



Biodiversity

Duty Report

January 2024 – 2026



Surrey County Council Biodiversity Duty Report

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Executive Summary

This report fulfils Surrey County Council's (SCC) statutory biodiversity duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, which requires local authorities to consider and promote biodiversity in their functions, policies and decision-making. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate SCC's actions and progress in meeting this duty across its operations for the reporting period (January 2024 – 2026) and its future plans.

The report highlights SCC's commitment to embedding biodiversity considerations across its activities. Contributions from multiple teams (including Greener Futures, Waste and Circular Economy, Flood and Climate Resilience, Surrey Nature Partnerships, Policy and Procurement, Countryside Services and Surrey Hills National Landscape) reflect the recognition that biodiversity enhancement requires cross-departmental collaboration.

SCC has already integrated biodiversity-supportive policies into its strategic framework, and council teams are taking tangible actions within their work programmes through the introduction of new policies, frameworks, projects, engagement activities, training and the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain. These efforts indicate a growing organisational culture that values natural capital and acknowledges the critical role local authorities play in addressing the biodiversity crisis.

Key actions include:

- Incorporating biodiversity and environmental considerations into procurement projects.
- Promoting Eco-schools and careers in environmental and energy sectors.
- Implementing the Climate Resilience Schools Programme and Mindful Gardeners Programme.
- Delivering natural flood management schemes which create ponds, bunds, leaky dams, rain gardens, and watercourses.
- Creating 'wild zones' at SCC waste sites, including the installation of bird boxes, bird feeders, bug hotels and bee hives.
- Awarding community groups to deliver local nature initiatives with the Community Nature Recovery Grant.
- Creating small-scale urban greening interventions through the Urban Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (URBOA) pilot project (e.g creating green walls and living roofs)
- Developing Together for Surrey; a Surrey-wide online behaviour change platform focused on environmental and climate change issues.
- Producing the Land Management Framework and Surrey Hills Management Plan (2025 – 2030)
- Carrying out a range of engagement activities with staff, local communities and volunteers, associated around land management in Surrey, conservation of Surrey's wildlife, biodiversity awareness and education.
- Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain as a regulator and a developer and providing BNG consultee services to some Local Borough Councils.

Surrey County Council Biodiversity Duty Report

With the upcoming local government reorganisation, which will establish two new unitary authorities for East and West Surrey, predicting long-term actions beyond the transition period is challenging. Nevertheless, SCC has established a strong foundation of biodiversity-focused policies, collaborative networks, baseline data and institutional knowledge, providing successor authorities with a platform to continue and expand biodiversity initiatives.

The Council will continue to meet its statutory obligations during the transition period, ensuring continuity of biodiversity action and support for local wildlife and habitats.

1 Introduction

1.1 What is Biodiversity Duty?

The Biodiversity Duty was established under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and strengthened by the Environment Act 2021. It places a statutory requirement on public authorities, including Surrey County Council (SCC), to consider, conserve, and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions.

The Duty is designed to ensure biodiversity is considered in all public authority decisions, including planning, land management, and operational policies. Public authorities are expected to:

- Identify opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Develop policies and objectives informed by evidence and local context
- Take actions to deliver these policies and monitor progress.
- Report on these opportunities, policies and procedures every five years.

The Biodiversity Duty is a key part of the government's strategy to halt biodiversity loss and restore nature across England. Local authorities, such as SCC, play a critical role in translating national commitments into effective local action.

To demonstrate compliance, councils must prepare a Biodiversity Duty Report, outlining objectives, actions, and outcomes. These reports provide transparency and accountability, showing how statutory obligations, national targets, and local ecological priorities are addressed.

1.2 Purpose of the Biodiversity Duty

SCC fulfils its statutory obligations under the Biodiversity Duty by integrating biodiversity considerations into its functions and ensuring alignment with both national and local objectives. The Council's approach supports key targets from the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, including the following government commitments:

By 2030:

- Halt the decline in species abundance.
- Protect 30% of UK land and sea for nature.

By 2042:

- Increase species abundance by at least 10% from 2030, surpassing 2022 levels.
- Restore or create at least 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites.
- Restore 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) to favourable condition.

- Reduce the risk of species extinction.

The *State of Surrey’s Nature 2017*¹ report highlights the significant biodiversity challenges facing the county, noting that Surrey is experiencing biodiversity loss at rates higher than the national average of 2%, with approximately one in nine species now locally extinct. These findings underscore the need for targeted conservation and restoration efforts.

This report fulfils SCC’s duty to demonstrate how it is meeting its statutory obligations in relation to biodiversity. It sets out the Council’s policies, objectives and actions that support biodiversity at both national and local levels.

The report addresses:

- Actions undertaken during the current reporting period (1st January 2024 to 1st January 2026);
- Planned future actions for the next five-year period (1st January 2026 to 1st January 2030); and
- Progress towards meeting Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations.

This report focuses on actions and projects that directly contribute to biodiversity enhancement, while excluding routine statutory roles and compliance, in order to maintain a clear emphasis on the Council’s enhanced biodiversity duty.

1.3 Limitations

1.3.1 Local Government Reorganisation

In October 2024, the government announced that SCC and Surrey’s 11 district and borough councils will be subject to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which will influence how biodiversity responsibilities are delivered across the county. From April 2027, two unitary councils, East Surrey and West Surrey, will replace the existing twelve councils. The proposed geographic coverage is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed Unitary Councils under Local Government Reorganisation

New Unitary Council	Areas Covered
West Surrey Council	Guildford, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Waverley, Woking.
East Surrey Council	Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, Tandridge.

¹ [Waite, M. \(2017\). The State of Surrey’s Nature. pp.1–32.pdf](#)

Discussions are also on-going regarding transferring additional powers into the county through a Strategic Authority.

Detailed governance arrangements, responsibilities, and policy frameworks for the new councils are not yet finalised. This creates uncertainty for long-term policies or commitments, particularly in areas such as biodiversity protection and enhancement, where future decision-making structures may differ significantly.

Shadow Authorities will operate ahead of vesting day on 1st April 2027 to prepare the new councils for full operation. Their responsibilities include establishing governance structures, appointing key officers, and ensuring all necessary preparations are made for the new authorities to become fully operational.

In response, SCC has framed its future biodiversity actions to be proportionate, achievable, and adaptable. This ensures that the Council continues to meet its biodiversity duty during the transition period while allowing actions to be reviewed and refined as the new unitary authorities come into effect.



2 Council Overview and Role in Biodiversity

SCC is the upper-tier local authority for Surrey. It works alongside the county's 11 district and borough councils, which are responsible for local planning and service delivery, while SCC provides county strategic oversight, planning functions and delivers county-wide services. This section provides context on the Council's responsibilities, governance, and role in shaping biodiversity and environmental outcomes across the county. Understanding SCC's role is essential for interpreting the objectives, strategies, policies, and actions presented in this report.

2.1 Role and Responsibilities of SCC

SCC delivers a wide range of services across the county, including education, social care, transport, waste, environmental and land management, public health, libraries and cultural services, economic development and emergency planning. As the upper-tier local authority, SCC is responsible for strategic functions and the delivery of services to Surrey's 1.2 million residents, covering an area of 1,663 km².

The Council is currently led by the Leader, Tim Oliver, supported by a Cabinet responsible for executive decision-making. Policy development and performance oversight are provided by 81 elected councillors, presided over by the Chair of the Council, Tim Hall. The day-to-day operations of SCC are managed by professional officers under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Terence Herbert.

2.2 How can SCC affect Biodiversity?

SCC influences biodiversity in Surrey through a combination of strategic, regulatory, advisory, and operational functions. As a local authority, landowner, planning authority, and service provider, the Council plays a key role in shaping land use, managing its land and assets to support wildlife, delivering services and infrastructure in ways that avoid or reduce impacts on biodiversity, and promoting biodiversity enhancement.

These functions include planning decisions, influencing development, providing advice and guidance to developers, landowners, and communities, and engaging residents through education and awareness initiatives that promote positive action for nature. To deliver these functions effectively, SCC relies on specialist teams, such as the internal Natural Environment Team, which provide dedicated ecological expertise across the county.

3 Biodiversity Framework

This section outlines SCC's biodiversity framework, which includes the national strategies that guide statutory obligations, the Council's existing strategies and policies that protect and enhance biodiversity, and the partnerships that support practical delivery on the ground. Together, these elements provide the structure for protecting habitats, supporting nature recovery, and embedding biodiversity considerations into SCC decision-making.

3.1 National Strategies

SCC is required under government guidance on complying with the biodiversity duty to consider relevant national and local strategies that influence how the Council conserves and enhances biodiversity. These strategies include Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Site Strategies. Public authorities are expected to understand these strategies in order to assess how they affect land management and identify opportunities to further biodiversity.²

3.1.1 Surrey Local Nature Recovery Strategy

LNRSs are a new, statutory system of spatial strategies for nature, introduced under the Environment Act 2021, and are compulsory for all areas in England. Each LNRS is designed to:

- Map the most valuable existing habitats for nature
- Identify specific proposals for creating or improving habitats to support nature and wider environmental objectives
- Set priorities for nature's recovery in the area

SCC is the responsible authority, as designated by DEFRA, for preparing the LNRS covering the whole of Surrey (the Strategy Area).

In 2024 SCC undertook a programme of 11 workshops and hosted an online survey to gather views from residents and communities on the priorities for nature recovery. The data gathered from these workshops, combined with an assessment of existing key policies and strategies resulted in the draft LNRS. The draft was further refined through consultation with the Districts and Boroughs and the LNRS steering group.

On the 31 July 2025 a public consultation on the draft was launched on the Common Place platform and ran until 25 September.

