

South Ribble Borough Council

Biodiversity Duty Report 2025

In fulfilment of Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021.

March 2026

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Related Documents	<p>SRBC Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 SRBC Climate Emergency Strategy 2022 SRBC Biodiversity Strategy 2022 SRBC Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 SRBC Air Quality Action Plan 2024</p> <p>(Emerging) Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041</p> <p>All related documents may be viewed via the SRBC website South Ribble Borough Council</p>
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Local Responsibilities and Commitment

This Biodiversity Report was prepared by the Climate Team of South Ribble Borough Council with the support and agreement of the following officers and departments:

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Executive Summary

This Biodiversity Duty Report has been produced to fulfil our statutory duty required by Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021.

The Biodiversity Duty places an obligation on all public bodies in England to report on actions taken to conserve or enhance biodiversity. This report outlines the biodiversity actions that South Ribble Borough Council has taken from the adoption of the first Biodiversity Action Plan in 2022 up to the 31st of December 2025, and the actions it proposes to take over the coming five years to 2030.

Biodiversity is the term that describes the biological variety of our planet. It includes all plants, animals and the ecosystems that supports them and us – the food we eat, the water we drink and the air that we breathe.

At a local level biodiversity shapes the landscape of our area, our local distinctiveness and our economic prosperity. It contributes to good mental health and a sense of wellbeing, as well as having a role to play in our response to climate change, flood management, air, water, and land quality.

The lives we currently lead compromise our biodiversity. Habitats are being lost or fragmented, which isolates the plant and animal communities into ever smaller areas. Pollution from intensive farming practices and industry results in higher levels of nitrogen and phosphates in our soil, air and water systems. Poor air quality globally leads to increased rates of nitrogen being deposited on our soils. Invasive, non-native species are out competing the native flora and fauna, altering habitats, food chains and ecosystems. Climate change is affecting weather patterns and sea levels across the world, resulting in global affects that will be felt locally.

South Ribble Borough Council is a District Council and Local Planning Authority in central Lancashire. As a landowner, the Council aims to set high standards and be a model of good practice for the Borough. It also has a role to play in partnership working, sharing responsibility, facilitating, coordinating, and promoting projects and a role to provide information, support and networking opportunities that will make a positive contribution to our response to the biodiversity duty.

About South Ribble

South Ribble Borough Council is located in central Lancashire. It covers an area of 133km² and has a population of c.111,000 (Census 2021). The River Ribble forms the northern boundary and separates South Ribble from the City of Preston.

The Borough is well connected with a dense network of motorways, including the M6, M61 and M65 and the west coast mainline.

The local economy has evolved from a manufacturing base of Leyland Trucks and BAE Systems. The new Samesbury Enterprise Zone is a hub for advanced manufacturing and engineering and a centre for collaborative research between academia and industry.

The administrative centre is in Leyland, with other towns and villages including Penwortham, Bamber Bridge, Lostock Hall and Walton le Dale.

South Ribble has approximately 4km² of park and open spaces, including 5 award winning Green Flag parks. The largest is Worden Park in Leyland, which has held the Green Flag since the awards inception in 1997. Others are Longton Brickcroft LNR, Hurst Grange Park, Withy Grove Park and Farington Park.

The Council manages a variety of habitats on its parks and open spaces including meadows, woodlands and ponds. Longton Brickcroft Local Nature Reserve is the only site owned by the Council with a nationally recognised conservation designation, but many sites are locally designated as Biological Heritage Sites.

There are SSSI, RAMSAR, SCA designations on parcels of land in the Borough but none of these are directly owned or managed by the Council.

There are no National Landscape Areas in the Borough.

There is a network of 'Friends Groups' that work on site and support the conservation and fund-raising work of the Council [Our Parks | Friends of South Ribble Parks](#), along with 'In Bloom' groups and other local community groups committed to improving the environmental benefits of the Borough.

