

**PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL - FIRST CONSIDERATION OF THE ENHANCED BIODIVERSITY DUTY**

**1.0 Understanding context, opportunities and challenges**

**1.1 Biodiversity and Portsmouth City Council**

The strengthened biodiversity duty states 'Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England'. Imagine 2040 identifies 6 thematic vision areas one of which is '**A Green City**', which states '*We protect and enhance both our land and maritime environment for future generations*'. The City Council has a corporate objective '*to ensure a resilient and healthy natural environment*'. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity within Portsmouth City Council is a function of:



Biodiversity intersects with all council directorates, Figure 1; there is an increasing understanding of how biodiversity supports climate resilience and enhances the health and wellbeing of residents, and a

number of council strategies touch on biodiversity, Section 1.3. Annex 1 illustrates the range of activity for biodiversity already taking place across the council and confirmed and possible future activity.

**Figure 1: Biodiversity in PCC directorates**

Directorate	Link with biodiversity
Adult Social Care	Opportunity for nature connection and health and well-being
Children, Families and Education	Operationally on estate Opportunity for nature connection
Corporate Services	Link with Climate Change Strategy
Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services	Operationally across Parks and Open Spaces Link with water quality
Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services	Operationally across estate Influence and public awareness and education through museums and libraries
Planning and Infrastructure	Operationally through Highways Maintenance Operationally through Infrastructure Development Policy and Spatial Strategy
Public Health	Operationally through Greening Strategy Opportunity for nature connection and health and well-being

[Scrutiny reports](#) have identified challenges with biodiversity management within Portsmouth, citing a lack of coordination, fragmented approaches and no clear plan. The city council does not have an overarching strategy for biodiversity nor an officer with strategic responsibility for biodiversity. These challenges are not unique to Portsmouth as the recent UK100 report illustrates [UK100 Powers in Place Nature Chapter FINAL SEPTEMBER - Google Drive](#). The Council declared an ecological emergency in 2022 stating that we are:

- Committing to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 in line with national and international commitments to biodiversity.
- Increasing space for wildlife and long-term maintenance and expansion of a Nature Recovery Network.
- Reducing pressure on wildlife.
- Improving doorstep access to nature, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Supporting communities and businesses to make better decisions and take action to support nature's recovery.

Portsmouth City Council has previously developed a draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan with support from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (2010). Although the new strengthened biodiversity duty may necessitate going beyond actions identified in that plan, the plan provides a good base from which to review our current situation.

## **1.2 What is biodiversity in Portsmouth like, and how may this inform opportunities for conserving and enhancing biodiversity?**

### ***1.2.1 Portsmouth has some fantastic spaces that can be celebrated for their biodiversity***

Portsmouth benefits from a rich diversity of flora and fauna in its coastal, harbour and chalk grassland environments. It is the UK's only 'island city' and some 30% is covered by statutory nature conservation

designations in recognition of its value to international, national and local biodiversity. This includes land down to the low tide mark. c.12% of the 4028 hectares of land in Portsmouth is covered by designations. This demonstrates that the significant proportion of designations are for environments below the high tide mark.

Figures from the Green Infrastructure Background Paper (September 21) which were taken from Portsmouth Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012) showed that there were 760 hectares of public open space in Portsmouth; 289 hectares of private open space and 713 hectares of private gardens. Of the public open space c.45% could be considered as being managed for nature being classified as countryside or natural / semi-natural greenspace. These spaces tend to be on the outside of the city, particularly to the north and east.

The Cumberland Museum highlights biodiversity within the city and the Countryside Rangers provide opportunities for residents to engage with protecting, accessing and enjoying the authority's natural heritage. However, there remains a perception that the natural environment of Portsmouth is not as widely known amongst residents as it could be.