- 233 individuals responded to the consultation survey via our Commonplace Engagement Platform
- 46 responses were received directly via email to the nature inbox
- 171 locations were noted on our interactive map

² [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty)

The final draft LNRS was produced using the outputs of the public consultation, the strategy is due to be published by the end of March 2026 following sign off by SCC cabinet. More information on the LNRS engagement process can be found on the [Surrey Nature Partnership website here](#)

The LNRS will be used to inform further strategic strategies such as the Spatial Development Strategy, Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plan through a duty to “have regard” for the LNRS. Additional information can be found via [Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance here](#)

3.1.2 Species Conservation Strategies

Species Conservation Strategies are a statutory mechanism introduced under the Environment Act 2021 to protect species at risk and improve their conservation status. While no formal strategies currently exist in Surrey, the Council supports local species through initiatives such as the NatureSpace District Licence Scheme for Great Crested Newts (GCN).

GCN are a European protected species, safeguarded under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). SCC has held a NatureSpace District Level Licence for GCN since 2022, which enables habitat creation and enhancement at a landscape scale, helping to increase and reconnect populations while allowing development to proceed lawfully.

3.1.3 Protected Site Strategies

Also established under the Environment Act 2021, Protected Site Strategies provide a coordinated approach to protecting and restoring species and habitats within designated sites. They offer guidance on addressing offsite pressures, such as nutrient pollution from the wider catchment, to support the long-term ecological health of these sites.

No Protected Site Strategies have been published for Surrey to date, and while SCC has not yet been requested by Natural England to assist, the Council is happy to provide support in their development when needed.

3.2 Existing SCC Strategies and Policies (Pre-Reporting Period)

SCC recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing local biodiversity. This commitment is reflected across a range of existing strategies and policies that influence planning and development, environmental management, climate action, and broader service delivery. Collectively, these documents provide the strategic and regulatory framework through which biodiversity considerations are embedded in Council decision-making and operational activities. Table 2 below outlines the key SCC strategies and policies that were in place prior to this reporting period, along with their relevance to biodiversity outcomes.

Table 2: Existing Surrey County Council Strategies and Policies with Relevance to Biodiversity

Strategy / Policy	Year Adopted	Relevance to Biodiversity	Link(s)
Organisation Strategy 2023 to 2028	2023	A five-year plan for how SCC will deliver the 2030 Vision, emphasising a greener future by becoming a carbon-neutral council by 2030, supporting sustainable behaviours in communities, reducing pollution, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, promoting climate change resilience, and ensuring accessible green and blue spaces that enhance wellbeing.	Organisation Strategy 2023 to 2028
Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy	2022	Guides procurement decisions to directly protect and enhance biodiversity. Focuses on avoiding habitat-damaging products, promoting materials and services that support native species, restoring natural capital, and achieving long-term biodiversity net gain within Council contracts. Works alongside the Social Value Policy, which addresses biodiversity through broader community and social outcomes.	Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy
Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)	2022	Places environmental protection at the heart of transport planning, integrating biodiversity considerations from the earliest stages of projects. It seeks to safeguard designated sites through assessments to identify any impacts. Measures affecting biodiversity are mitigated or enhanced, with partner organisations collaborating to ensure sustainability and support for local biodiversity.	Local Transport Plan (LTP4)
Social Value Policy	2021	Encourages biodiversity benefits through Council projects by delivering social and environmental value beyond contractual requirements. Supports community engagement, environmental education, and initiatives that restore or enhance habitats. Complements the Procurement Policy by addressing biodiversity outcomes outside procurement activities.	Social Value Policy
Surrey's Climate Change Strategy	2020	Recognises the role of healthy ecosystems and green infrastructure in climate mitigation and adaptation. Supports biodiversity indirectly by promoting resilient natural systems. Delivery is guided by the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021–2025.	Surrey's Climate Change Strategy

Strategy / Policy	Year Adopted	Relevance to Biodiversity	Link(s)
			/ Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021 to 2025
Surrey's Tree Strategy	2020	Sets a target to plant 1.2 million trees across Surrey by 2030. Expands woodland, creates new woodland, plants street and individual trees, and enhances hedgerows to support biodiversity through habitat creation and connectivity.	Surrey's New Tree Strategy 2020
Countryside Estate Strategy	2019	Provides strategic objectives for managing SCC's countryside estate, protecting and enhancing habitats, and mitigating climate change impacts.	Countryside Estate strategy

4 SCC Actions to Support Biodiversity

The following section summarises the key actions taken by SCC during the reporting period to support biodiversity beyond statutory duties. These include adopting new strategies and policies, using procurement and social value to influence third-party delivery, working in partnerships, managing land to enhance habitats, creating habitats and biodiversity features, and delivering education and awareness initiatives.

4.1 Procurement Services – Policy Team

4.1.1 Overview of Service Function

The Procurement Service supports the Council with strategic, compliant, and value-driven procurement, providing market, legal, and commercial expertise. Its Policy Team ensures ethical, environmental, and government objectives are met by identifying sustainability and biodiversity opportunities and risks, and embedding these into contracts, specifications, and social value initiatives across projects and services.

4.1.2 Projects and Actions

During the reporting period, the Policy Team incorporated biodiversity and environmental considerations into seven key procurement projects across Surrey, including school expansions, community centres, council-owned sites, and county-wide services such as countryside estate works. Tender questions on environmental performance were weighted 3%–10%, addressing biodiversity enhancement, pollution prevention, invasive species management, protection of species and sites, biosecurity, sustainable sourcing, and staff training.

Across Surrey, the Policy Team also applied social value criteria in relevant projects to support biodiversity and nature recovery, including community and school education.

Projects include:

- Small Format Digital Advertising: Donation of 10 Woodland Trust Pollinator Tree packs per annum, providing up to 21,000 trees over the life of the contract, and provision of a ‘green roof’ on 10% of units deployed.
- Educational workshops: Delivered through the Surrey Learning Network, Greener Schools Network and Surrey Environmental Action Schools.
- STEM Ambassador Partnership: Promoting careers in environmental and energy sectors.

These actions demonstrate the Policy Team’s ongoing commitment to embedding biodiversity and sustainability in procurement.

4.1.3 Social Value Model

A draft Social Value Model, linked to SCC's existing Social Value Policy introduces a new core Model Award Criterion to “*deliver nature and biodiversity management, restoration, enhancement and protection above tender requirements.*” Additional criteria within the draft model support biodiversity through social value by inspiring communities, providing environmental benefits, or reducing environmental risks beyond standard contractual obligations. Biodiversity considerations were added to the draft model in August 2025, and implementation is planned early 2026 as part of the Council's ongoing procurement processes.

4.2 Transport – Policy Team

4.2.1 Overview of Service Function

The Transport Policy team shapes Surrey's transport system to support sustainability, social mobility, improved quality of life, and economic growth, while minimising environmental impacts. They lead Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and Local Street Improvements (LSIs), designing and upgrading infrastructure that safeguards landscapes, townscapes, and historic sites. Where opportunities arise, these schemes help restore or enhance biodiversity. Materials and design choices are selected to create greener, safer, and more people-focused streets.

4.2.2 Promoting Eco-schools

Eco-Schools is a globally recognised award programme that uses a simple seven-step framework to embed sustainability in school life. Operating in over 60 countries, it is one of the largest educational programmes worldwide. In Surrey, over 450 schools are registered, with nearly 300 achieving an award and almost 40 earning the highest accolade, the Green Flag, recognised by UNESCO. The programme offers a range of initiatives, from recycling schemes, and herb gardens to clean air days and beekeeping. The SCC Safer Travel Team provides free guidance and training to help schools get started with Eco-Schools.

4.3 Flood and Climate Resilience

4.3.1 Overview of Service Function

The Flood & Climate Resilience Team brings together the Flood Risk Infrastructure & Programming, Planning & Consenting, Partnerships & Strategy, and Climate Change Adaptation teams to manage flood risk and enhance climate resilience across Surrey. The Planning & Consenting Team provides statutory advice on development proposals, promoting sustainable and multifunctional drainage solutions that replicate natural processes, maximise open watercourses, and support biodiversity. The Partnerships & Strategy Team leads flood investigations, enforces against unconsented works, and delivers the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy with partner Risk Management Authorities. The Infrastructure & Programming Team designs and delivers flood risk mitigation schemes, including natural flood management and SuDS, delivering wider

environmental benefits, while the Climate Resilience & Adaptation Team coordinates the Surrey Adapt strategy, promoting ecosystem-based adaptation and reporting on adaptation activity across the organisation.

4.3.2 Projects and Actions

During the reporting period, the Flood & Climate Resilience Team has delivered nature-based projects, including the Dome Hill Rain Garden and West Horsley Place Natural Flood Management schemes, enhancing biodiversity while managing flood risk.

The Dome Hill Rain Garden Scheme involved the construction of rain garden features within grass verges, incorporating below-ground water storage and wildlife-friendly planting. Completed in November 2024 in Dome Hill, Caterham, the project engaged local residents and transformed previously uniform grass verges into biodiverse planting schemes, enhancing local habitats and supporting pollinators.

The West Horsley Place NFM Scheme³ delivered a range of natural flood management measures across the site, including pond creation, bunds, leaky dams, and re-meandering of a straightened watercourse. Completed in November 2024 at West Horsley Place, Leatherhead, the project was delivered in partnership with the landowners and Surrey County Council. Outcomes included reduced peak flows through leaky dams, new aquatic habitats via storage ponds, and improved channel storage and biodiversity through the re-meandered watercourse.

4.3.3 Climate Resilience Schools Programme

The Climate Resilience Schools Programme provides small grants of between £4,000 and £7,000 to support Surrey maintained schools and academy schools in implementing practical climate adaptation measures in response to climate impacts such as flooding, overheating and biodiversity loss. Running from October 2025 to March 2026, the programme places a strong emphasis on blue-green infrastructure and nature-based solutions, including sustainable drainage systems, green roofs, shading, tree planting and rainwater harvesting. Projects are designed to enhance site-level climate resilience while creating strong links to learning outcomes, with schools encouraged to work towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award. The programme also includes engagement through the Eco-Schools Summit in March 2026, providing an opportunity to share best practice and celebrate achievements across the education sector.

