to show what we, the Council, will do about the priorities for Ribble Valley. This document sets out our strategic way forward; it aims to take us to the next level. The plan focusses on the following four goals, each of which has a number of target outcomes:

1. Residents, their health, and wellbeing – Creating flourishing, healthy, and happy communities.
2. Valuing our place and our environment - Making the Ribble Valley a place we want to be by creating a safer, stronger, greener, and cleaner Borough
3. Building a strong economy - Sustaining a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
4. Continue to be a well-managed Council - Providing efficient services based on identified customer needs

Of particular relevance to the Biodiversity Duty, under goal 2 are that we will:

- Deliver an achievable Climate Change Strategy through development of the action plan, and
- Work to preserve our countryside, parks, and areas of natural beauty.

2.2 The council has made some progress on the issue of climate change through its Climate Change Strategy 2021–2030 and subsequent action plans but in declaring a Climate Emergency the council commits to accelerate, widen and deepen its actions by working with all sections of the community. A motion passed at council on 14 October 2025 stated that the council will set targets and develop resources to both enable carbon neutrality across the full range of council activities by 2030 and also to support making the Borough of Ribble Valley carbon neutral by 2050.

2.3 The Climate Change Action Plan 2026/2027 was approved by Economic Development Committee on Thursday, 11 June 2026, with action plan goals/objectives and actions having been considered by the Climate Emergency Working Group which also take into account the 14 October 2025, Notice of Motion to Declare a Climate Emergency that was approved by Council. The action plan includes the goal to Commit to enhancing RVBC's biodiversity on council land by:

- *Action:* Regularly reviewing existing management plans to consider biodiversity and carbon sequestration in all our habitats on council land.

- *How we will do this:* by introducing biodiversity enhancement measures where appropriate, including wildflower habitats, reduced mowing schedules and an increase in native low maintenance bedding displays

- *Action:* Review the Local Plan and embed climate change and nature recovery
  - *How we will do this:* the Local Plan includes policies on mitigation, adaptation and resilience to address climate change in RVBC. Include policies that support biodiversity and nature recovery.

2.4 Preparation of the **New Local Plan.** The Ribble Valley Local Development Framework was formally prepared and adopted by the council in two stages – The Core Strategy in December 2014; and Housing and Economic Development DPD and Proposal's Map in November 2019 when the council also resolved to prepare a new Local Plan.

The new Local Plan will update the adopted Local Development Framework (LDF). It will comprise a single document which sets the overall planning strategy for the borough up to 2042 alongside detailed development management policies. A copy of the Ribble Valley Local Plan Timetable can be found here.

2.5 As it is now a legal requirement under the Environment Act 2021 for all development to provide at least a 10 per cent biodiversity net gain to be delivered in specific circumstances. RVBC adopted on 29 May 2025 a Local Validation Checklist for the purposes of validating planning applications. As well as outlining mandatory national requirements, the document outlines a local list of validation criteria. It also provides further guidance and context to the local approach to delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in planning.

2.6 The Council also offers a pre-application advice service about biodiversity net gain. There is a non-refundable fee for this service which can be calculated in the pre-application guidance notes.

2.7 The Lancashire Waste Partnership which is made up of the 15 authorities comprising the County Council and the Lancashire-14 are updating the Lancashire Waste Strategy for managing waste up to 2036. The new draft waste strategy 'A low waste Lancashire' supports the reduction in waste production, and the reuse and recycling of waste, which diverts waste away from disposal to landfill for the whole of Lancashire.

The Partnership aims to provide the most efficient waste management service possible for Lancashire residents. The National Simpler Recycling reforms came into effect on the 1 April 2026 and will introduce a consistent set of recyclable materials for all councils in England to improve material capture.

These waste management policies and processes have positive benefits for biodiversity by reducing contamination, and reducing demands for natural resources, including land, which can then be restored for nature conservation.