A lot of information and details of conservation projects, including the planting of 220,000 trees, creating 42 urban wildflower meadows and the wildlife friendly grass cutting initiative is available on the biodiversity pages on the Council website - [Biodiversity – South Ribble](#).

Biodiversity Policies, Objectives and Actions

South Ribble Borough Council published its first Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 and associated 4-year Biodiversity Action Plan in 2023.

Strategy Vision – For a Borough where biodiversity is bigger, better and more joined up. With networks of accessible, natural green space, linking areas of habitat that are positively managed for wildlife and biodiversity gains, as well as resident enjoyment and wellbeing.

Strategy Aims - To ensure that South Ribble Borough Council’s responsibilities to restore, conserve and enhance biodiversity are integrated into the work of all departments and there is a clear understanding of biodiversity and how it relates to decision making. That residents and businesses benefit from maintaining and improving a healthy green environment.

Strategy Objectives –

- To act as a responsible landowner and land manager and conserve and enhance biodiversity
- To highlight priority habitats and species that have value locally and nationally
- To highlight threats and issues that may adversely impact priority habitats and species
- To maintain, restore and create habitat connectivity
- To share good practice and develop partnerships
- To encourage education and community action / involvement
- To instigate a cross-department ethos that will inform decisions
- To ensure development does not negatively impact on existing biodiversity across the Borough and where possible actively improves it

The Action Plan details those actions required to be taken across the Borough but also the actions that it intends to take as an organisation and local employer.

In implementing our actions, the Council is seeking to act as a community leader, setting high standards and working collaboratively to show the changes and improvements that can be achieved, enabling it to help others across the borough to do the same.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is very comprehensive, and it cannot all be achieved and reported on every year. For this reason, key actions are identified each year and these form the basis of the annual report on progress. The Action Plan will be reviewed in full every four years.

The actions that have been undertaken to date include –

- Produced baseline GIS mapping of key biodiversity information across the borough.

- Complied with national directives to imbed Biodiversity Net Gain into the Planning system.
- Identified Council owned sites which are appropriate for registering for developer contributions for Biodiversity Net Gain.
 - Employed ecological consultants to carry out baseline assessments of the sites and associated Metric
 - Employed ecological consultants to produce 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans for the site
- Complied with our role as a Supporting Authority to support Lancashire County Council as the Responsible Authority in the development of the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Reviewed our mowing schedule to enhance existing biodiversity areas by incorporating low intervention areas and providing better habitats for wildlife
 - Implemented the first tranche of wildlife friendly grass cutting, monitored sites and reviewed progress which fed into the development of the project to provide better habitat for wildlife on an ongoing basis
 - Continued to change mowing schedules to benefit wildlife, encompassing more sites and larger areas
- Created a work programme for ponds on a 5 to 10-year management cycle
 - Undertook condition assessments and survey work required to deliver the work programme
 - Started on a pond improvement programme
- Ensured South Ribble and its suppliers only use peat free alternatives for compost
- Promoted awareness and understanding of the park's wildlife and associated management in South Ribble using engagement, education, signage and communications
- Adopted a Hedgehog Highway Action Plan
- Delivered the corporate targets for tree planting in the borough by developing partnerships with landowners and other organisations
- Continued to support and grow our own 'Friends Groups' by expanding our programme of conservation volunteering opportunities, and helped facilitate community groups already committed to biodiversity and climate projects
- Continued to engage with residents and park users to tackle environmental crimes such as litter, dog fouling and fly tipping
- Continued to work on the control and eradication of Invasive Non-Native Species on our sites

- Delivered the Corporate Project - Support community action on climate change, using several biodiversity initiatives as a KPI
- Submitted the first Biodiversity Duty Report
- Continued to play an active role in Lancashire's Local Nature Partnership

Consideration of other strategies

South Ribble Borough Council has acted in its role as Supporting Authority in the development of the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This Strategy is due to be published early in 2026.