4.3.4 Training

Officers have completed specialist training, including Van Walt water quality and pollutants training, Environment Agency Natural Flood Management training, and attendance at biodiversity conferences and the Festival of NFM. This has improved the identification of biodiversity enhancement opportunities within NFM schemes,

³ More information can be found here: [Water management on the West Horsley Place estate | West Horsley Place](#)

particularly through reducing pollutant and fertiliser runoff to watercourses. The learning is being applied in practice, with officer capability and effectiveness continuing to develop.

4.4 Waste and Circular Economy

4.4.1 Overview of Service Function

The Waste & Circular Economy service manages Surrey's municipal waste as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), handling around 530,000 tonnes per year. The WDA operates through a long-term PFI contract with SUEZ, originally let in 1999 and recently extended to 2029, which covers five Waste Transfer Stations (WTSs), 14 Community Recycling Centres (CRCs), and the Eco Park waste treatment facility. The CRCs are a key public-facing service, attracting approximately 2.7 million visits annually and providing residents with accessible recycling and waste disposal options.

4.4.2 Projects and Actions

The Waste & Circular Economy team has delivered a range of projects across Surrey's waste and recycling sites, as well as Surrey Eco Park, to enhance habitats, support wildlife, and engage the community. These projects, delivered in partnership with SUEZ, have had a positive impact on local habitats and species, while also fostering community engagement and awareness of wildlife conservation. For a full breakdown of actions during the reporting period, see Table 3 below.

Table 3: Biodiversity Actions Delivered by SCC Waste and Circular Economy

Action	Date(s) Completed	Biodiversity Benefit
Litter picks at nine combined CRC and WTS sites and Surrey Eco Park.	February 2024 – April 2025.	Protects habitats, reduces pollution and safeguards wildlife.
Installation of beehives at Surrey Eco Park, with staff training for maintenance when beekeepers are not present.	March 2024 – March 2025.	Supports bee populations and increases biodiversity awareness.
Creation of wild zones at six combined CRC and WTS sites, with feeding areas and water baths; regularly maintained and monitored.	March 2024 – January 2025.	Provides food and water resources for local wildlife.
Installation of wildflower planters at a CRC and Surrey Eco Park, using donated materials from the revive Reuse shops and up-cycled items.	April 2024 – September 2024.	Supports pollinators by increasing nectar-rich planting, while promoting reuse and up-cycling principles.
Netting of open-air vents at Surrey Eco Park.	June 2024.	Prevents birds from becoming trapped in infrastructure.
Installation of bird boxes at four combined CRC and WTS sites; regularly maintained and monitored.	June 2024 – January 2025.	Provides nesting and shelter opportunities for birds.
Creation of multiple roof spaces into living roofs at Surrey Eco Park, with additional up-cycled planters installed.	August 2024 – December 2024.	Enhances habitat and supports plant biodiversity.
Installation of bird feeders at eight combined CRC and WTS sites.	January 2025 – April 2025.	Provides a supplementary food source for local bird populations.
Construction of bug hotels at four combined CRC and WTS sites using reused materials; regularly maintained.	January 2025 – April 2025.	Provides habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects.
Relocation of a bee swarm from a vulnerable location at Surrey Eco Park.	May 2025.	Protects bees from harm and supports pollinator populations.

4.4.3 Beekeeper Training and the Mindful Gardeners Programme

During the reporting period, staff from SUEZ, SCC's waste contractor, undertook a specialist beekeeping course to maintain the bee hives at Surrey Eco Park when professional beekeepers are not present, supporting pollinator conservation. In addition, the Residual Waste Contract's Social Value programme has included volunteering with Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Mindful Gardeners programme. The Mindful Gardeners programme is a four-week outdoor learning initiative delivered in collaboration with The Lucy Rayner Foundation at a local school, providing Year 6 students with mindfulness, sustainability workshops, and sensory gardening activities to support mental wellbeing and environmental awareness⁴. Further initiatives are planned throughout the 15- year contract term.

4.5 Greener Futures

4.5.1 Overview of Service Function

The Greener Futures group leads Surrey County Council's work to tackle climate change, reduce emissions and support environmental improvement across the county. The team influences how services, communities and partners take action on climate and nature through behaviour change, engagement and support for more sustainable practices. Greener Futures plays a central role in delivering Surrey's sustainability ambitions, supporting progress towards net zero and long-term resilience through community-led initiatives, education and targeted programmes that improve environmental outcomes and contribute to the county's climate and biodiversity goals.

4.5.2 Together for Surrey

Together for Surrey⁵ is a Surrey-wide online behaviour change platform launched in 2025, designed to inspire and support action on climate change and environmental issues among individuals, community groups, businesses, and schools. Developed through a partnership between Surrey County Council and the Institute for Sustainability at the University of Surrey and supported by a broad network of local organisations and charities, the platform offers tailored articles, videos, and practical "to-do" suggestions across key themes, including nature and biodiversity, to encourage meaningful pro-environmental behaviour.

4.5.3 Urban Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (URBOA) pilot project

The Urban Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (URBOA) pilot project explored small-scale urban greening interventions to create wildlife corridors, support pollinators, and improve air quality in areas fragmented by development. Delivered with partners including Surrey County Council, Zero Carbon Guildford, and local businesses, the pilot featured initiatives such as a living pillar in a busy urban area and a green roof at a

⁴ More information on the Mindful Gardeners programme can be found at: [Mindful Gardeners – where mental health meets sustainability! | SUEZ in the UK](#)

⁵ <https://togetherforsurrey.org/>

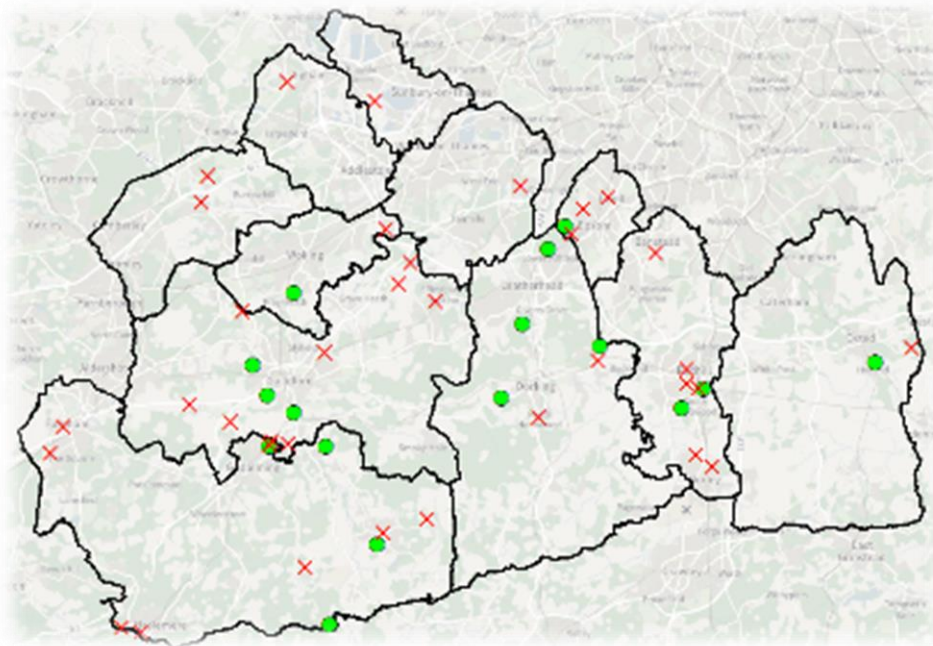
school, encouraging residents and businesses to adopt greening measures while raising awareness of nature recovery in the city.



Green roof at Guildford Nursery School (left) and Living Pillar on Guildford High Street (right).

4.5.4 Community Nature Recovery Grant

The Community Nature Recovery Grant awarded up to £5,000 to 20 community groups to deliver local nature initiatives, purchase tools, or access training that protects wildlife while providing wider community benefits. Projects included installing benches, bird boxes, bug hotels, and amphibian shelters, planting trees, running events, and conducting wildlife surveys. Payments were mostly completed by January 2026, with funds to be spent by the end of the financial year.



Map of Surrey showing successful grants (green dots) and unsuccessful grants (red crosses)

4.5.5 Eco-Schools Support Programme and 2025 Eco-Schools Summit

Greener Futures delivers a dedicated support programme for Surrey schools pursuing the Eco-Schools Green Flag, focusing on biodiversity actions such as wildflower planting, habitat creation, outdoor learning, wildlife boxes, hedgehog highways, and citizen science species monitoring. In 2025, the team also helped host the annual Eco-Schools Summit, a Surrey-wide sustainability conference themed around biodiversity. The Summit included teacher CPD, practical workshops on habitat creation and species monitoring, outdoor learning, and collaborative projects between schools and environmental organisations, strengthening schools' capacity to embed biodiversity into everyday learning and activities.

4.5.6 Greener Futures - The Natural Environment Team

4.5.6.1 Overview of Service Function

The Natural Environment Team provides ecological and landscape expertise across the Council. Comprising ecologists, a landscape specialist, and the LNRS lead, the team delivers species and habitat surveys, contributes biodiversity and landscape input to projects and policy, advises on mitigation and habitat enhancement, and issues guidance on long-term habitat management. The team is also responsible for producing the Surrey LNRS report. They play a core enabling role, supporting statutory compliance and identifying opportunities for measurable biodiversity gain to help SCC meet its enhanced biodiversity duty and deliver positive outcomes for Surrey's wildlife and habitats.

4.5.6.2 Engagement Activities

In addition to a required bat survey at Fetcham Springs, Leatherhead, undertaken as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Feasibility Study with the Transport team, ecologists led a Bat Walk in September 2025. The session, attended by members of the Fetcham Residents Association and SES Water, enabled participants to observe bats and learn about their ecology and the impacts of outdoor lighting.

In 2024 and 2025, a series of workshops were delivered to raise awareness of the council's biodiversity duty and strengthen the integration of ecological considerations into planning and infrastructure projects. These workshops were primarily attended by Ringway and SCC Highways staff, planning officers across Surrey, and SCC Regulation 3 project teams, supporting improved outcomes for nature through increased understanding and early ecological engagement.