2.8 The Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was published on 16th January 2026, in accordance with the requirements of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and taking account of the results of a public consultation which concluded in August 2025. The Strategy is made up of two main elements, a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, and a Local Habitat Map.

3. How RVBC can affect biodiversity

3.1. As a public authority, the Council has a duty under the Environment Act 2021 to consider how it can contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England. This could include considering biodiversity conservation and enhancement in council strategies, approaches to land management, planning decisions, providing advice to the public, raising community awareness and other operations.

3.2. For example, most of Ribble Valley lies within the Forest of Bowland, originally designated as an Outstanding Area of Natural Beauty, and now recognised as a 'National landscape'.

3.3. The Forest of Bowland, also known as the Bowland Fells and formerly the Chase of Bowland is an area of gritstone fells, deep valleys and peat moorland is mostly in north-east Lancashire, with a small part in North Yorkshire (however roughly half of the area falls into the area of the historic West Riding of Yorkshire). It is a western outlier of the Pennines.

3.4. The area is home to significant peatland and bog habitats, including blanket bogs, which are vital for biodiversity, water quality, and carbon storage. 38,940.5 acres (15,759 ha) of the Bowland Fells is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area is internationally important for its upland bird populations and under the Habitats Directive "Bowland Fells" has been designated a Special Protection Area, designated especially for breeding merlin and hen harrier.

3.5. Gisburn Forest is situated in the upper Hodder Valley and surrounds Stocks Reservoir (which provides water mainly for Blackpool and the Fylde coast). It is the largest wooded area in Lancashire, and home to conifers, spruce and a huge variety of wildlife. The forest has a huge array of habitat types that support varied wildlife. These include a wide range of bird species including important birds of prey such as hen harriers and the short-eared owl. There is a continuing programme of planting more broadleaved trees across the forest, to help continue the diversification of habitats as well as provide visual improvements to the landscape.

4. Biodiversity net gain information

4.1. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been mandatory since 12 February 2024 for new planning applications for major developments made under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990, subject to the confirmed exemptions. For small sites, it has applied since 2 April 2024. Biodiversity Net Gain legislation states that the biodiversity value attributable to a development must be at least 10% higher than the pre-development biodiversity value.

4.2. Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved using the following three methods, which are listed in order of how they must be prioritised by the developer:

1. Onsite BNG +10% is delivered on the site of development.

2. Offsite BNG +10% is delivered at a different site to that of the development.

3. Statutory credits +10% is delivered by purchasing Government credits.

4.3. To support applicants in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain, RVBC provides information via the Pre-application service, and information on BNG is provided in the Validation Checklist for Planning Applications. To support with the assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain reports and metrics, RVBC consults with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. Their advice is then considered by the Planning Officer when determining an application.

4.4. Since the legislation came into force on 12 February 2024, Biodiversity Net Gain has been enacted at RVBC. Planning applications required to achieve the mandatory BNG requirement are subject to the statutory biodiversity condition. This is a pre-commencement condition that requires a biodiversity gain plan approving before works can commence on site. Those permissions that have been subject to such a biodiversity gain plan can be found by typing 'biodiversity' into the development description box on the Council's planning application search page - Planning Advanced Search - Ribble Valley Borough Council

4.5. It should be noted that a proportion of the Biodiversity Net Gain units to be delivered across the planning applications will be delivered offsite or through the purchase of statutory credits.

4.6. It is hoped that with the appointment of a new Senior Planning Officer (Environment and Climate Change) resources will be available to report on the delivery of new habitats created through Biodiversity Net Gain, and potentially looking at opportunities to support delivery of improving biodiversity in the Borough through developments on Council land. Recent planning approvals for development on Council owned land requiring biodiversity gain have secured this on-site - where site constraints mean that +10% is not possible to deliver this on site then a hybrid approach of on and off site has been secured.

