

Appendix E – Relevant Strategies and SCDC Actions

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Key objective 1

Air quality: Improve the air quality of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and reduce impacts on habitats and species.

- Woodland creation and management
- Increase urban tree canopy
- Wildlife corridors and pollinator routes along transport routes to buffer vehicle emissions.

Implication on South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) biodiversity approaches

- Working with Woodland Trust to plant more trees on Council estates and on parish land
- Six Free Trees programme increases tree canopy.

Key objective 2

Climate change: Strengthen the resilience of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's environment against the effects of extreme weather and climate change impacts.

- Wetland creation and restoration
- Peatland protection, sustainable farming on wet soils
- Woodland expansion (urban and rural)
- Water management (dams, reconnecting rivers to floodplains)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)
- Climate-friendly gardening
- Field margins/hedgerows around arable fields, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, paludiculture

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- The Zero Carbon Communities Grant and Community Chest Grant have funded the following types of projects to tackle climate change:
 - climate Change Gardening group which promotes climate-friendly practices in private gardens
 - native tree and hedge planting around recreation grounds and allotments
 - planting drought resistant grasses and wildflowers
- Our Awarded Watercourses team manage awarded watercourses up to a legal standard and ensures proper drainage and connection with the drainage network.

Key objective 3

Communities - Enhance a sense of place where both people and nature can benefit

- Empower communities to develop local nature recovery plans
- Support organisations, communities and interest groups to manage priority habitats and community greenspaces
- Create new natural green spaces especially in areas with health inequalities; enable access to nature for people of all abilities
- Identify and address greenspace deficits using Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards
- Promote nature-friendly gardening and wildlife friendly practices i.e. Bat boxes
- Skills and capacity building of habitat restoration, conservation and ecology professionals

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Local Nature Recovery toolkit is shared with local groups and parishes
- SCDC grants support community groups to manage key habitats and species within their local area, through protection and enhancement of natural

features or addition of amenities such as bat and bird boxes, trees and other plants

- Accessibility of the space to communities is assessed as a key funding criteria for internal biodiversity grants
- Appointment of a permanent Ecologist within the Natural Environment team (GCSP)

Key Objective 4

Doubling Nature - Support Natural Cambridgeshire's doubling nature ambition to at least double the area of rich wildlife habitats from approximately 8% to more than 16% by 2040 and increasing beyond that

- Restore or create 30-40% high value natural sites in each priority landscape
- Encourage 7-10% of farmland to be managed for wildlife
- Promote regenerative agriculture and paludiculture
- Create and enhance urban tree canopy and green spaces
- Create a mosaic of habitats to support diverse species
- Monitor progress towards the 16% target and beyond
- Integrate species and habitat data to guide targeted interventions

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Support tree and wildflower planting efforts through grant funding and partnerships
- Actively identify opportunities for nature enhancement and green infrastructure on new developments
- Encourage planting of native English tree species through the Six Free Trees Scheme
- Aim to double areas managed for nature (DEFRA) from 7% to 14% of land in South Cambridgeshire (Draft Climate and Nature Strategy 2026)

Key Objective 5

Development - Encourage existing, new and large developments to incorporate wildlife friendly features in gardens, buildings and land

- Encourage a minimum of 20% BNG where possible
- Use Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards to identify and address greenspace deficits through local plans
- Create new strategic green spaces connected to wider green infrastructure network via green corridors
- Urban greening interventions (green roofs/walls, SuDs, street trees and wildflowers, allotments, pocket parks)
- Install wildlife features i.e. Bird and bat boxes
- Connect wildlife across transport corridors

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Aim for a minimum of 20% BNG for all developments where possible (Biodiversity SPD, 2022)
- Biodiversity SPD requires that all developments contribute towards the enhancement of the green infrastructure network in the district.
- The Council will encourage proposals which reinforce, link, buffer and create new green infrastructure and, promote, manage and interpret green infrastructure and enhance public enjoyment of it (Biodiversity SPD)
- Grant funding has supported urban greening projects such as tree and wildflower planting, and installation of wildlife features
- The Zero Carbon Communities Grant has funded a project to restore woodland and wildlife green gateway to Histon and Impington that was impacted by the expansion of A13

Key Objective 6

Environmentally Friendly Farming

That farming and food production across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is conducted using environmentally sustainable practices, recognising the importance of food production and the potential of farming to support nature recovery

- Allocate 7-10% of farmland to wildlife-friendly options (managed for nature)

- Use uncropped and unsprayed land to support pollinators and rare arable plants
- Create networks of wildflower-rich grassy margins
- Enhance existing hedgerows to be tall, thick and species rich
- Leave 6 m of uncultivated strips for wildlife
- Restore and create ponds in clusters
- Use wet farming (paludiculture) and wetland buffers to improve water quality and biodiversity
- Implement natural flood management
- Reduce agricultural runoff through integrated pest management and nutrient control
- Promote Environmental Land Management (ELM) options tailored to local landscapes
- Collaborate with other farms to manage water resources and habitat creation

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC has supported the establishment of 16 local farmers' markets to promote local and sustainable food.
- Draft Climate and Nature Strategy (2026) proposes supporting and engaging farmers and agricultural businesses to become more economically and environmentally sustainable.
- The Draft Strategy also supports the promotion of environmentally sensitive farming by highlighting innovative farming practices in South Cambridgeshire.