Alongside delivering statutory ecological input to tree safety works associated with ash dieback, ecologists in 2024 hosted guided information walks on SCC-owned sites, including Sheepleas and Norbury Park, to raise awareness of local biodiversity and explain ecological management practices.

Ecologists have also delivered positive biodiversity enhancements by working with Merrow Depot staff to improve the wildlife garden, including planting native species and installing reptile refugia to support a small slow-worm population.

4.6 Countryside Services

4.6.1 *Countryside Estate*

4.6.1.1 *Overview of Service Function*

The Countryside Estate Team is responsible for 29 SCC owned sites, covering 2,409.65 hectares. The team ensures sites are safe and accessible to the public, maintains infrastructure such as car parks, signage, bins, and gates, and protects the land from adverse events, including encroachments, fly-tipping, and unlawful access. They work closely with partners, including Surrey Wildlife Trust and SCC Natural Environment Team, to ensure designated sites are appropriately managed, and undertake woodland management to maintain, protect, and enhance the Council's woodland assets. For a full list of sites that the team is responsible for, please see Appendix 1.

4.6.1.2 *Projects and Actions*

During the reporting period, conservation grazing was carried out to manage chalk grassland and heathland habitats at Chobham Common, Wisley & Ockham Commons, Tice's Meadow, Hill Park, and Brockham Lime Kilns, helping to maintain open habitats and support species diversity. Woodland management activities, including ride clearance, coppicing, thinning, and glade maintenance, were also undertaken at Shere Woodlands, Norbury Park, Tice's Meadow, and Sheepleas to maintain healthy woodland structure and enhance wildlife habitats. Woodland management staff training was completed, and new woodland management plans are being developed to guide future works. These projects are ongoing and delivered in partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust and The Downlands Partnership for grazing, and volunteer groups and the Forestry Commission for woodland management.

4.6.1.3 *Land Management Framework*

As a major landowner, Surrey County Council manages its estate through a Land Management Framework designed to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and land use pressures. The framework aims to maximise ecological, social, educational, and economic value while demonstrating exemplar land management.

By 2050, the Council's land estate will be resilient, biodiverse, and engaged with communities, achieved through nature-based solutions, community action, and technology, guided by three principles:

1. Harnessing the natural environment to deliver wider outcomes by maximising natural capital services.
2. Leading by example as an exemplar landowner achieving best outcomes for environment, residents and businesses.

3. Responsible and effective management through robust practices and monitoring.

The framework includes policies to: enhance habitats and wildlife corridors; promote health, wellbeing, and education; support sustainable farming, renewable energy, and circular economy practices; build climate resilience and improve water quality; deliver net-zero carbon activities; and foster community engagement through volunteering and inclusive access to nature.

Implementation is achieved through partnerships, annual monitoring, alignment with the Surrey LNRS, and farm tenant management plans addressing soil, trees, water, carbon, and community objectives.

4.6.2 Countryside Access

4.6.2.1 Overview of Service Function

The Countryside Access team manages Surrey's public rights of way network, ensuring routes are safe, accessible and well maintained for public use. The service owns and manages the Downs Link public bridleway, a former railway line extending approximately 13 miles across Surrey and widely used by local communities and visitors. Sections of the route are up to 20 feet wide, allowing the team to undertake limited conservation work on embankments and adjacent land, primarily within areas of regenerative woodland and scrub.

4.6.2.2 Projects and Actions

As part of management of the Downs Link public bridleway, 1400m² of Hazel Coppice in Cranleigh was brought back into rotation, with regrowth now reaching 8 feet and showing no deer or rabbit damage. Additionally, 616m² of bramble north of Hewitts Road was removed to encourage seed stock and ground-covering plants, with refugia piles created and regrowth actively managed. Both projects were carried out in Autumn 2024 and Winter 2024/25 with support from Downs Link Volunteers.

4.6.3 Countryside Resources

4.6.3.1 Overview of Service Function

The Countryside Resources team delivers practical land and biodiversity initiatives across Surrey, including leading the 1.2 million tree planting programme on SCC land and supporting boroughs, districts, charities, and community groups. The team manages tree inspections and works, including large-scale Ash Dieback felling, supports farmers with tree planting, biodiversity projects, and grant access, and plans and delivers offsite Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) projects, including site selection and implementation.

4.6.3.2 Projects and Actions

During the 2024–25 planting season, 49,065 trees were planted across 228 sites in Surrey, involving over 140 partners, including boroughs, districts, charities, and community groups. The planting will create hedgerows, copses, and new orchard

spaces, providing habitat for wildlife, shade, and increased species diversity. Data was collected between March and October 2025, with full season figures to be published March–October 2026.

4.6.3.3 *Engagement Activities*

The Tree Planting & Establishment Team within Countryside Resources delivers ongoing workshops to build community capacity, enabling local groups to lead tree planting projects and expand canopy cover.

4.6.4 *Visitor Services*

4.6.4.1 *Overview of Service Function*

Visitor Services manages public engagement with Surrey’s countryside. While not directly responsible for habitat management, the team supports practical countryside operations and play a central role in communications, visitor engagement, and partnership work with community and third-sector organisations. Responsibilities include coordinating filming, hiring spaces for events, and supporting conservation initiatives.

4.6.4.2 *Engagement Activities*

The team delivers a wide range of public-facing initiatives to raise awareness of biodiversity and responsible countryside use. These include educational programs, workshops, events, campaigns, and media content. Table 4 below summarises key activities, their biodiversity benefits, delivery dates, and the teams or partners involved.



Table 4: Engagement Activities Delivered by SCC Visitor Services Team

Engagement Activity & Biodiversity Benefit	Date(s) Completed	Responsible Team(s)
Produced 75 interpretation boards detailing flora and fauna found within SCC’s owned and managed sites, raising biodiversity awareness.	2024 – 2025.	SCC Visitor Services.
Launched Dog Walkers Code of Conduct promoting responsible dog walking and wildlife respect in Surrey’s countryside.	February 2024.	SCC Visitor Services.
Ash Dieback engagement sessions with Surrey residents raising public awareness on disease impact and management, and updates to the Ash Dieback information video, highlighting how SCC teams assess and protect habitats and species before tree felling.	February, March & September 2024.	SCC Visitor Services and SCC Countryside Resources SCC Natural Environment.
Added 3 cows to Tice’s Meadow herd for conservation grazing, with a naming campaign.	March 2024.	SCC Visitor Services and SCC Countryside Estates.
Children’s workshops at Newlands Corner Discovery Centre focused on hedgehog awareness and protection, including checking hedgehog tunnels for footprints.	March 2024.	SCC Visitor Services and Surrey Hills Society.
Produced a series of visitor information videos showcasing the flora, fauna, and highlights of SCC’s countryside estate sites, available on visitor information pages.	April 2024.	SCC Visitor Services.
Established a wildlife-guided walk program at Sheeples, including wildflower and tree education, plus dawn chorus walks during summer months.	April - July 2024 & 2025.	SCC Visitor Services and public-led guides.
Wildfire awareness campaign with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to promote safe countryside practices during dry months, while highlighting wildlife on the commons.	May - June 2024 & 2025.	Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and SCC Visitor Services.
Hosted the “Tice’s Meadow Biodiversity Summit” to discuss site challenges, share ideas, and inform future management plans to support biodiversity.	June 2024.	Reps from internal SCC teams including: Visitor Services, Natural Environment, Countryside Estate and Countryside Resources.

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Engagement Activity & Biodiversity Benefit	Date(s) Completed	Responsible Team(s)
Supported Thames Basin Heaths Partnership in promoting Heath Week; a week of free activities educating visitors about wildlife and biodiversity across Surrey’s countryside sites.	August 2024 & 2025.	Thames Basin Heaths Partnership, Surrey Fire and Rescue, local Borough and District Council’s, and SCC Visitor Services Team.
Produced the Land Management Framework video to accompany the vision, policy, and principles, highlighting county-wide work on landscape management, flood prevention, and nature recovery initiatives.	September 2024.	SCC Visitor Services.
Supported promotion of Surrey Nature Day at West Horsley Place and provided on-site support during the event.	September 2024.	SCC Engagement and SCC Visitor Services.
Supported Asian Hornet Awareness Week to educate the public about this invasive species and encourage reporting of sightings via app.	September 2024 and 2025.	SCC Visitor Services.
Partnered in creating <i>The Thousand Year Tree</i> , a bespoke children’s book highlighting ancient trees at Newlands Corner. Delivered school and on-site workshops to educate primary school children about trees and nature. Ran a design competition with Surrey libraries (500+ entries). The published book was gifted to all 52 Surrey libraries and is also available in bookshops.	December 2024.	Surrey Hills Society, local author and illustrator, Surrey based publisher and SCC Visitor Services.
Participated as a stakeholder in establishing the Wealden Heaths “super” National Nature Reserve (NNR) to restore and improve habitat connectivity across southwest Surrey. The project, coordinated by Natural England, brought together nine landowners and partners including SCC.	August 2025.	SCC, Surrey Wildlife Trust, The National Trust, Forestry England, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, RSPB, Waverley Borough Council, Surrey Hills National Landscape and The Hampton Estate.
Installed a new dog walking trail at Norbury Park to divert walkers from livestock, raise awareness of dog waste issues (e.g., neospora), and protect wildlife.	November 2025.	SCC Visitor Services.
Regularly produced posters to inform the public about on-site work on SCC land (e.g., woodland management, tree felling) and highlight habitat regeneration efforts, including native species planting.	Ongoing.	SCC Visitor Services.
Ongoing pop-up events with Thames Basin Heath Partnership’s Heathland Hounds to raise wildlife awareness and promote responsible dog walking.	Ongoing.	SCC Visitor Services and Heathland Hound’s group.

4.6.5 Basingstoke Canal

Managed by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils, the Basingstoke Canal balances public safety, conservation, and wellbeing. As an SSSI, it follows a Conservation Management Plan (2018-28) guiding maintenance to enhance biodiversity.