4.7. To support habitat creation in RVBC, the authority is sharing guidance prepared by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit to landowners interested in registering land as a habitat bank.

5. Information about Ribble Valley Borough Council

5.1 **Brief description of the Council's functions:** Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) is responsible for providing services to the public that include local planning and development management decisions, environmental health, parks, waste and recycling services, and cultural and leisure provisions.

5.2 **Description of the district:** RVBC is a local government district with borough status within the non-metropolitan county of Lancashire, the council offices are based in Clitheroe. The borough also includes the town of Longridge, with numerous villages and surrounding rural areas; the area takes its name from the River Ribble and has an area of 583Km2.

5.3 The mid-year population estimate in 2024 for Ribble Valley is approximately 65,794, this represents 5.1% of the total Lancashire-12[1] local authorities, which was estimated to be 1,294,914. For the Lancashire-14[2], this was estimated to be 1,601,645.

[1] *Lancashire-12 districts are Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Wyre.*

[2] *Lancashire-14 is the Lancashire-12 plus Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.*

5.4 Much of the district lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area has a rich history and has several outstanding historic buildings including the medieval Clitheroe Castle and Keep, Sawley Abbey and Whalley Abbey, Stoneyhurst College, and Cromwell's bridge at Hurst Green.

5.5 The iconic landscape of Pendle Hill, which lies in Pendle Forest, is in the east of Lancashire, with Clitheroe to its west and near to the towns of Colne, Nelson, Brierfield, Burnley and Padiham. Its summit is 557 metres (1,827 ft) above mean sea level. It is an isolated hill in the Pennines, separated from the South Pennines to the east, the Bowland Fells to the northwest, and the West Pennine Moors to the south. It is separated from the nearby main bulk of the Bowland Fells by the River Ribble.

5.6 Although Ribble Valley is the largest area within Lancashire, it also has the smallest population. The economy of Ribble Valley is mainly rural in nature, with a high proportion of jobs being in the private sector, heavily influenced by BAe there is a bigger sway towards manufacturing jobs mainly as a result of the aerospace industry, but also food and beverage producing employers. In contrast, it has the lowest proportion of employment in the service sector in Lancashire due to the size of the authority and the dispersed nature of settlements.

5.7 Ribble Valley has by far the largest number of farm holdings in the county. Cattle and sheep are the dominant livestock. Well, over a thousand people are employed in agriculture. The financial returns in a number of agricultural sectors have forced many farm enterprises to look more carefully at diversification as a means of improving the viability of their core farm businesses. In some cases, this has taken the form of developing non-agricultural activities such as the provision of accommodation, facilities to encourage tourism visits, or the hosting of weddings and other events. Diversification has also been achieved by moving into organic production, both of livestock and crops, or offering innovative new uses for former farmland or buildings,

5.8 The neighbouring districts to Ribble Valley are Pendle, Burnley, Hyndburn, Blackburn with Darwen, South Ribble, Preston, Wyre, Lancaster and North Yorkshire.

5.9 Other than the A59 running east to Yorkshire and west to Preston, the road network is predominantly 'B' roads. The authority has four railway stations, Clitheroe, Langho, Ramsgreave and Wilpshire, and Whalley, which are served by Clitheroe to Manchester trains.

5.10 **Outline of governance and management structures:** RVBC operates under a Leader and a Committee system model of governance, with elected councillors representing 26 wards across the district. The Council is composed of 40 councillors, who are responsible for setting the strategic direction, approving budgets and making key decisions on local services.

5.11 The Council's operations are supported by a Corporate Management Team (CMT), headed by the Chief Executive, which ensures the effective delivery of services and implementation of council policies. The Council works in partnership with local stakeholders, regional bodies, and national agencies to deliver services and meet statutory duties, including those related to biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

6. Summary of actions completed

Table 1 below provides a summary of the actions completed between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2026 that benefit biodiversity, and any potential future actions, which has been updated from the First Considerations Report on Complying with the Biodiversity Duty.