### ***1.2.2 Protecting our existing designated sites and improving their condition is a priority***

Thirty-one of Hampshire's 50 notable species (62%) can be found in Portsmouth (recorded between 2008 and 2018). The Biodiversity Background Papers ([Feb 19](#) and [July 21](#)) prepared as part of the emerging Local Plan provide more information about biodiversity within Portsmouth and explains that the species conservation within Portsmouth can be delivered through habitat management. Examples of habitat management enhancing biodiversity can be seen at Portsdown Hill where incorporation of scrub management and grazing has increased species diversity and prevented decline; at Hilsea Lines where the canopy is being opened up to support woodland ground flora and at Milton Common where scrub clearance is creating open habitat. The emerging Local Plan contains policies to protect and enhance biodiversity. Annual reports from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre illustrate the extent and condition of our biodiversity at designated sites including the condition of SSSIs [HBICAnnualBiodiversityMonitoringReport2022-2023.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](#). Portsmouth City Council's Countryside Rangers have management plans in place for protecting and enhancing biodiversity across semi-natural green spaces including SSSIs and SINC's, although not all SINC's have management plans and not all SINC's are owned/managed by PCC.

### ***1.2.3 We can enhance biodiversity through connecting management across fragmented sites.***

The opportunity for Portsmouth City Council to make space for nature could be considered limited due to the geography of the city, the high percentage of manmade surfaces and the spatial distribution of

the large open spaces. There may be potential to enhance biodiversity within the city, because of the amount of land owned and managed by Portsmouth City Council (including highways and housing / schools).

**1.2.3i New policy supporting nature recovery will deliver benefits if rolled out strategically**

The emerging Local Plan identifies tools for enhancing biodiversity as a result of development - for example through Biodiversity Net Gain, the Urban Greening Factor Standard, Urban Nature Recovery Standard and Urban Tree Cover Standard. There is scope to set authority wide and locally appropriate targets for the three standards cited.

**1.2.3ii The introduction of and scaling up of, mowing for biodiversity may be a low-cost but effective way to effect change across sites that are not designated.**

The introduction of mowing regimes to support flower rich spaces is one way to reduce fragmentation, creating a network of stepping stones and corridors that support wildlife, Figure 3. There is also an opportunity to consider whether the potential for biodiversity could be improved by not adding nutrient rich topsoil to e.g. newly created or reinstated verges.

**Figure 3: A case for changed mowing practices**

The Traffic, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Report into Biodiversity (Mar 22) reports that within Parks and Open Spaces:

*'The Grounds Maintenance Manager explained that 280 hectares of council land is mown. There are different regimes depending on the location and type of grass. The frequency has decreased over the years; it was average of 16 per year and is now 9-12. The grass in parks and cemeteries are mown fortnightly. Grass in sports fields is cut as and when in Winter and fortnightly during the rest of the year. Reducing the frequency of mowing, saves money and carbon emissions and also increases biodiversity.'*

Mowing for biodiversity is not appropriate across all grassy areas, however it could be adopted more widely and generally involves two mows per year. The implementation of significantly reduced mowing not only supports more species rich areas, but increase carbon sequestration, reduces the risk of areas drying out (therefore maintaining cooling effects) and supports storm water regulation.

Portsmouth City Council has two designated Road Verges of Ecological Importance - in recent years a cessation of optimal mowing has resulted in a reduction in quality of these verges. Reinstatement of mowing is recommended. Additionally, it is noted that within the authority area there are numerous road verges worthy of being recognised for their high ecological value. These are not being managed appropriately at the moment.

**1.2.3iii An uplift in biodiversity could be delivered through developing a resilient treescape that supports wildlife move throughout the city and that is resistant to future threats.**

In the last three years Portsmouth City Council has started to increase tree numbers across the city. Initially this was driven by the net zero agenda. There is now an increased recognition of the wider ecosystem services provided by trees, particularly cooling; regulating water flow and improved air quality. Consideration is being given to our future climate and the likely implications for native species - whether that be more prolonged drought or emerging pests and disease. A focus on connectivity across treescapes and hedgerows is recommended with clear understanding of natural ecology.

#### ***1.2.4 There is an opportunity to consider how Portsmouth City Council influences the land management by others to make space for nature***

Due to the scarcity of space for nature, particularly within the urban part of the authority, there is an opportunity for Portsmouth City Council to influence and support others make space for nature. 57% of open space within Portsmouth is either private open space or private gardens. It should be noted that the open space descriptor does not necessarily mean that these areas are natural.