Existing knowledge and early mapping shows that the following areas of particular importance have been / will be identified in South Ribble

- RAMSAR sites
- SSSIs
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Special Protection Areas
- Local Nature Reserves (SRBC - Longton Brickcroft)
- Ancient trees and woodland
- Biological Heritage Sites

Areas will also be identified as opportunity sites where future measures or actions to restore habitats and species could take place to benefit the wider biodiversity value of the Borough and region.

The Council's Biodiversity Action Plan already cites the development of the Lancashire LNRS, and more details and future actions which reflect the delivery of the Lancashire LNRS will be added to the 2027 refresh of the Action Plan.

There are currently no published protected sites or species conservation strategies for Lancashire, though these areas will be covered in the upcoming Lancashire LNRS and then absorbed into local Action Plan updates.

Future Actions

South Ribble Borough Council will update the Biodiversity Action Plan every four years, with the next update due in 2027. This document will steer the work that is done in this area, building on current work and successes. An update on key targets will be given to Council annually as part of the regular update on climate, air quality and biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will be supported by the publication of a new Parks, Play and Open Spaces Strategy in January 2026, which outlines a plan to guide the development of parks, play areas, and open spaces in the borough over the next six years (2026/27 – 2032/33). It aligns with both local and national strategies, including the Council's Corporate Strategy, the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Positioned between these overarching policies and individual park management plans, the Strategy identifies five main challenges and sets out how the Council aims to respond to each of them through its provision of parks, play areas and open spaces.

The challenges are as follows:

- a. Improving the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of all parks, play areas and open spaces
- b. Promoting active lifestyles and recreation
- c. Improving community engagement and partnership in the use of our parks, play areas and open spaces including local events
- d. Preserving and enhancing biodiversity and climate resilience
- e. Driving towards financial sustainability in managing parks, play areas and open spaces

The Parks, Play and Open Spaces Strategy responds to the five challenges identified above through proposing an investment and delivery plan that will see improvements in the following areas:

- a. Physical improvements to parks, play areas and open spaces linked to a six-year investment plan, underpinned by sufficient investment in maintenance and upkeep
- b. Improved accessibility of all the borough's parks, habitats, open spaces, play areas and sports pitches
- c. Improve links between and within our open spaces, promoting active travel and offering opportunities to improve physical and mental health
- d. Implement the objectives of the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and Climate Strategy where possible within the parks and open spaces within the borough and improving sustainability of land management and maintenance operations

- e. New ways of working including the use of digital technologies to pool resources and expertise with partners across public, voluntary and the private sector, maximising funding opportunities and increasing the range of events and activities available to everyone in the borough

Within the new Strategy there is a proposed Investment and Delivery Plan which identifies a number of capital projects connected to parks, play areas and open spaces planned for the next six years, delivering the objectives identified above.

A key part of the Investment and Delivery Plan is the identification of how individual projects will be funded in the first two years. A large proportion of the projects have historically been, and will continue to be, funded from developer contributions secured through the planning system. This is either through section 106 funding, secured for specific projects, or from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Parks, Play and Open Spaces Strategy is a comprehensive and forward-thinking policy and programme, promoting sustainability, enhancing access to green spaces, improving our play area offer and protecting and enhancing biodiversity for the benefits of all communities in South Ribble.

Across the authority the key themes for the upcoming years will be to –

- Embed the policies of the soon to be published Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy into our existing plans and policies
- Work with the opportunities highlighted in the LNRS habitat maps, specifically the identified priorities and potential measures, in the development of landscape scale projects with partners.
- Adopt and deliver the new Parks, Play and Open Spaces Strategy
- Establish suitable South Ribble owned sites as future Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) habitat banks.
- Support private landowners and businesses to develop biodiversity improvement initiatives on privately owned land.
- Scale up existing wildlife friendly grass cutting and pond improvement schemes to include more habitats and species.
- Empower community groups to develop and lead climate end environmental projects
- Support schools and landowners to create wildlife rich grounds

- Investigate options for nature based urban cooling projects – e.g. green walls and roofs – that will bring biodiversity into the heart of our urban areas.
- Improve our ecological data to inform management / maintenance decisions
- Promote Citizen Science projects so residents can take an active part in conserving biodiversity in the borough and elsewhere.