No	Objectives for meeting the Biodiversity Duty	Preliminary Assessment of current and planned actions that contribute towards meeting the objectives and policies (either alone or in partnership)	Future actions for consideration for the first biodiversity reporting period 2024-2026	Actions completed / pipeline 2026 onwards
1.	**Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Plans, Policies and Strategies** The Council's overall approach to mainstream biodiversity, ensuring it is embedded into all Council Services, strategic plans, policies and decision making, not just those directly related to the environment.	• The Core Strategy (2008-2028) A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adoption Version which includes a number of policies that seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity • The Climate Change Strategy (2021-2030) which includes biodiversity and nature-based targets. • The Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2027 includes the goal Valuing our Place and our Environment - Making the Ribble Valley a place we want to be by creating a safer, stronger, greener, and cleaner Borough, which we will achieve by delivering: ○ an achievable Climate Change Strategy through development of the action plan	1. Identify a corporate lead for co-ordinating and monitoring delivery of Biodiversity actions. 2. New Local plan to include a commitment to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Making Ribble Valley a place, more ecologically resilient and wildlife rich. 3. Identify other plans & strategies when reviewed as an opportunity to incorporate biodiversity where appropriate. 4. Identify opportunities to integrate work on biodiversity with the Councils Climate Change Strategy and subsequent Action plan.	1. Climate Emergency Working Group. Director of Community Services and Director of Economic Development and Planning 2. The new Local Plan is in progress The Local Plan Timetable can be found here. 3. Ongoing 4. Climate Change Action Plan 2026/2027 includes the goal to commit to enhancing RVBC's biodiversity on council land by: • Regularly reviewing existing management plans to consider biodiversity and carbon sequestration in all our habitats on council land, and • To review the Local Plan and embed climate change and nature recovery

		○ Working to preserve our countryside, parks, and areas of natural beauty ○ Delivering our Climate Change Action Plan 2025/2026: Theme 2 – Minimising the Council's Emissions.		
2.	**Positive management of Council owned land and buildings 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	• Management of parks and green spaces for nature including the creation of areas of new habitats such as rewilding and woodlands • Endeavour to plant native and sustainably UK sourced where appropriate and in keeping with landscape character and objective of any management plan for nature reserves (Crosshill and Salthill RVBC own the land but leased to Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Council manage the tree cover for public safety, which also includes control of ash dieback. • Wildflower planting • Bedding planting largely replaced with herbaceous perennials and pictorial meadows	5. Assess the potential for enhancing small scale habitats on Council owned land and buildings, including nest and roosting boxes 6. Establish a programme of species and habitat surveys to record and monitor the ecological baseline for	5. Since April 2024 as part of the Council's 50th anniversary celebrations 27 carbon busting redwood trees have been planted on council and private land across the borough, and we are continually looking for more sites. • In partnership with Lancashire County Council's Treescapes team three Miyawaki micro-forests have been planted at Edisford (Mar 24), John Smith's Playing Fields, Longridge (Feb 25) & Henthorne Park (Feb 26) • Planted 20 standard trees of various varieties as replacement trees for ash dieback, storm damaged and trees removed for management purposes around Longridge and Clitheroe. • Two re-wilding and biodiversity restoration schemes at Clitheroe Castle and Edisford. • Our Grounds Maintenance team continue to take environmental issues very seriously by restricting chemical use including herbicides and pesticides, avoid the use of peat and peat-based products, they consider planting drought tolerant species and a mixture of tree species. 6. Ongoing