It should be noted that **all public authorities** have to comply with the Biodiversity Duty [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). A list of government departments and public bodies can be found here [Departments, agencies and public bodies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). This presents opportunities for Portsmouth City Council to work with others to achieve benefits. Of relevance within Portsmouth may be the MOD, the Environment Agency and the NHS. The University may be another important ally, particularly given the location of its natural green space.

#### ***1.2.5 Ways of working or policies that enhance biodiversity could be explored***

A commitment to reducing pesticides has been in place since 2017 and has seen a decrease in the amount of pesticide being used across our estate. Other adopted practices include purchase of native and locally sourced trees. Other **principles for nature** could be identified across supply / delivery chains, creating the conditions for nature to be put first or considered.

#### ***1.2.6 The role of water and protecting and enhancing freshwater habitats and the sea***

Given the city's proximity to the ocean and our responsibility down to the low tide mark as well as the importance of designations below the high tide mark, a key theme that may emerge for the local authority is around water. Portsmouth City Council has signed up to Motion for the Ocean, a declaration to align ocean recovery within our climate emergency response, [A motion for the ocean \(sea-changers.org.uk\)](#) and has been leading activity on nutrient neutrality, [Interim-Nutrient-Neutral-Mitigation-Strategy.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#). Terrestrial actions / activity can enhance our coastal and marine ecosystems by slowing flow of water into the sea and catching / trapping pollutants.

The problems of surface water flooding are described comprehensively here [Report Template v2.4 \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#). **Co-creating flood management solutions that deliver for biodiversity may be an opportunity. There is merit in understanding how extreme heat and drought conditions**

may negatively impact biodiversity and whether mitigation measures through rainwater harvesting and release are appropriate.

### **1.3 Relevance of key strategies to Portsmouth**

#### ***1.3.1 Local Nature Recovery Strategies***

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is being led by Hampshire County Council, may provide an opportunity to increase the resilience and connectivity of Portsdown Hill, SSSI and some of our terrestrial coastal sites. This process is ongoing and as a supporting local authority we are advocating for Local Nature Recovery to deliver for our urban centres. We are particularly focused on:

- Local nature recovery to connect and enhance chalk grassland on Portsdown Hill
- Connectivity across natural green spaces on the east and south of the island

#### ***1.3.2 Species Conservation Strategies***

Portsmouth has previously taken advice from Hampshire Biological Information Centre. 31 of Hampshire's 50 notable species can be found within Portsmouth. These can be protected through habitat management. Many are found on SINCS, also known as Local Wildlife Sites. Within the city Brent Geese and Waders are protected by specific policies which have been reviewed and are explained in the Local Plan.

### **1.3.3 Protected Site Strategies**

#### ***1.3.4 Other internal strategies***

A focus on increasing the quality and quantity of green infrastructure is evidenced in the emerging Local Plan which was supported by the previously mentioned Biodiversity Background Papers and a [Green Infrastructure Background Paper](#). The Greening Evidence Review and Strategy highlights the importance of nature for climate resilience and health and well-being and the Climate Strategy illustrates how nature is a key part of climate mitigation and adaptation - see 1.8. This provides further evidence of both the need and opportunity for the strengthened biodiversity duty to be addressed across directorates and points to the fact that any emerging biodiversity strategy or action plan may best be viewed or owned **Corporately**.

### **1.4 Political and local support for conserving and enhancing biodiversity**

#### ***1.4.1 Political support***

There is political support for conserving and enhancing biodiversity creating and enabling environment for operational decisions. Key things to note are: Declaration of a climate emergency; declaration of a nature emergency and signing up to Motion for the Ocean. There is a recognition of the importance of nature-based solutions as evidenced by the [Greening Evidence Review and Strategy](#) approved by Cabinet on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023.