Key Objective 7

Historical Environment - Celebrate Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's rich culture, built / natural heritage, and its geology and surrounding environment

- Protect the character and integrity of the rural landscape, ensure nature recovery efforts also enhance the historic environment
- Preserve veteran and ancient trees
- Include pollarded elms and historic orchards as cultural and ecological assets

- Restore and expand orchards using heritage fruit varieties
- Recognize and interpret archaeological and cultural significance of fen landscapes
- Develop and promote educational and tourism opportunities (archaeology, geology, natural features).

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- The Community Chest grant has funded orchard restoration and expansion projects where native heritage fruit trees have been planted
- SCDC manages a Local Heritage List to identify and protect non-designated heritage assets such as historic buildings, Roman Roads, and medieval field systems
- Aligning with the NPPF, heritage protection has been embedded into the draft local plan and ensures development proposals consider the historic and geological context of the area

Key Objective 8

Lawton Principles - Respond to the existing deficit of rich wildlife areas across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by using the Lawton Principles of 'better, bigger, more and joined up'

- Better – improve the quality of existing habitats
- Bigger – increase the size of existing habitats
- More – create new habitats
- Joined up – connect habitats to allow species to move and adapt

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- A list of properties within the Council's estate has been designated 'land managed for nature', and more are continuously being added if viable for ecological intervention such as reduced mowing, wild grasses/flowers planting, habitat creation via deadwood and branches

- SCDC is helping to create more joined up habitats by contributing to the Cambridge Nature Network which identifies wildlife areas and corridors across Cambridge City and South Cambs
- GCSP has secured BNG offset sites to secure required BNG from developments which cannot accommodate BNG onsite, particularly smaller developments. Larger offset sites and nature reserves are less fragmented than BNG areas that would otherwise be delivered on development sites

Key Objective 9

Peatland - Promote healthy functioning peatlands to store and capture carbon whilst not increasing methane emissions.

- Restore, create and protect wetlands on peat soils to improve biodiversity and hydrological functions
- Create mosaics of wetland habitats
- Identify and prioritise areas for peat soil protection
- Enhance water management to protect peatland hydrology and nutrient status
- Reduce agricultural runoff through best practices
- Support paludiculture and complementary cropping to reduce pollution, improve water quality, reduce peat soil loss, and lower carbon emissions
- Promote nature-friendly farm reservoirs in the Fens

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

SCDC uses peat-free compost in its estates and landscaping to reduce demand for extracted peat

Key Objective 10

Water quality and resources - Promote integrated water management techniques considering water resources, quality, and resilience to flooding

- Manage pollutants from farmland, transportation, wastewater and other sources

- Improve water efficiency for domestic and commercial uses
- Explore options to address water scarcity
- Nature-based solutions to mitigate flood risk
- Promote nature-friendly farm reservoirs to reduce demand on public supply
- Establish 50m buffer zones along rivers
- Reconnect rivers to floodplains, remove artificial barriers
- Reduce abstraction from chalk aquifers and supporting aquifer recharge

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC provides key input to key partnerships (Cambridge Water Scarcity Group, Water Resources East) to address water scarcity in the area
- SCDC is collaborating on the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project which seeks to protect and restore chalk streams with science-led, data driven methods, and engage the public through volunteering opportunities, citizen science and education

UN Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992

Key Objective 1

Conservation of biological diversity

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- all new developments to have a biodiversity net gain (Biodiversity SPD)
- proposals that lead to loss of biodiversity will not be permitted
- protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats (Doubling Nature Strategy)

Key Objective 2

Sustainable use of natural resources

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Circular economy encouraged through waste reduction, reuse and recycling (Zero Carbon Strategy)

- Promoting sustainable agricultural practices to enhance soil health (Doubling Nature Strategy)
- Promoting efficient water use through watercourse management (Doubling Nature Strategy)

Key Objective 3

Sharing benefits of nature (i.e. genetic resources)

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Doubling Nature Strategy sets out co-benefits from biodiversity enhancements such as improved air quality, greater resilience against climate shocks, better physical and mental health, reduced inequality, and strong community cohesion.

Key Objective 4

Recognise role of indigenous and local communities in biodiversity conservation

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC encourages parish councils and local groups to develop biodiversity projects through funding support and engagement (i.e. Newsletter, workshops, conferences)
- Residents are encouraged to carry out wildlife monitoring and habitat surveys, as well as develop community forests and woodlands (Doubling Nature Strategy); residents are encouraged to undergo training and conduct citizen science for habitat monitoring (Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project)

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)

Key Objective 1

Integrating biodiversity into the built environment

SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Biodiversity Net Gain of a minimum 10% and 20% as best practice for new developments (Biodiversity SPD)
- Promotion of green infrastructure such as green roofs, walls and SuDs (Biodiversity SPD)
- Encourage habitat creation within developments – wildflower meadows, hedgerows, ponds (Biodiversity SPD)
- Long-term management plans are required to ensure habitat maintenance for at least 30 years (Biodiversity SPD)