Biodiversity Net Gain in South Ribble

Actions the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has carried out to meet BNG obligations

The council has completed the following actions to meet the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements:

- Applied the rule that all developments (unless exempt) must deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Implemented mandatory BNG, including:
 - Providing training for planning agents and consultants on BNG requirements.
 - Introducing new processes to support BNG, such as a Self-Build and Custom-Build declaration form for applicants.
- Purchased and introduced the ‘Exacom’ BNG module to record BNG cases and support ongoing monitoring and reporting. Staff have been trained to use the system.
- Developed mapping tools to record BNG information spatially and support monitoring and land use decisions.
- Developed a dedicated BNG Policy (EN6), along with other environmental policies, within the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023–2041 to strengthen biodiversity within planning decisions.
- Worked in partnership with Lancashire County Council on the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and delivered internal training on how planning officers should take the LNRS into account when considering planning applications.
- Set up a joint BNG Officer Working Group with Chorley Council and introduced regular BNG advice sessions for Planning Officers.
- Began desktop studies to estimate the likely demand for Biodiversity Units from development sites proposed in the emerging Local Plan, assessing how this aligns with potential supply.

- Recruited and appointed a dedicated Ecological/BNG Officer for South Ribble.
- Developed Section 106 templates for BNG, including requirements for substantial on-site monitoring fees.

Details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from approved biodiversity gain plans

There is often a gap between when a development gets planning permission and when the biodiversity work linked to it can begin. This is because the biodiversity requirements are only confirmed when the developer discharges the BNG condition, which must happen after planning permission is granted but before work starts. Biodiversity Net Gain is still quite new, so the Council expects that more of these conditions will be completed in the coming years as projects move forward.

Biodiversity net gains are measured via Biodiversity Units. These units are calculated by assessing the biodiversity value of the land, including the ecological value of a habitat, its condition, quality, location and significance.

Eligible Planning Applications

- Between 12 February 2024 and 31 December 2025 (the BNG reporting period), the council approved 29 developments that are required to deliver BNG.
- 166 planning applications were exempt from BNG due to the type of development they proposed. For example, householder applications for household extensions and improvements do not require BNG to be provided.
- Of the 29 developments that require BNG, 3 developments have so far applied to discharge their BNG condition and had their Biodiversity Gain Plans approved. Of those 3:
 - Two developers pledged to deliver their nature improvements on the site itself.
 - One developer pledge to use a mix of on-site and off-site units
 - None used government credits, and none relied solely on off-site improvements.

Overall expected gains and losses across all biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period.

- Some developments cause a loss of biodiversity on-site, reducing habitat quality. To compensate for those losses and deliver net gains, developers have committed to create or improve habitat on-site and/or off-site. Gains will be delivered on a range of habitat types (including cropland, grassland, heathland, scrub, trees and urban land and hedgerows and watercourses).

- Approved gains currently total 0.34 biodiversity units (net change).