#### ***1.4.2 Resident support***

There is also substantial support from residents for improving biodiversity. For example, consultation for the [Parks and Open Spaces Strategy](#) illustrated that residents within the city wanted quiet natural

spaces, Figure 4. Additionally, community and neighbourhood groups show increasing interest in wanting to take action for biodiversity for example Fawcett Road Greening Group and Friends of the Earth. Such groups would benefit from increased directional support to ensure their efforts complement wider environmental initiatives and misguided efforts do not occur. Other groups are long standing e.g. Friends of Portsdown Hill and the Countryside Rangers have had huge success in the last 12 months in developing new conservation volunteer groups. The work of the Tree Wardens, Community Orchard Group in delivering change across the city further illustrates resident engagement. Lastly the work of Adult and Social Care illustrates how valuable our natural places and spaces are for health and well-being, for example NatureWatch and Wellbeing Walks and reflections from officers in Adult and Social Care has highlighted the need to recover nature across the city for this purpose.

**Figure 4: Results from consultation - Parks and Open Spaces Strategy**

*'A Parks and Open Spaces residents survey was held between 8 October and 24 November 2021. 1330 responses were received to the survey. The survey comprised 7 questions. Full results are found in an appendix to this strategy. The survey found that the majority of respondents were now visiting parks and open spaces more than before the pandemic, highlighting their importance to the city. Respondents thought that the main focus for Portsmouth's parks and open spaces should be as green havens: to protect biodiversity and wildlife. The most popular reasons for using parks and open spaces were found to be enjoying a quiet space and visiting nature. This aligns with the focus of parks as green havens and is supported by the other reasons given for visiting parks, which included birdwatching, photography and wildlife observation, mental health and mindfulness.'*

### **1.5 Cooperating with neighbouring local authorities**

Portsmouth City Council works closely with neighbouring authorities. Continued cooperation will ensure will help us to achieve our biodiversity duty. Examples of cooperation are the PfSH; Hampshire Forest Partnership; our SLA with HBIC; our work with the Solent Partnership.

### **1.6 Evidence (data and information)**

We are aware that the ecological evidence base is continually emerging. Our coastal situation (in the south of England), coupled with the fact that we are a densely populated city, poses a unique set of challenges exacerbated by the impact of climate change. As a port city maintaining vigilance around invasive non-native species is a priority and we will need to continue to **ensure we have the surveillance and appropriate measures in place**. This includes ensuring we are cognisant of disbenefits - for example a potential concern is around vector borne diseases as a result of climate change. [Climate Crises and Developing Vector-Borne Diseases: A Narrative Review - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#); [Climate change: health effects in the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

### 1.7 Skills, knowledge and understanding

The new duty requires local authorities to do what they can to conserve and enhance biodiversity. *Understanding how existing in-house expertise and knowledge can be shared across directorates and considering whether there is a business case for a PCC Strategic Biodiversity Officer could be considered.* There may also be merit in considering how the authority may further build pro-nature and attitudes and action amongst residents.

### 1.8 External context and implications for Portsmouth City Council

In December 2023 DEFRA published its plan for delivering 30by30 as part of England's response to the Global Biodiversity Framework. It should be noted that 30by30 is seen as a collaborative, voluntary effort driven by those recovering nature on the ground. Targets around SSSIs identified in the Environmental Improvement Plan are cited; *'to restore 75% of our SSSIs to favourable condition by 2042'*. The interim targets are that; *'by 31 January 2028: • all SSSIs will have an up-to-date condition assessment; and • 50% of SSSIs will have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.'* There has been discussion around 30by30 and what types of sites qualify with criteria being developed around Purpose; Protection and Management. *These criteria could usefully be adapted and applied within the local authority area to help develop a baseline for reporting purposes.*

External drivers including emerging legislation, funding, frameworks and evidence provide tools for Portsmouth to conserve and enhance its biodiversity. For example, Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the [Green Infrastructure](#) Standards developed by Natural England. All of which are recognised in the emerging Local Plan.