Key Objective 2

Prioritise protected species and habitats

SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC contributes to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which identifies and maps priority habitats and protected species in the districts
- Early ecological assessments required to avoid harm to protected habitats and species during development (Biodiversity SPD)

Key Objective 3

Protect and enhance existing features on brownfield sites

SCDC biodiversity approaches:

- Ecological surveys for brownfield developments are required especially when there are priority species like invertebrates, reptiles and birds (Biodiversity SPD)
- Biodiversity surveys required for brownfield sites if they meet certain criteria (proximity to designated sites, presence of priority habitats) (Biodiversity SPD)

Key Objective 4

All developments to deliver 20% biodiversity net gain

SCDC biodiversity approaches:

20% Biodiversity Net Gain as best practice for all new developments (Biodiversity SPD)

Key Objective 5

All new developments contribute towards the enhancement of the green infrastructure network within the district

SCDC biodiversity approaches:

Green infrastructure in new developments considered within the larger network framework

Cambridgeshire County Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2022)

Key Objective 1

Creating a wildlife-rich, resilient, productive and sustainable landscape

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Doubling Nature Strategy (2021) seeks to increase wildlife rich areas in South Cambridgeshire by 2050
- Agriculture and food growing included as part of the district's natural capital; the strategy recognises there are active threats to soil health especially intensive farming practices. Nature-friendly practices must be adopted to ensure sustained productivity of the land (Doubling Nature Strategy, 2021)

Key Objective 2

Harnessing the power of local communities – place-based approach

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC's grant programs draw on local expertise and ingenuity to support place-based projects. Grant applications are assessed not only for environmental impact but also reach, inclusivity and accessibility

Key Objective 3

Increase knowledge of nature-based solutions for carbon reduction and climate change

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC promotes climate-friendly actions, such as sustainable gardening and tree planting through communications (i.e. ZCC newsletter) and grant schemes

Key Objective 4

Embed environmental value in decision making

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC embeds the 'Green to our core' value into all council decisions, including procurement and grant funding among other areas

Key Objective 5

Improve biodiversity across Council estates

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

Currently 21 areas are managed for nature on Council estates.

Cambridge City Biodiversity Strategy (2022-2030)

Key Objective 1

Focus conservation efforts on priority habitats and species

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC will continue to collaborate on the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream project to protect and enhance chalk stream habitats.

Key Objective 2

Integrate Cambridge's green spaces into a wider ecological network

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- SCDC is a key partner in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Network and Cambridge Nature Network, which identify and prioritise, and connect priority habitats at a strategic level

Key Objective 3

Promote easy access to high-quality green spaces

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- The Doubling Nature Strategy seeks to make green spaces more ubiquitous and accessible, by doubling the amount of wildlife-rich habitats and tree canopy cover
- The SCDC Local Plan and Biodiversity SPD require developments to include green infrastructure and provide accessible natural spaces. Furthermore, the green spaces must contribute to public enjoyment of nature

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough County Wildlife Sites (CWS) Handbook

Key Objective 1

Engage the community about biodiversity through education and outreach – Biodiversity mainstreaming, Nature in your neighbourhood

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Zero Carbon Community Newsletter sent out quarterly with tips on reducing emissions and sharing environmental news
- Zero Carbon Communities events with biodiversity-themed presentations and activities
- Annual Local Action Climate Conference (since 2023)
- Biodiversity Duty information webinars for Parishes to be offered in 2025

Key Objective 2

Embed biodiversity in planning and development (BNG, green infrastructure)

- See above ‘Investment in green infrastructure through planning’

Key Objective 3

Improve biodiversity on Council-owned land

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Managing Council-owned land is the first sphere of our influence on biodiversity. We are planting more trees and wildflowers on Council housing land, church yards, and at Cambourne hall to attract local wildlife; we are also increasing native vegetation in the watercourses we manage.

Key Objective 4

Collaborate with residents, businesses, institutions, and conservation organisations

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Promote gardening for nature to our residents to increase awareness and better enable residents to preserve and enhance nature within their own spheres (Action Plan)
- Partnered with Allia to deliver support for businesses to become greener (reduce carbon emissions)
- Partner with the Woodland Trust and conservation volunteers to plant more trees on Council HRA land (Action Plan)

Key Objective 5

Local plans should include policies that protect and enhance CWSs

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- Doubling Nature Strategy (2021) identified 121 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) in South Cambridgeshire and recognizes these sites make up a significant area (1714 hectares) in the district. However, there is no explicit mention of policies that enhance and protect CWSs.

Key Objective 6

Local authorities can provide advice and support to landowners, facilitate funding or grants for habitat management, promote sympathetic land use practices

Implication on SCDC biodiversity approaches

- The SCDC Climate and Environment Team signposts landowners to available resources to help them enhance biodiversity on their land and implement initiatives.
- SCDC offers several grants for biodiversity enhancement (see above)
- Through the Biodiversity SPD, GCSP requires ecological and biodiversity assessments prior to development approval, to ensure proposed land use will not adversely affect wildlife and biodiversity