Impact on Irreplaceable habitats

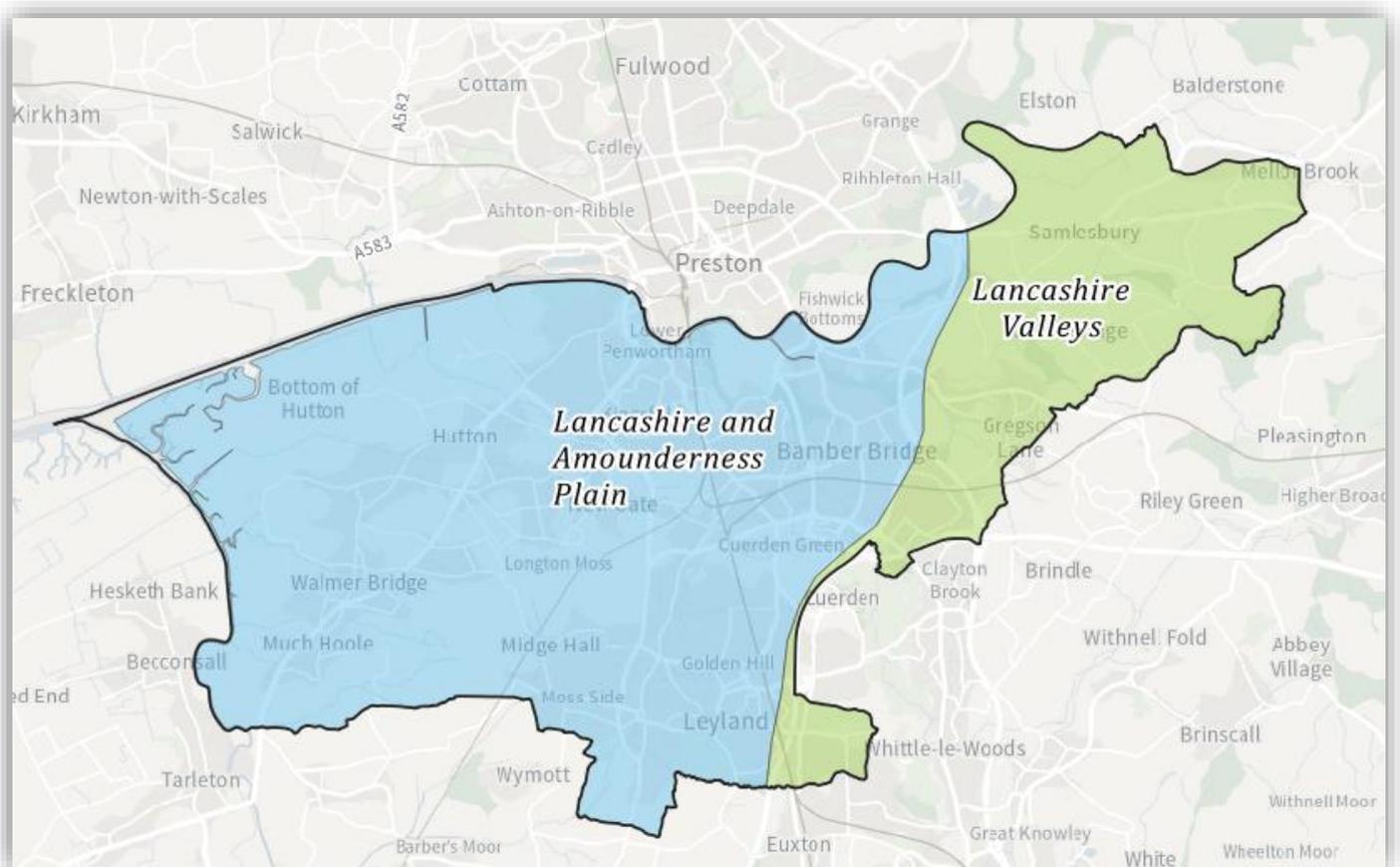
- No developments damaged irreplaceable habitats during this reporting period.

Offsite biodiversity units

Developers sometimes cannot achieve their biodiversity improvements on the development site, so they must create or enhance habitat somewhere else. This is called off-site biodiversity gain.

- Most off-site biodiversity units (95%) were kept within South Ribble or the local national character area (NCA), which supports local nature recovery.
- None were in neighbouring authorities.
- A very small amount (5%) was delivered outside South Ribble and the local national character area.

National Character Areas in South Ribble



From - [Natural England - National Character Area Profiles](#)

Results of monitoring biodiversity gains

Monitoring means checking that habitat creation is delivered and is maintained over the mandatory 30-year period. As BNG monitoring usually begins several years after planning permission is granted, these results reflect the early stages of BNG.