The link between biodiversity and climate change is increasingly visible in national guidance. For example National Climate Adaptation Reporting [Final Consultation Document Fourth round of climate adaptation reporting.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](#) which states *'Annual reporting by upper and single tier local authorities to central government on local biodiversity performance. This includes data (in part supplied by Local Nature Partnerships) on the proportion of local sites where positive conservation management is being achieved, providing information on the links between climate change and impacts on biodiversity.'*

The Department for Education and Skills published a Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy in 2022 [Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and the first report on progress was published in December 2023. There are four strategic aims, all of which provide a vehicle to increase biodiversity across the Education and Childrens' Services Estate. Additionally, there is a focus on ensuring children and young people have a growing opportunity to connect with nature, access services in climate resilient spaces and prepare children and young people for a changing climate. Understanding fully how Portsmouth City Council can support this strategy in *action across Education and Childrens Services* may be a consideration.



An increased recognition of the twin emergencies of climate and nature and the interdependencies between these two emergencies is likely to continue to be expressed through national strategies, policies and, potentially the funding environment *and may be best reflected internally as Climate and Nature Emergencies being corporate priorities and coordinated by a Climate and Nature task force.*

### **1.9 Conclusion and emerging themes**

In considering what Portsmouth City Council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, thought and consideration has been given to:

- 1) locally relevant outcomes
- 2) policy and policy gaps
- 3) operating and delivery environment for biodiversity
- 4) stakeholders / partners for a city with a healthy and resilient natural environment

There is a lot of positive action for biodiversity across the city. There are also limitations as to the measures that can be taken. There may be an opportunity for greater coordination of efforts. Benefits may be more fully realised if the following were put in place:

- A plan / strategy for biodiversity informing other existing relevant policies / strategies and ways of working to ensure cohesion
- Consideration of new policies or the introduction of principles for nature
- A designated responsible officer (s) to coordinate biodiversity efforts
- In house biodiversity / ecological expertise to work across directorates and to include training / staff support

Given the current situation within Portsmouth it is suggested that during the first reporting period there is a focus on Resilience including the development of our institutional infrastructure to meet the requirements of the new duty. The following *suggested* headline objectives for Portsmouth City Council's first consideration of the strengthened Biodiversity Duty are provided below, and mapped against the commitments outlined in the Ecological Emergency declaration.

Objective / Ecological Emergency Declaration	Committing to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 in line with national and international commitments to biodiversity.	Increasing space for wildlife and long-term maintenance and expansion of a Nature Recovery Network.	Reducing pressure on wildlife.	Improving doorstep access to nature, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.	Supporting communities and businesses to make better decisions and take action to support nature's recovery.
To increase the capacity for conserving and enhancing biodiversity across Portsmouth recognising the need to develop resilience against emerging climate threats					
To continue to protect and enhance the biodiversity of our protected sites and identify measures to mitigate against future climate threats					
To make more space for nature across the city and in doing so develop resilience against emerging climate threats					
To celebrate the nature of Portsmouth and engage residents in playing an increasingly active role in enhancing and monitoring biodiversity					



**Annex 1 - Table 1: Portsmouth City Council Biodiversity Duty – First Consideration – 19 December 2023**

The table below sets out how biodiversity is addressed in our objectives, policies, and actions. This constitutes our “first consideration” of our biodiversity duty, under the terms of the Environment Act 2021.

Theme	What we are doing now	Current future actions scheduled within the first reporting period (by January 2026)	Potential future actions or recommended actions for the first reporting period (by January 2026)
<b>Planning policy and associated opportunity</b>			
Planning policy and development management	Developing a Local Plan (currently at regulation 19 stage) affording strong protections for biodiversity; protecting / developing the Green Grid; protecting species (including Brent Geese and Waders); protection of internationally designated habitats ; setting Biodiversity Net Gain targets and Green Infrastructure standards such as Urban Greening Factor; creation of Local Green spaces; Protection of trees and hedgerows; preventing additional nutrient pollution in the Solent ; securing new open space.	The Local Plan is aiming for an adoption date of the end of 2025.	Local Plan approval which affords protection to designated sites in line with legislation; creates opportunities for development of green infrastructure and connectivity for wildlife; protects species (as per other column)
Biodiversity Net Gain	Working with PfSH to assess opportunities for habitat banking on PCC land. Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain through the planning system as specified in the Environment Act and secondary legislation. .	Developing / implementing habitat banking for BNG Exploring the Potential for BNG on City Council owned assets.  Ensuring delivery of BNG on New development from January 2024.	Identification and potential delivery of BNG offsetting opportunities across SINCs; HNB and POS Development of guidance to support BNG implementation
Local Nature Recovery Partnership	Supporting authority in the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Hampshire County Council is the lead authority.	Working as a Supporting Authority in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to identify areas within Portsmouth most suited for nature recovery.	Inclusion of land within Portsmouth within LNR
<b>Management of our protected sites</b>			
SSSIs	Implementing management plans for SSSIs for favourable condition - for example on Portsdown Hill on the SSSI	Continuation of implementation of management plans for SSSIs.	