During the reporting period, over 71,000 volunteer hours supported biodiversity efforts, including invasive species control (Japanese Knotweed, Floating Pennywort, mink), and bankside habitat management benefiting odonata species (dragonflies and damselflies). The 2023 odonata survey recorded two new species, and the Canal remains one of England and Wales' richest freshwater sites for vascular plants (87 species). It attracts 1.75 million visitors annually and involves 200+ active volunteers.

Upcoming priorities include CMP review in 2028, targeted dredging, continued invasive species management (especially for signal crayfish, Cabomba, and Crassula), strategic tree management, and ongoing botanical and odonata monitoring.

4.6.6 Surrey Countryside Partnerships

4.6.6.1 Overview of Service Function

The Surrey Countryside Partnerships (SCP), hosted by SCC and funded by seven Surrey boroughs and districts and three London boroughs, deliver a shared countryside service across public and private land. The service manages and restores habitats including chalk grassland, heathland, woodlands, commons and ponds, while improving public access. Volunteers contribute over 30,000 hours annually, supporting habitat management, conservation grazing and public engagement. SCP work with landowners across the urban fringe of South London, the Green Belt and Surrey Hills National Landscape to enhance biodiversity and promote wellbeing.

4.6.6.2 Volunteer Events

SCP run a wide range of volunteer and engagement activities to involve communities and organisations in practical land management. Each year, the team delivers over 500 volunteer task events, open to all, while also facilitating corporate volunteering, with 2,833 hours contributed in 2024–25 across more than 30 companies. Regular volunteers receive training in machinery use to increase efficiency and manage larger areas. Partner organisations such as Surrey Choices actively participate in task days at Surrey Hills and other sites, fostering inclusive community involvement in biodiversity and land management.

4.6.6.3 Projects and Actions

Much of the work delivered by SCP and volunteers occurs on District, Borough, and private land. This report, however, focuses solely on projects carried out on SCC Countryside Estate land. For a full breakdown of actions during the reporting period, see Table 5 below.

Table 5: Biodiversity Actions Delivered by Surrey Countryside Partnerships on SCC Owned Land

Action	Date(s) Completed	Biodiversity Benefit
Scrub clearance in the chalk download at Park Ham, removing young hawthorn.	January 2024 – December 2025	Prevents scrub encroachment on chalk grassland.
Planted 150 native trees at Little Woodcote Wood including oak, birch, rowan, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, alder, grey willow, wild rose, hornbeam, hazel and crab apple.	23 rd February 2024	Native species will support a range of wildlife by providing both shelter and food. A mixture of trees and shrubs was planted which will create a diverse habitat structure in the future.
Pond management and scrub clearance at Stones Road Pond. Maintenance work carried out as part of agreement with SCC and Natural England, keeping paths clear for newt surveys around the pond and in the buffer area by the new pond and old allotment area.	February 2024 and March 2025.	Enhances survey access for monitoring species; maintained pond-edge biodiversity. Increases light and habitat diversity, and prevents dominance of bramble over other species.
Hazel coppicing in Norbury Park and dead hedged along the edge. Produced products including planting stakes, den materials, binders, hedge stakes, deer stakes, and whips for hedge laying.	November 2024 and 2025.	Maintains traditional woodland management; increases light penetration supporting understorey flora and invertebrates; creates wildlife-friendly habitat edges. Provides materials for habitat creation.
Scrub removal at Staffhurst Wood where a glade was covered in bramble, bracken and young trees.	17 th December 2024	Removing scrub increases light, promoting the recovery of diverse ground flora and other wildlife (e.g. insects).
Scrub removal at Little Woodcote Wood removing bramble and planting 20 ground flora plants and 50 hazel nuts.	December 2024 and December 2025	Opens up the woodland, allowing more light to reach the woodland floor. This promotes growth of saplings, young trees and ground flora to flourish, enhancing the diversity and structural complexity of the woodland.
50m of hedge laying at Old Lodge Farm, completing a stretch of 150m), the first stretch being laid out by other groups. Installed stock fencing around a new bird hide to stop cows damaging it. Planted chalk grassland plants (e.g. bird's foot trefoil, horseshoe vetch, knapweed etc) on banks around the farm yard.	January 2025 and May 2025.	Creates new habitat through hedge laying and enhances grassland diversity by introducing characteristic chalk grassland plants.
Installed 12 dormouse boxes in Brockham Limeworks.	25 th February 2025.	Provides nesting and hibernation sites for dormice.

Action	Date(s) Completed	Biodiversity Benefit
An area at Sheepleas was coppiced with products left on the far side of the track. The rest of the brash was laid in a dead hedge around the coppice area. A large fallen cherry tree was partially tided up. Products made were deer stakes, tree planting stakes, binders and den building material.	11 November 2025.	Supports traditional woodland management, increases structural diversity, enhances habitat for birds, small mammals, and invertebrates, and provides materials for ongoing habitat restoration and management. Provides materials for habitat creation.
Provision of year-round conservation grazing using cattle on Tice's Meadow Nature Reserved (SCC landowner and manager).	Ongoing	Improved wet grassland habitat and marginal silvopasture. Reduction in cover of ruderal-dominant species and increased presence of indicator species such as ox-eye daisy, bird's foot trefoil and lady's bedstraw.
Provision of conservation grazing using sheep and goats on Brockham Quarry – Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SSSI (unit 038). SCC is the landowner and manager, and Brockham Parish Council are volunteers.	Ongoing	Management of species-rich chalk grassland and mosaic scrub. Site supports notable butterfly species including small blue and silver-spotted skipper, along with several orchid species.
Provision of conservation grazing using sheep and goats on Coneyborough Hill – Chipstead Downs SSSI. SCC are the landowners and Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) are the land managers.	Ongoing	Restoration and management of species-rich chalk grassland.
Provision of conservation grazing using sheep and goats on Fame's Rough – Chipstead Downs SSSI (SCC landowner and SWT land manager).	Ongoing	Restoration and management of species-rich chalk grassland. Site supports notable plant species including ground-pine, cut-leaved germander and adder's tongue, along with a range of butterfly species.
Provision of conservation grazing using sheep, cattle and goats at Old Lodge Farm. Use of holdback land. Base site for the Downlands flock including lambing, animal welfare checks and routine treatments (SCC landowners).	Ongoing	Management and restoration of chalk grassland, species-rich grassland, mosaic scrub and hedgerows. Provision of holdback grazing supporting flexible, welfare-led livestock management. Site supports Red List farmland bird species and a confirmed breeding population of hornet robberfly.
Provision of conservation grazing using cattle, sheep and goats at Park Ham SSSI (SCC landowners).	Ongoing	Management of chalk grassland and lowland hay meadow habitat. Site supports notable species including autumn gentian, chalkhill blue, grizzled skipper, yellowhammer, meadow pipit and linnet. Site condition improved from unfavourable to favourable by 2021.

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Action	Date(s) Completed	Biodiversity Benefit
Holdback land. Future BNG conservation grazing at The Lemons.	Ongoing	Future conservation grazing for Biodiversity Net Gain

5 Surrey Hills National Landscape

5.1 Overview

Designated in 1958 as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Surrey Hills AONB was renamed the Surrey Hills National Landscape in 2023. It is one of the UK's most heavily wooded protected landscapes, with 47% tree canopy cover, and features a diverse mosaic of chalk downland, heathland, mixed farmland and extensive woodland, shaped by rolling hills, river valleys and historic settlements. The landscape stretches from Farnham to Oxted along the North Downs, with the Greensand Hills to the south and the wooded Low Weald forming its southern boundary. The area's varied habitats provide important ecological value and support a wide range of species.

The Surrey Hills team works to conserve and enhance the National Landscape, promoting biodiversity, supporting communities, and addressing climate change. Delivery is shared across five "family" members, including the Surrey Hills Board, Surrey Hills Enterprises, Surrey Hills Society and Surrey Hills Arts. SCC provides funding for the Surrey Hills Board and partners with Surrey Hills Arts through Surrey Arts, highlighting SCC's active role in supporting delivery and community engagement across the National Landscape.

5.2 Projects and Actions

Since January 2024, 65 projects have focused on biodiversity across the Surrey Hills National Landscape. Key examples include:

- Woodland pond restoration: Two ponds created in the 1960s were desilted, dams repaired, marginal plants managed, and surrounding trees coppiced to reduce shading. An accessible dam was installed to allow school groups and established community groups to use the ponds for educational activities.
- Heathland grazing enhancement: A high-capacity mobile water bowser was purchased to support a larger number of cattle grazing on the heathland, restoring natural grazing regimes and improving habitat quality for heathland species.
- Conservation grazing at vineyards: 1000m of temporary fencing, a solar energiser, and signage were installed to enable conservation grazing at various vineyards and across other sites in the National Landscape.
- Chalk grassland and steep slope management: An EcoTech H24 Lynx remote-controlled mower was purchased to safely manage steep banks and areas with difficult access, preventing scrub encroachment, enhancing biodiversity, and reducing the need for manual labour by volunteers.

5.3 Surrey Hills Management Plan (2025 – 2030)

5.3.1 Introduction and purpose

The Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 is a statutory document that sets out a comprehensive 75-year vision for the conservation and enhancement of one of England's most significant protected landscapes. Adopted by local authorities between September and October 2025, the plan fulfils the legislative requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and responds to the strengthened duty under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which requires all relevant public authorities to actively "seek to further the purpose" of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes.