	multifunctional needs.	• Reduced the use of herbicides and pesticides • No use of peat • RVBC manages all woodland under its jurisdiction in accordance with appropriate woodland management practices. • We welcome applications for biodiversity enhancement submitted by working partners such as Lancashire County Council Treescapes Team, Ribble Rivers Trust, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Beaver Trust to make successful bids for external funding to deliver biodiversity enhancements. • Working in partnership with LCC Highways, RVBC weed sprays and cuts road verges, where site lines become an issue • Beneficial mowing (low-mow and no-mow) management practices in some areas of the borough frequently mown amenity grassland or open spaces are not now being cut for example, at the riverbank opposite Edisford Riverbank Park to the rear of	Council owned/manged land drawing on previous survey work and existing ecological data (i.e. Local Plan Evidence Base and information) and emerging data through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to identify the need for further survey work to fill data gaps. 7. 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 Biodiversity Net gain (BNG)). 8. Work with partners to bid for additional funding to deliver local nature recovery projects on council owned land 9. Scope the potential for additional management and maintenance regimes for our parks and green spaces that maximise potential for biodiversity, carbon storage and sequestration. 10. Assess the condition and review the management of Council owned sites that are protected or designated as being of particular biological importance – LNR and Biological Heritage Sites (BHS).	7. Ongoing – see also Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2026 8. Worked with Lancashire County Council Treescapes Team funding is in place for Miyawaki micro forest at Henthorn Park (Feb 26), partially funded through The Tree Council Trees Outside Woodland Fund (ToW). 9. Ongoing – part of the annual monitoring of management and maintenance regimes for our parks and green spaces 10. Ongoing – part of the annual monitoring of management and maintenance regimes for Council owned sites that are protected or designated as being of particular biological importance

		the 3G pitches. The Council is presently consulting with residents about extending this approach in Low Moor. • Ribble Valley Biological Heritage Site and Site of European Importance at Clitheroe Castle includes 16-acres of grounds and a Norman Keep. • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), for example, White Moss SSSI is the best surviving example of an actively growing basin mire in Lancashire. • Peatland in Ribble Valley - As part of the Ribble Life for Water project Ribble Rivers Trust is restoring some of the eroding peat gullies at the top of Pendle Hill. The project aims to improve water quality and support wildlife.	11. Leading by example: demonstrate the positive role of estate management to businesses, other organisations and the general public. 12. Explore the preparation of a Masterplan for the Castle Grounds which will include biodiversity net gain opportunities i.e. more rewilding.	11. Voluntary groups and schools involved in planting schemes – Henthorn Miyawaki micro-forest (Fe 26) LCC Treescapes team and children from Edisford Primary School (approx. 950 native tree saplings). 12. Ongoing 2027 – Summer 2026, major investment on Clitheroe Castle keep and grounds including working with Holden Clough Nursery on horticultural activities. As part of the Ribble Life for Water Project Ribble Rivers Trust is: • Pendle Peat restoration - restoring some of the eroding peat gullies at the top of Pendle Hill. • **Mearley Brook farm advice** - Starting on Pendle Hill, Mearley Brook flows through Clitheroe and into the Ribble. As it passes through agricultural land, industrial areas, villages and towns, the Brook suffers from various pollution inputs leading to poor water quality. Work includes providing farm advice for landowners in the area, so they too can help reduce the runoff of peat, and other sediments and pollutants, into the Brook.
3.	**Planning and Development including Biodiversity Net Gain**	• Ribble valley's LDF addresses biodiversity through a number of its policies including those for the conservation of designated and protected international, national and local sites, habitats and species of importance. It	13. Planning policies and Development Management will continue to protect and enhance habitat, species, ecological networks, trees and woodlands, green infrastructure and ensure BNG. 14. Implement BNG and ensuring all relevant planning applications are	13. Ongoing 14. Ongoing - All relevant planning applications are treated in accordance with the Regulations.