	<p>there is a focus on scrub management; implementation of grazing that favours species diversity. Across sites that border the SSSI there is a focus on restoring management as appropriate to reduce scrub and invasive species and to implement mowing regimes that favour biodiversity.</p>	<p>Consideration of land management outside of protected sites to further enhance biodiversity within protected sites/increase resilience through Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p>	
SINCS / RVEIs	<p>Implementing management plans for SINCS to enhance biodiversity - for example increased scrub management at Great Salterns by Countryside Team.</p> <p>Hilsea Lines - thinning and management to support the correct ecosystem structure and allow increased diversity and coverage of woodland ground flora.</p> <p>Farlington Marsh managed by HIWWT in partnership with PCC. The coastal defences are deteriorating and there is currently consultation being carried out by the EA <a href="#">Farlington Marshes Project information page - Environment Agency - Citizen Space (environment-agency.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>Continuation of management to enhance biodiversity across SINCS</p> <p>Consideration of land management outside of protected sites to further enhance biodiversity within protected sites/increase resilience through Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>Surveying of SINCS as part of SLA with HBIC</p>	<p>Re-introduction of mowing regimes on RVEIs</p> <p>Identification of new RVEIs</p>
<b>Management of other sites/ land owned by Portsmouth City Council (by directorate)</b>			
Parks and Open Spaces / Sports Fields	<p>Identifying and increasing opportunities to manage spaces for wildlife for example the introduction of wilder areas to Victoria Park Reduction in / cessation of use of pesticides</p> <p>Supporting community groups manage council owned spaces in a wildlife friendly way - for example allotment holders are able to leave part of their allotment for rewilding; are encouraged not to use pesticides</p>	<p>Continuing to increase the amount of land managed for wildlife adopting actions identified in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022-2038 Parks and Open Spaces Principle <i>We will protect biodiversity, increase tree coverage, increase wildflower habitats and restrict pesticide use to a minimum.</i></p>	<p>Identification of sites to increasingly manage for wildlife, linking or aligning those to improved management for wildlife on neighbouring land managed by e.g. housing, highways, other relevant actors within Portsmouth.</p>

	Tree planting as appropriate		
Housing Neighbourhood and Buildings	Reducing mowing and wildflower meadow creation Reduction in / no use of pesticides Tree planting as appropriate Considering opportunities for BNG habitat banking	Continue with increasing areas managed for nature  Identification of opportunities for BNG habitat banking	Increasing focus on making space for nature as appropriate and alignment (see above)
PRED - Highways/verges	Reducing mowing Reduction in pesticides Tree planting as appropriate Considering opportunities for BNG habitat banking Bus shelters with green rooves		Identification and delivery of conservation management practices in key areas - including the RVEIs Consideration of sustainable, permanent, native planting schemes as appropriate.
<b>Consideration of habitats</b>			
Trees, woodlands and hedgerows	Developing a resilient treescapes plan to ensure: Right trees are planted in the right place and providing the right care and using native (where appropriate) and sustainably sourced trees; Optimising the benefits provided by trees particularly in relation to climate adaptation; ecological connectivity; Future proofing our trees through understanding onward costs in terms of maintenance and management and developing effective monitoring and surveillance  Hedgerow creation - For example the work of Countryside Rangers within the Parks and Open Spaces Team - Planting/managing/establishing hedgerow across the city.	Developing tree / urban forest plan  Completing an I-Tree Eco survey to provide a snapshot of the city's current trees, their species diversity, age diversity and value to help inform future planting & management	Recognition of hedgerow habitat network and identification of opportunities to both protect and expand - including through public engagement  Opportunity mapping to identify suitable planting sites across the city; prioritising the planting where greatest benefits will be realised for biodiversity, climate and health & wellbeing.  Formation of a tree palette of species suitable for different spaces across the city encouraging the use of a wide variety of native species
Flower rich grasslands and pollinators	Increasingly naturalising our Parks and Open Spaces - for example the Parks and Open Spaces strategy reports 2500m2 of new flower rich meadows within the last 4-5 years; Housing, Neighbourhood and	Knowledge exchange across services re: flower rich regimes what works and how; community education re perennial/pictorial meadows; opportunity mapping to identify options for connectivity between meadows.	Commitment to and development of a connected network of flower rich spaces across the city developed through reduced mowing, green hay (as appropriate) - replicating native conditions