The Management Plan is structured around three core themes, each with specific targets and strategic priorities:

5.3.2 (1) Nature – Thriving plants and animals

The plan focuses on reversing biodiversity decline and creating a resilient, connected network of wildlife-rich habitats across the Surrey Hills. Key focal areas include:

- **Habitat Restoration and Expansion:** Priority habitats including ancient woodland (the Surrey Hills has 47% canopy cover, making it one of the most wooded National Landscapes), lowland heathland, chalk grassland, wetlands, and the internationally important yew and box woodlands on the North Downs.
- **Ecological Connectivity:** Creating wildlife corridors through hedgerow planting and maintenance, connecting fragmented habitats to enable species migration and increase resilience to climate change.
- **Protected Site Management:** Ensuring Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are brought into or maintained in favourable condition.
- **Agricultural Land Management:** Supporting nature-friendly farming practices, including regenerative agriculture, precision farming to reduce chemical inputs, and the creation of buffer zones along watercourses.
- **Water Quality and Natural Flood Management:** Restoring riparian buffer zones, re-wetting drained land, creating wetlands, and implementing natural flood management techniques including leaky dams and strategic woodland planting.

5.3.3 (2) People & place – Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement

This theme addresses the social, cultural, and economic value of the Surrey Hills, focusing on:

- **Public Access and Inclusion:** Improving accessibility for all members of society, including those currently excluded through physical, social, or economic barriers. This includes developing easier access trails, improving the North

Downs Way National Trail, and creating active travel routes connecting communities.

- Cultural and Artistic Heritage: Recording, protecting, and celebrating the Surrey Hills' rich associations with artists, writers, designers, and architects. The plan seeks to commission new artistic interpretations of the landscape to inspire contemporary audiences.
- Historic Environment: Conserving heritage assets including historic buildings, archaeological sites, historic parks and gardens, and the landscape's industrial heritage (mills, quarries, former gunpowder production sites).
- Sustainable Tourism and Rural Economy: Managing the Surrey Hills as a destination for sustainable tourism and responsible recreation, supporting local businesses that contribute to conservation, and developing the Surrey Hills brand through Surrey Hills Enterprises.
- Thriving Rural Communities: Supporting affordable housing for local people and key workers, improving community transport infrastructure, and fostering skills development in land management and conservation.
- Gateway Locations: Strategic investment in visitor facilities at key sites including Hindhead Commons, Newlands Corner, Box Hill, and Reigate Hill to manage visitor pressure and protect more sensitive locations.

5.3.4 (3) Climate – Mitigation & adaptation

The climate theme integrates throughout the plan, addressing both carbon reduction and climate resilience:

- Carbon Sequestration: Expanding trees outside woodland through agroforestry, hedgerow planting, and tree belts. Supporting soil conservation and improved soil health to capture carbon.
- Renewable Energy: Supporting small-scale renewable energy installations on farms (solar panels on existing buildings, wind turbines) and promoting biofuel production from agricultural waste, while ensuring such developments do not harm the natural beauty of the National Landscape.
- Climate Adaptation: Building landscape resilience through habitat connectivity, species reintroduction, woodland management to reduce wildfire risk, and natural flood management to protect communities from extreme weather events.
- Sustainable Transport: Reducing transport emissions through promotion of electric vehicles, improved public transport infrastructure, active travel networks, and support for remote working to minimize commuting.

- **Circular Economy:** Encouraging local production and consumption, promoting sustainable practices to manage natural resources, and supporting local renewable energy solutions.



5.3.5 Targets

The Management Plan establishes ambitious, measurable targets across all three themes, setting out both long-term aspirations to 2100 and practical five-year milestones. For nature recovery, wildlife-rich habitats will increase from 14,560 hectares to 20,000 hectares by 2100, with an initial target of adding 1,000 hectares within the first five years. The hedgerow network will expand significantly from 6,900 km to 10,000 km by the end of the century, beginning with an additional 20 km in the current planning period. Protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) will see marked improvement, rising from 75% in favourable condition today to 95% by 2100, with an interim target of 80% by 2030.

The Management Plan sets ambitious long-term targets across heritage, access, and climate priorities. National Heritage at Risk features will be reduced from eight to just two by 2100, with half of these (bringing the total down to four) addressed within the first five years by 2030. Easier access trails will undergo dramatic expansion from the current 8 miles to 75 miles by 2100, with 20 miles to be completed by 2030, ensuring the Surrey Hills becomes increasingly accessible to all members of society. On climate, trees outside woodland—including agroforestry, hedgerows, and tree belts—will increase from 2,665 hectares (6.5% of land cover) to 4,200 hectares (10%) by 2100,

beginning with growth to 2,800 hectares within five years. The plan commits to achieving Net Zero by 2050 in line with national targets, then moving beyond this to become carbon negative, reaching -0.5 by 2075 and -1.0 by 2100, demonstrating the Surrey Hills' long-term contribution to climate recovery.

5.3.6 Policy Framework, Governance, Delivery & Priorities

The Management Plan provides the strategic framework for conserving and enhancing the Surrey Hills National Landscape, with delivery focused on three core themes: nature, people, and climate. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 has strengthened the legislative framework, introducing an active duty on all relevant authorities to "seek to further the purpose" of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, a significant upgrade from the previous "duty of regard."

Development controls are exceptionally strict. The "tilted balance" in favour of sustainable development does not apply if development fails to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In the heavily wooded Surrey Hills, substantial tree screening is explicitly not considered justification for development. Strict requirements focus on conserving designated sites, managing priority habitats (heathland and chalk grassland), creating habitat corridors for nature recovery, and delivering biodiversity net gain through the planning system.

Delivery relies on coordinated partnership working: the Surrey Hills Partnership Board provides strategic oversight; the Surrey Hills Team manages day-to-day coordination; the Planning Working Group advises on development proposals; and the Surrey Nature Partnership delivers biodiversity priorities aligned with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Funding comes from diverse sources including DEFRA core funding, Environmental Land Management Schemes, Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, and National Heritage Lottery programmes.

Immediate priorities include habitat restoration (woodland, wetlands, ancient trees), nature-friendly farming and agroecological practices, water quality improvements and natural flood management, wildlife corridor creation, enhanced public access and interpretation, and protection of productive agricultural land from inappropriate development. The Plan adopts adaptive management with annual monitoring and five-year comprehensive reviews aligned with DEFRA's Protected Landscapes Framework.

National Landscape designation is equivalent in protection to National Parks and recognized internationally as IUCN Category V Protected Landscape. Management Plan policies are a material consideration in planning decisions, and cumulative impacts must be carefully assessed to prevent gradual erosion of landscape quality.

The Surrey Hills Management Plan 2025-2030 represents an ambitious and comprehensive framework for managing one of England's most cherished landscapes. By establishing a 75-year vision alongside practical five-year targets and policies, the plan balances long-term strategic thinking with immediate action. Its focus on nature recovery, climate resilience, sustainable communities, and inclusive access positions

the Surrey Hills to meet the environmental and social challenges of the 21st century while conserving and enhancing the special qualities that have inspired generations of artists, writers, and visitors.

The plan's success will depend on effective partnership working across local authorities, landowners, farmers, conservation organizations, businesses, and communities, all working together to deliver the vision of "a nature-rich landscape connecting its ancient trees, woodland, heathland and downland, whose beauty is enjoyed and appreciated by all parts of society, with thriving communities and economy, delivering natural health and wellbeing, and resilient to climate change."

6 SCC Future Actions and Projects to Support Biodiversity

This section outlines SCC's planned actions to support biodiversity over the next reporting period. Building on existing delivery and responding to national and local priorities, these actions aim to further embed biodiversity considerations across Council functions. Over the next five years, SCC will contribute to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, protecting, restoring, and enhancing nature across the local area.

As a local planning authority and land manager, the Council influences biodiversity outcomes through policy, planning decisions, partnerships, and stewardship of its own land. Key responsibilities include integrating biodiversity into the planning system, ensuring that development proposals avoid significant harm, mitigate unavoidable impacts, and deliver measurable enhancements. Planning decisions will be informed by robust ecological evidence, aligned with local plan policies, and delivered through planning conditions, compensation measures, and biodiversity net gains. The Council will also work proactively with developers to embed green infrastructure, habitat creation, and nature-based solutions at early design stages.

SCC is responsible for protecting and managing designated sites, priority habitats, and biodiversity on Council-owned land. Over the next five years, this will involve improving habitat condition and connectivity, supporting local nature recovery initiatives, and using Council land and assets as exemplars of best practice. Active land and woodland management will continue, with countryside officers maintaining and reviewing management plans to ensure sustainable practices that enhance habitats, increase climate resilience, and support diverse species.

The Council provides strategic leadership on biodiversity by partnering with neighbouring authorities, statutory bodies, landowners, community groups, and other stakeholders to support nature recovery, raise awareness, and deliver measurable outcomes. Monitoring and reporting will demonstrate statutory compliance and track tangible biodiversity benefits.

Through its planning, land management, and leadership roles, SCC will play a central part in enhancing biodiversity, delivering healthier ecosystems, resilient landscapes, and improved community wellbeing over the next five years. While this report covers the next 12 months, longer-term delivery may be affected by the anticipated local government reorganisation, which could alter structures, responsibilities, and governance. The Council remains committed to statutory compliance and biodiversity enhancement in the short term, but future actions, priorities, and reporting frameworks will be reviewed once new local government arrangements are established.

Table 6 below sets out the planned actions and projects, alongside their anticipated biodiversity benefits, delivery timescales, and associated funding or resource requirements.