		seeks to protect and enhance ecological networks and to protect and enhance green infrastructure generally including open spaces. It also includes a policy related to protecting specific trees and trees on development sites. Moreover, it also encourages the incorporation of measures to enhance biodiversity where appropriate. These policies are considered and applied to all relevant developments across the borough and are central to the determination of applications for planning permission. • Protection and maintenance of the most valuable trees and woodland in the borough through the imposition and assessment of Tree Preservation Orders • Since January 2024 the Council has a Service Level Agreement with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), for ecology advice including the assessment of planning applications in	treated in accordance with the Regulations 15. Extend SLA with GMEU for enhanced services in relation to mandatory BNG including the assessment of eligible planning applications to ensure that assessment of mandatory BNG proposals are accurate, achievable and, where needed, off site measures have been identified. 16. Explore the available options for monitoring and enforcement of mandatory BNG 17. Seek opportunities for on-site BNG provision where development on Council owned land is coming forward 18. Consider the need for additional resources and expertise	 15. Reviewed annually – extended until 2027. 16. Local Authorities only have to monitor BNG secured through s106 agreements We propose to pick this up as part of our ongoing s106 monitoring work. However, developers are responsible for monitoring and reporting BNG throughout the 30-year period. In terms of enforcement - failure to comply with the BNG condition by commencing development without approval of the Biodiversity Gain Plan will be a breach of planning control. 17. Planning applications on Council owned land include habitat / BNG surveys therefore we have ecology information for Langho, Mardale and Edisford 3G pitch projects 18. RVBC has been awarded a salary bursary through the Public Practice Programme for additional resource through a 12 month fixed term post of Senior Planning Officer (Environment and Climate Change).

		relation to ecological impacts and net gains in biodiversity. • Biodiversity Net Gain, as calculated using the Defra approved biodiversity metric, is sought through negotiation on planning applications. On-site biodiversity enhancements are secured through planning conditions with significant on-site enhancements or off-site contributions secured via planning agreements. • To assist the Council in preparing for BNG, planning officers have undertaken training as appropriate • .		The post will primarily support the preparation and monitoring of the Local Plan, specifically policies relating to the natural environment and climate change including biodiversity, nature recovery, green infrastructure, landscape protection and environmental sustainability. They will also support the Council's wider corporate priorities on climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable development. We have appointed expect to onboard in mid-October 2026.
4.	**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	• Wildlife and Habitat Surveys • Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including: ○ Change in priority habitats and species by type and; ○ Change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional or local significance;	19. Review and update Local Plan biodiversity evidence base as necessary	19. Surveys were completed as part of the evidence base for the LNRS published in January 2026. RVBC published a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping document for comment as part of the local plan scoping consultation. It establishes the baseline conditions of the borough and identifies the key environmental challenges and opportunities that the Local Plan will need to address Ribble_Valley_SEA_Scoping_Report_Update_2026_FINAL_v2_CLEAN.pdf . A task for the new Senior Planning Officer (Environment and Climate Change) will be to baseline our evidence and establish gaps and updates required to inform plan

	of Council activities to be measured; and identify any new threats and opportunities across the borough.	○ loss of Biological Heritage Sites; ○ and loss of hedgerows (through planning decisions)	20. Monitor and record species and habitat surveys for Council owned/manged land drawing on previous survey work and existing ecological data (i.e. Local Plan Evidence Base and information held by LERN) and emerging data through the LNRS to identify the need for further survey work to fill data gaps 21. Continue to monitor implementation of the policies and proposals in the Local Plan	making including Habitats Regulations Assessment and collect data relating to planning decisions which have secured BNG. 20. Ongoing – continue as a landowner to understand the biodiversity baseline on a site by site basis in order to identify the necessary enhancements required to achieve net gain and implement them when resources or changed management practices allow. 21. Ongoing – We will continue to monitor implementation of the policies and proposals in the Local Plan
5.	**Projects and Partnerships** Working with others on joint biodiversity related strategies, initiatives, and projects, including the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS	• Member of the Lancashire LNRS Steering Group as a Supporting Authority • Member of Lancashire Local Nature Partnership • Work with statutory agencies and partners including Lancashire Wildlife Trust, The Forestry Commission, LCC and neighbouring Local Authorities. • Work with partners to secure funding for new woodland planting including the	22. Continue to work in partnership with the Lancashire County Council (and other Lancashire Authorities) to develop 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 23. Continue to collaborate with statutory agencies such as Natural England, The Environment Agency,	22. Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published on 16th January 2026, in accordance with the requirements of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and takes account of the results of a public consultation which concluded in August 2025. 23. Ongoing collaboration with statutory agencies and partners.