	<p>Building Services have also introduced reduced mowing and seeded perennial meadows; COLAS have also introduced reduced mowing in some areas.</p> <p>Portsmouth City Council Open Spaces Needs and Opportunities Assessment (2018) identified that 'Amenity greenspace should be linked wherever possible to other areas of open space by interconnected green corridors (linear verges and areas adjacent to strategic routes'</p>		
Coastal habitats and environments	Coastal defence projects with consideration of biodiversity that encourage and make space for nature (Guy Mason)		
Fresh water habitats	Portsmouth has few fresh water features. Recent action in this area includes the Countryside Team assisting BPA in restoration of wildlife dipping pond by Tangiers Field. Additionally the Countryside Team are looking to restore freshwater features at other sites.		
Marine habitats			
<b>Policies and practices</b>			
Native trees / local provenance	Using native and sustainably sourced trees when planting - across all operations	Continue to use native and sustainably sourced trees as appropriate	
<p>Creating dedicated spaces for wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build and install nest boxes for birds, bats and other animals</li> </ul>	Across council operations officers are looking to make space for wildlife. Swift box installation is encouraged with a close relationship with Hampshire Swifts; the new Local Plan introduces the Urban Greening Factor which may encourage the	<p>Development of biodiversity guidelines to support others create spaces for wildlife including through development</p> <p>Support / encouragement of wildlife gardening</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add green walls or roofs to existing or new buildings</li> <li>• plant native trees and shrubs</li> <li>• plant wildflowers for pollinators</li> </ul>	<p>addition of green roofs and green walls to new buildings; leaving dead wood safely in place in woodlands / wooded areas to provide additional habitat</p>		
<p>Enhancing biodiversity resilience through reducing threats / harm</p>	<p>Invasive species are identified and managed - key actions that have occurred in recent years include management of cotoneaster on chalk grassland sites across Portsdown Hill and the removal of Holm Oak across vegetated shingle in Eastney.</p> <p>We have reduced the use of pesticides.</p>	<p>Continue to manage invasive species.</p>	<p>Maintain vigilance and consider how residents could be engaged in monitoring.</p> <p>Understand implications of climate change across our habitats and species through a rapid review.</p>
<p>School grounds - create gardens, ponds, meadows or woodlands to improve biodiversity and aid education</p>	<p>The Countryside Team provide advice to schools on request as to how school grounds are improved for wildlife. CIL funding supports schools develop their school grounds and we are currently working with Trees for Cities to make space for nature within 3 schools.</p> <p>The Landscape Architect Team work with Education Directorate and schools and identify opportunities for introducing appropriate planting.</p>	<p>Review school grounds (and childrens services estate) across the city and understand opportunities for enhancing spaces for biodiversity and climate resilience</p>	<p>Deliver clear actions based on review. Secure funding to support school ground development for biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>Educate, advise and raise awareness</b></p>			
<p>include the public in projects to improve biodiversity</p>	<p>A number of regular volunteer conservation task sessions take place at key locations across the city. These are supported by the countryside team.</p>	<p>Continue with delivery</p>	