Table 6: Planned Actions / Projects to Meet Surrey County Council’s Enhanced Biodiversity Duty

Proposed Actions / Projects	Expected Biodiversity Benefit	Timescale	Funding / Resource Source
Continue integrating biodiversity and nature-related considerations into high-opportunity and high-risk procurement projects through specifications, tender questions, award criteria, contract clauses, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).	Increased number of council contracts require suppliers to address and mitigate environmental impacts.	Ongoing.	SCC Procurement.
Implement the Social Value Model to enable services to request bidders provide social value aligned with biodiversity and nature-related priorities.	Services can secure social value outcomes that support core biodiversity objectives.	Early 2026.	SCC Procurement.
Dorking NFM Scheme - leaky barriers, scrapes, floodplain reconnection and bunds on Pipp Brook and tributaries.	Wetland creation supporting a range of wildlife, and vegetation management to allow more light into aquatic habitats (daylighting). Benefit lifespan: 15 years for woody structures, 100+ years for earthwork measures.	Phase 2 works to be carried out in February 2026. Phase 3 works to be carried out in Summer/Autumn 2026.	Funded via a combination of grant (Local Levy administered by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee) and SCC capital budget (Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme). Resourced by Flood and Climate Resilience Team.
Ash Ranges NFM Scheme - leaky barriers, gully stuffing, scrapes, bunds and pond creation.	Wetland creation supporting a range of wildlife; benefit lifespan: 15 years for woody structures, 100+ years for earthwork measures.	Benefits realised post Summer 2026.	Funded via EA National NFM Programme grant with additional SCC funding. Resourced by SCC Flood and Climate Resilience.
Farnham Park NFM Scheme - leaky barriers, scrapes and pond creation.	Wetland creation supporting a range of wildlife; benefit lifespan: 15 years for woody structures, 100+ years for earthwork measures.	Business case completed October 2025. Construction	Fully funded by grant (Local Levy) and resourced by SCC Flood and Climate Resilience.

Proposed Actions / Projects	Expected Biodiversity Benefit	Timescale	Funding / Resource Source
		planned for July 2026.	
A new biodiversity module for the carbon literacy training which enables participants to achieve Carbon Literate accreditation. It is an 8-hour course delivered over two days, allowing staff to explore causes and impacts of climate change with a focus on the role of carbon emissions.	Increase organisational understanding of the links between climate and biodiversity. By requiring participants to make pledges at the end of the course, the inclusion of biodiversity content is expected to broaden biodiversity-focused commitments by staff and leaders, helping to embed biodiversity considerations across services and decision-making.	2026 – 2028 (aligned with when the course runs).	Greener Futures Team
Apply for support grants to maintain and enhance existing conservation grazing and woodland management on council-managed land to support biodiversity and habitat quality.	Continued enhancement of grassland, heathland, and woodland habitats.	1-3 years (grant application and continuation)	Countryside Stewardship grant.
Continue to run an extensive volunteer task programme and conservation grazing service.	Volunteer-led management supports the maintenance of Surrey’s habitats, benefiting local wildlife and plant diversity.	Ongoing	SCC Countryside Services - SCP
When commissioning schemes, make sure there is standard text to give to designers to ensure they are considering biodiversity when designing and implementing transport schemes.	Allows designers to choose wildlife friendly lighting, drainage and incorporating green infrastructure.	Designs from feasibility to detailed, achieving funding and to construction.	Resourced by SCC Transport. Funded sources are limited and therefore not many schemes have been built.

7 Biodiversity Net Gain Implementation

7.1 BNG Overview

Surrey County Council has a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to ensure that a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is achieved for all non-exempt developments requiring planning permission.

In its role as the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, SCC Ecologists in the Natural Environment team are responsible for assessing BNG submissions and ensuring that applicants demonstrate how the mandatory 10% BNG will be achieved and secured in accordance with legislation. This includes reviewing biodiversity metric calculations, BNG reports, biodiversity gain plans, habitat management and monitoring plans, and legal agreements to ensure gains are maintained for the required 30-year period. SCC does not deliver BNG itself in this regulatory capacity; rather, it ensures that applicants meet the statutory requirements.

In its role as a developer such as the delivery of schools, libraries and other council infrastructure (also known as Regulation 3 applications), SCC applies the mitigation hierarchy to its own developments. This involves seeking to avoid biodiversity impacts in the first instance, delivering on-site habitat enhancements wherever possible, and securing off-site compensation where necessary to achieve the mandatory 10% BNG. SCC ecologists independently review the ecological information, including BNG assessments, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

In addition, SCC Ecologists provide BNG consultee services to Elmbridge Borough Council and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. This includes providing planning consultation responses on BNG matters and advising on mechanisms to secure habitat management and monitoring for the statutory 30-year period.

7.2 Approved Biodiversity Gain Plans

Surrey County Council currently has five Biodiversity Gain Plans (BGPs) approved in the reporting period. Four of these are securing BNG through on-site units only and one is securing BNG through a combination of on-site and off-site units.

Table 7: SCC BNG Projects with Approved Biodiversity Gain Plans

Reference / Type	Location	BNG Delivery Type
SCCRef-2025-0037 / DP	Merstham, Surrey	On-Site
SCCRef-2025-0065 / DP3	Guildford, Surrey	On-Site
SCCRef-2025-0095 / DP3	Woking, Surrey	On-Site
SCCRef-2025-0169 / DP3	Camberley, Surrey	On-Site
SCCRef-2025-0192 / DP	Dunsfold, Surrey	Both - On-site and Off-Site via habitat units purchased from Environment Bank Ltd.

7.2.1 Mycelia

Surrey County Council uses Mycelia, a specialist BNG software developed by Verna, to support the work of its in-house ecologists and planners. The software is used as a supplementary tool to assist with the administration, validation and long-term monitoring of BNG requirements.

SCC ecologists remain the first point of review for all BNG submissions. Mycelia is used to support this process by assisting with tasks such as metric validation checks, data management, and tracking habitat delivery and monitoring obligations over the statutory 30-year period.

The system helps ensure consistency, transparency and accurate record-keeping across Minerals and Waste planning applications and Reg 3 planning applications, enabling the Council to monitor compliance effectively.

7.2.2 Biodiversity Gain Plan Outcomes

This section summarises biodiversity unit outcomes from BGPs approved during the reporting period. The data has been collated using Mycelia from approved statutory biodiversity metric calculations and reflects the biodiversity units secured through the planning process, including both on-site and off-site delivery.

7.2.2.1 Overall Expected Gains and Losses

Table 8 summarises the aggregated biodiversity unit outcomes for the five BGPs that were approved during the reporting period.

Across all schemes, on-site area habitat units increased from 7.34 to 8.19 units, delivering a net gain of 0.85 area habitat units (+11.57%). Hedgerow units increased from 1.80 to 3.43 units, delivering a net gain of 1.63 hedgerow units (+90.42%). Off-site delivery generated an additional +0.07 area habitat units and +0.11 hedgerow units. No statutory biodiversity credits were required. Overall, the approved BGPs achieved a combined net gain of +12.48% for area habitat units and +85.34% for hedgerows.

Table 8: Overall Expected Gains and Losses Across All Approved BGPs.

Overall expected gains and losses	Area Habitat Units	Hedgerow Units
Total number of pre-development biodiversity units approved on-site	7.34	1.80
Total number of post-development biodiversity units approved on-site	8.19	3.43
Total net unit change in biodiversity units, on-site	0.85	1.63
Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, on-site	11.57	90.42
Total number of baseline biodiversity units approved off-site	0.02	0.24
Total number of post-intervention biodiversity units approved off-site	0.09	0.35
Total net unit change in biodiversity units, off-site	0.07	0.11
Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, off-site	332.31	46.56
Total number of biodiversity units offset using statutory credits	0.00	0.00
Total net unit change in biodiversity units (including any units offset using credits)	0.92	1.74
Average percentage (%) change (including statutory credits)	12.48	85.34

7.2.2.2 *Composition of Biodiversity Gains*

Table 9 summarises changes in area-based habitat biodiversity units and the habitat types that contribute to those units across the five approved BGPs.

Notable gains were delivered in heathland and shrub (+1.25 habitat units) and individual trees (+0.42 habitat units). Urban habitats also increased (+0.12 habitat units) while grassland units decreased (-0.86 habitat units) and sparsely vegetated land decreased (-0.01 habitat units). However, the overall habitat area increased slightly from 4.34ha to 4.51ha. In total, the schemes with approved BGPs will deliver a net gain of +0.92 habitat units.

Table 9: *Composition of Biodiversity Gains – Habitat Areas.*

Habitat Type – Area	Total Biodiversity Units at Baseline	Total Hectares at Baseline	Total Biodiversity Units Post-development	Total Hectares Post-development	Net Change in Biodiversity Units	Net Change in Hectares
Grassland	3.00	1.41	2.14	0.51	-0.86	-0.90
Heathland and shrub	0.41	0.10	1.66	0.25	1.25	0.15
Sparsely vegetated land	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Urban	0.14	2.35	0.26	3.11	0.12	0.76
Individual trees	3.77	0.47	4.19	0.63	0.42	0.15
Total	7.37	4.35	8.29	4.51	0.92	0.16

Table 10 summarises changes in linear habitats such as hedgerows and tree lines.

The largest gain was in species-rich native hedgerow (+1.77 hedgerow units). Non-native and ornamental hedgerows also increased (+0.12 hedgerow units), while native hedgerow units reduced slightly (-0.15 hedgerow units). Overall, the schemes with approved BGPs will deliver a net gain of +1.74 hedgerow units, increasing linear habitats from 0.55km to 0.89km.

Table 10: Composition of Biodiversity Gains – Hedgerows and Line of Trees

Habitat type - hedgerows and lines of trees	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total kilometres at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total kilometres post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in kilometres
Species-rich native hedgerow	0.17	0.02	1.94	0.29	1.77	0.27
Native hedgerow	1.55	0.36	1.40	0.31	-0.15	-0.04
Line of trees	0.26	0.12	0.26	0.12	0.00	0.00
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.06	0.06	0.18	0.18	0.12	0.12
Total	2.04	0.55	3.78	0.89	1.74	0.34

7.2.2.3 Impacts on Irreplaceable Habitats

No BGPs approved during the reporting period involved on-site changes that negatively impacted irreplaceable habitats.

7.2.2.4 Location of Off-site Biodiversity Units

All 0.44 off-site biodiversity units (100%) were located outside the Local Planning Authority (LPA) or National Character Area (NCA) of the impact site, but within a neighbouring LPA or NCA.

7.3 Habitat Banks

In order to support the delivery of Reg 3 projects across the County the Council has been exploring securing its own land as habitat banks. The aim of this work is to establish a portfolio of sites which can off-set habitat losses and provide habitat improvements locally whilst also supporting the Councils pipeline of projects through planning. BNG assessments were completed on a number of sites across the County, and a shortlist of sites are now going through consideration as future habitat banks.