		Lancashire County Council Treescapes team and Ribble Rivers Trust • Green Flag – castle ground / blue pennant??	The Canal and Rivers Trust together with partners including The Forestry Commission, LCC, Ribble Rivers Trust, Forest of Bowland National Landscape and neighbouring Local Authorities. 24. Continue to support organisations who are working with and supporting communities to improve green spaces, habitat and species diversity. 25. Continue to support the efforts of local and national nature conservation groups such as Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Ribble Rivers Trust.	24. Continue to work in partnership with LCC Treescapes Team working supporting communities to improve green spaces, habitat and species diversity mainly on the Miyawaki micro-forest projects. 25. Work ongoing
6.	**Workforce Development** Training and Education for councillors and council employees to ensure that there is a sound understanding of biodiversity across the Council	• Consider achieving Carbon literacy accreditation – training and awareness raising for councillors and staff is an action in the Climate change Action Plan 2025/26 and 2026/27.	26. Raise general awareness, using available guidance and resources. Integrating biodiversity into staff training and, where necessary, providing specific training. For example all staff and Members to complete e.g. Local Government Association (LGA) : Biodiversity for councils 27. Staff to complete the Environmental Awareness module on the Me Learning Portal. 28. Promote opportunities for staff to undertake voluntary conservation work. 29. Additional specialist training for staff involved in the management and/or	26. Ongoing promotion with staff and Councillors (LGA – free registration to use the platform). 27. Between 1 January 24 to 31 December 26 – 138 staff have completed the Environmental Awareness module on the Me Learning Portal. 28. Ongoing – opportunities needs to be sourced and promoted with staff and Councillors. (RVCAN, Ribble Rivers Trust). 29. Ongoing – no additional specialist training has been identified for grounds staff or planning staff.

			maintenance of Council owned sites of particular local importance for habitats and/or species	
7.	**Education, Advice, Awareness and Engagement** Creating a greater awareness of the part everyone can play in supporting nature and biodiversity. Engaging with stakeholders and the public to promote an increased understanding and awareness of biodiversity; to better understand the impact of their actions on nature and wildlife; and deliver community-led biodiversity actions	• Promote environmental activities across the borough for schools in partnership with Ribble Rivers Trust, LCC Treescapes Team and RVCAN	30. Continue to pursue funding opportunities for the delivery of community led biodiversity actions.	30. Ongoing work to pursue funding opportunities and engagement with the public and local schools to promote an increased understanding and awareness of biodiversity: • 3 x Miyawaki / micro forests planted at Edisford (Mar24), John Smith's Playing Fields, Longridge (Feb25) & Henthorne Park (Feb26). Planting led by RVBC Countryside Officers, RVBC Amenity Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance team, LCC Treescapes Team with RVCAN members, general public and local school children. • Working with Ribble Valley Climate Action Network (RVCAN) to support local schools, sixth forms, and other education bodies to increase understanding and promote involvement in climate change solutions through Conference of Ribble Valley Schools (CORVS). 26 March 26 CORVS 4 Conference of Ribble Valley Schools 2026 at Grindleton Pavilion. Follow up meeting hosted by the Climate Emergency Working Group scheduled for 1 October 2026 with local schools who participated in the Conference of Ribble Valley Schools (CORVS4). The schools would like to further discuss some of the elements from the Conference, where they looked at how to achieve a sustainably designed school and for members of the working group to provide feedback and ideas on how these could be implemented.