	Additionally, the countryside team run a 'roving' volunteering group support conservation and biodiversity improvements or enhancements at smaller sites, making space for nature and increasing connectivity.		
feature biodiversity in public or internal communications	The countryside team support newsletters for community groups. Biodiversity is often featured in council communications.		
use libraries and museums to raise awareness of biodiversity	The Cumberland House Natural History Museum is run by Portsmouth City Council and provides a range of opportunities for public education and awareness raising. Recent success includes a focus on oceans. Libraries across Portsmouth often have a focus on nature.		
put information boards in greenspaces or offer guided walks	Guided walks are offered by different teams across the council. A programme of nature-watch walks offered by Adult Social Care is often supported by the Countryside Team		New information board at the Tangiers Road entrance to Great Salterns
include biodiversity considerations in advice for internal and external clients and service users			Development of biodiversity guidelines - arising from the Greening Development Group 17 Oct 2023  Biodiversity guidelines to support developers / BNG implementation as per identified by Greening Development Group 17 Oct 2023
educate your staff on your biodiversity actions and why they're important	The Countryside Team have upskilling and skill share on a regular basis.		Consider scope for increased awareness raising within staff  Cross directorate biodiversity training / upskilling across operational teams
raise public awareness of how their gardens can support biodiversity, for example by avoiding artificial grass	Staff across the council are involved in attending a variety of events and supporting and promoting wildlife and stewardship including wildlife gardening. For example, Wilder Paulsgrove; events		Communications strategy and messaging around gardening measures to support wildlife; create cool and permeable spaces

	<p>delivered by the Countryside Team including Baffins Christmas Market; and the work of the Landport Community Gardener in promoting and supporting tenants make space for nature.</p> <p>Collaboration with HIWWT and other community groups has encouraged and supported community greening. There is scope to understand other ways in which we can increase the benefits for biodiversity delivered through community greening and develop best practice guidelines for community projects funded through the council.</p>		<p>Re-establishing nature/green network - working with the HIVE</p> <p>Development of community greening guidelines and support in favour of enhancing native biodiversity</p>
Other ideas e.g. improving biological recording	Volunteers are already involved in comprehensive recording at key sites for example at Portsdown Hill. At Milton Common Volunteers trained in botanical ID skill summer 2023 by Countryside Team.	Volunteer training in tree ID and recording as part of I-tree eco survey	
<b>Processes and practices</b>			
transport – support sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality	Increased electrification of vehicles coupled with planned works to reduce transport.		
waste – review waste management and recycling processes to reduce water pollution and air pollution from waste transport and landfill	Could we include / consider here on site composting; what we do re cut and collect; ?		
water – improve water efficiency to reduce the effect water abstraction can have on sensitive habitats and species	For example re how we manage trees in establishment phase - watering tubes		

procurement – buy sustainable materials and supplies to reduce the demand on natural resources	Only use biodegradable tree guards for tree planting Using non tanned, locally sourced timber Local suppliers and trades where possible.		
light – make sure the design of artificial lighting minimises effects on nature		Where necessary in areas close to wildlife areas and bat roosts look in wildlife red light frequencies.  <a href="#">Bat-friendly street lights for Worcestershire crossing - BBC News</a>  <a href="#">These bat-friendly lights show how to make cities safe for nature (fastcompany.com)</a>	
Electric tools			
<b>Other miscellaneous actions</b>			
Management of buildings	<i>whether you should remove vegetation around your buildings and if you do, when to do it what chemicals you use on the premises when you carry out maintenance work, to minimise disturbance to wildlife whether you can reduce the use of energy and water to help reduce pollution and address the pressure it puts on wildlife</i>		
Integrated Impact Assessments	IIA currently allows for consideration of the impact of projects or initiatives on climate and environment.		Provide guidance and support for staff completing IIAs focused on biodiversity
Green Infrastructure features	GI features include SUDs, road verges, street trees. The Local Plan identifies green corridors. Within the authority there is an opportunity to increase connectivity through GI features.	Develop understanding of opportunities to support green / wildlife corridors.	