In addition to this, SCC ecologists in the Natural Environment team have been supporting Borough and District authorities in developing their own habitat bank projects as well as collaborating on legally securing sites with external providers. An example of this is the work that took place between SCC ecologists and Elmbridge Borough Council to secure the first habitat bank in the County (Wild Cobham). Helping to establish private habitat banks in this way enables the core objective of ensuring habitat lost to development is off-set locally, and that off-site biodiversity unit needs can be delivered in Surrey for local projects.

8 Barriers and Support Needed

8.1 Key Barriers to Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Delivery

While local authorities play an important role in conserving and enhancing biodiversity, the delivery of meaningful improvements is shaped by a range of practical, financial and structural constraints. Competing statutory responsibilities, limited resources and ongoing pressures on land use can restrict the scope and pace of biodiversity action. In addition, fragmented land ownership, the impacts of climate change, and the need to balance ecological objectives with social and economic priorities present ongoing challenges. Recognising these barriers is essential to understanding the context in which biodiversity duty is implemented and to identifying realistic opportunities for progress.

8.1.1 Resourcing and Delivery Limitations

Feedback from council officers through data collection has highlighted resourcing and delivery capacity as the most significant barriers to enhancing biodiversity. Insufficient funding and staff resources limit the ability to undertake habitat management, monitoring and enforcement activity, with several projects currently on hold due to the pausing of government funding streams, rising costs associated with fencing and tree protection, and environmental challenges such as high deer pressure on council owned estate land. Officers also identified structural and policy-related constraints, including the absence of national guidance on incorporating biodiversity within Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), and the need for extensive bureaucratic processes to justify and implement biodiversity interventions.

8.1.2 Conflicting Priorities and Policy Constraints

In some cases, biodiversity objectives may conflict with other statutory priorities, such as flood risk management or the delivery of Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS). Limited capacity for proactive inspection and enforcement of ordinary watercourse works and approved SuDS was also raised, resulting in a largely reactive approach.

Further barriers include inconsistencies in securing environmental and social value commitments made at procurement stage, funding and delivery challenges associated with transport schemes such as Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and Local Safety Improvement schemes (LSIs), and the predominance of urban schemes at feasibility and design stage, which can reduce opportunities for achieving Biodiversity Net Gain.

8.1.3 Impacts of Local Government Reorganisation

The ongoing Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey presents a significant barrier to the council's ability to plan, deliver, and sustain biodiversity improvements. With the transition from a two-tier structure to two new unitary authorities scheduled for April

2027, there is substantial uncertainty around future staffing, including which officers will be retained, redeployed, or required to transition into new roles. This makes long-term planning and continuity of biodiversity projects challenging. In addition, the corporate priorities of the new unitary authorities will set the direction for future biodiversity work which at this time, given the uncertainty, presents a potential barrier.

8.1.4 Budgetary Uncertainty and Funding Constraints

Budget allocations for environmental and conservation work are also uncertain, as funding streams may be restructured or reprioritised during and after the transition. In addition, the need to align services, policies, and governance frameworks across the emerging authorities can delay or complicate delivery, particularly for multi-year habitat management, monitoring, and enforcement activities. The restructure may also shift priorities towards statutory obligations and service continuity, leaving less capacity for proactive biodiversity enhancements. Taken together, these uncertainties create a cautious operational environment in which staff may be reluctant to commit to new initiatives, and planned biodiversity improvements may face delays, scaling-back, or temporary suspension until the new authorities are fully established.

8.2 Officer Capacity, Resources and Stability

8.2.1 Resourcing, Training, Operational and Contract Support

Effective delivery of biodiversity restoration and enhancement relies on targeted support for council officers, including sufficient resourcing, training, and clear guidance to enable them to plan, implement, and monitor projects consistently and successfully.

Council officers highlighted the need for increased funding and resources to support biodiversity work, including tree planting, woodland management, and monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain within SuDS. Many emphasized the importance of stability and capacity during the transition between the current and new councils, ensuring ongoing projects are not disrupted.

Practical support needs were identified, including reducing bureaucratic requirements where positive impacts are proven, providing sufficient staff resources for investigations and legal enforcement, and increasing training and engagement for contract managers to ensure suppliers deliver environmental commitments.

8.2.2 Partnership and Policy Support

Officers also called for continued partnership working, particularly with organisations such as Surrey Wildlife Trust, and for enhanced guidance and policy support from central government to inform nature-based approaches across sectors.

8.2.3 Access to External Funding

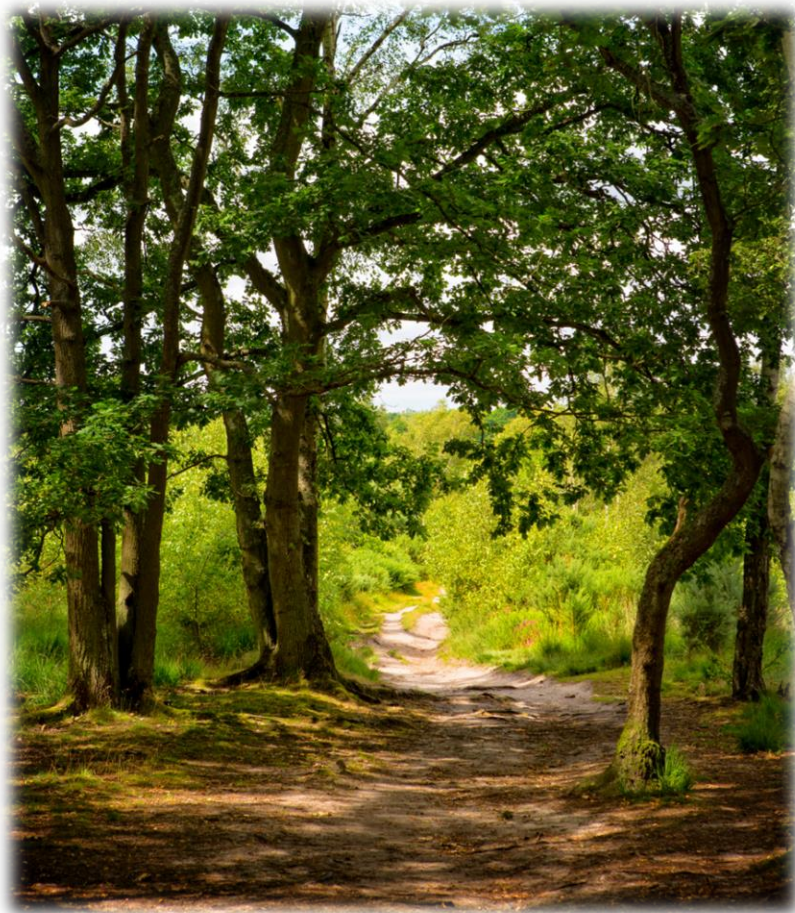
Finally, officers highlighted the importance of support in securing external funding, including government grants, Active Travel England schemes, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bids, to enable detailed project design and delivery.

9 Conclusion

This report demonstrates Surrey County Council's commitment to embedding biodiversity considerations across its operations. Contributions from teams including Greener Futures, Transport, Waste and Circular Economy, Flood and Climate Resilience, Surrey Nature Partnerships, Policy and Procurement, Countryside Services, and Surrey Hills National Landscape reflect recognition that biodiversity enhancement requires cross-departmental collaboration.

The Council has already embedded biodiversity-supportive policies within its strategic framework, and teams are taking tangible actions to support biodiversity in their work programmes. These efforts show a growing organisational culture that values natural capital and acknowledges the critical role local authorities play in addressing the biodiversity crisis.

With Local Government Reorganisation approaching, establishing two new unitary authorities for East and West Surrey, predicting long-term actions beyond the transition period is challenging. Nevertheless, the foundations of biodiversity-focused policy, collaborative networks, baseline data, and institutional knowledge provide a strong platform for successor authorities to build upon. The Council will continue to meet its statutory obligations during the transition and ensure continuity of biodiversity action.



Appendix 1

A comprehensive list of SCC-owned sites for which the Countryside Estate Team has responsibility is provided in Table A.

Table A: Full list of SCC-owned sites managed by the Countryside Estate Team

SCC Owned Sites	Area ha	Designation
Bisley & West End Commons:	55.67	LNR, SSSI, SPA, SAC
Brockham Limeworks	51.31	SSSI, SAC
Burners Heath & Swallow Pond (SCC)	4.63	None
Chinthurst Hill	17.21	LNR, SSSI, SPA, SAC
Chobham Common (including Burrow Hill and Little Heath, etc.)	575.01	SPA, NNR, SSSI, SPA, SAC
Crooksbury Hill	18.11	NNR
Fames Rough	22.77	LNR, SSSI
Hackhurst Downs	40.02	LNR, SSSI
Hill Park, Tatsfield	24.16	LNR
Ledgers Wood	6.93	None
Milford Green (9.51) & Coxhill Green (4.99)	14.5	None
Miliams Field (Sheepleas)	6.61	None
Norbury Park	530.77	SSSI, SAC
Nore Hill Chalk Pinnacle	0.16	None
Park Ham		SSSI
Rodborough Common	61.9	LNR, NNR
Shabden Park (in-house)	44.73	SSSI
Sheepleas	102.76	LNR, SSSI
Sheepwalk Lake	12.1	
Shere Woodlands - Francis Corner, Netley Plantation, West Hanger & Coombe Bottom	43.87	LNR, SSSI
Staffhurst Wood	38.72	LNR, SSSI
Tilburstow Hill	9.08	None
Wisley & Ockham Commons (including Chatley Heath)	330.73	LNR, SSSI, SPA
Worplesdon Group of Commons:		
Whitmoor (163.15) & Rickford Commons (20.06)	183.21	LNR, SSSI, SPA
Stringers Common	36.04	None
Broadstreet & Backside Commons (including Rydes Hill)	157.97	None
Littlefield Common	16.51	None
Chitty's Common	4.17	None