- No developments had reached the stage where biodiversity improvements needed to be monitored
- No “significant” on-site or off-site habitat work required checks yet
- No enforcement actions were needed

At present, no development sites have finished creating their on-site Biodiversity Net Gains. Because of this, the Council has not yet reached the stage where monitoring needs to begin. These checks will happen in future years, and the Council expects to report the results in later Biodiversity Duty Reports.

Composition of Biodiversity Gains

Biodiversity gains have been secured for different types of habitats (e.g., cropland, grassland, scrub, urban land). For each habitat type, the data summarises:

- Biodiversity units before development
- Biodiversity units after development
- The net change (gain or loss)
- Hectares / meterage before and after development

This tells us which habitats will be improved, and which will be lost across all approved BNG plans. In BNG, it is the value of the habitat (in biodiversity units) being impacted by development that is important, rather than the area. Some small areas of habitat may be more valuable than other larger areas of habitat.

The proposed developments have resulted in the net loss of certain habitat types. The loss of Cropland relates to the change in land use, as arable fields, once developed, no longer function as agricultural habitat. Similarly, areas of Heathland and Scrub and Sparsely Vegetated Land often comprise derelict or previously unused land which are lost once development or associated landscaping works take place, leading to the removal or reduction of these habitats.

Habitat Type	Change in Biodiversity Units	Loss / Gain
Cropland	- 0.43 units	Loss
Grassland	+1.12 units	Gain
Heathland and Scrub	- 0.065 units	Loss

Sparsely Vegetated Land	- 0.588 units	Loss
Individual Trees	+ 0.114 units	Gain
Species-Rich Hedgerow	+ 0.09985 units Equivalent to 0.0116 km	Gain
Native Hedgerow	No change	
Watercourses	No change	
Overall Results		
Total baseline units	- 3.05 units	Loss
Net Change	+ 0.34 units	Gain
Total area change	- 18m ² of habitat units + 0.0116km of hedgerow units 0 watercourse units	Loss Gain No change

How South Ribble plans to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

Future actions will include:

- The council will adapt to any updates or changes in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation, guidance, and processes.
- Subject to the decisions of the appointed Planning Inspectors finding the Central Lancashire Local Plan sound, the council will adopt the plan, including Policy EN6: Biodiversity Net Gain, which will strengthen support for BNG delivery within South Ribble and across Central Lancashire.
- The council will continue to secure, monitor, enforce, and report Biodiversity Net Gain as required.
- The council will implement a robust process to monitor and record the condition of 'significant' habitats secured through section 106 agreements. This will ensure that habitats delivered are created and maintained in accordance with the approved Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).
- The council will develop a pipeline of council owned land that can be used as offsite BNG market sites to support BNG delivery within the borough and wider Central Lancashire area.

Achievements, Challenges and Community Engagement

South Ribble has delivered a wide-ranging and high-volume programme of biodiversity work, covering planting, habitat enhancement, community engagement, and funded improvement schemes across the borough. The collated data demonstrates strong partnership working, consistent delivery, and significant environmental gains.

The Council owns only 4.15 km² of land in a Borough area of 113km². Of this 4.15km², 10% is managed as wildflower meadow or maintained under reduced cutting regimes to support species diversity, and 43% is managed as woodland. In addition, the Council owns, manages and maintains 69 ponds, including ponds created or enhanced through the District Level Licensing scheme for Great Crested Newt conservation and 32.7km of waterways.

Tree planting schemes and public giveaways have resulted in 220,861 trees being planted between 2019 and 2025, doubling the original target of 110,000 trees – A Tree for Every Resident. This has included extensive hedgerow planting, often enhancing existing walls and fencing with nature rich boundaries at parks, schools and community gardens, improving habitat connectivity.

Numbers of urban meadows have increased year on year to the current total of 49 sites across the Borough, transforming grassed spaces into biodiversity rich habitats. Seed types have migrated away from annual mixes to perennial mixes, reducing the need for frequent re-sowing and creating more resilient, long-lasting meadows that support a wider range of wildlife

A significant programme of practical biodiversity improvements has been undertaken. This includes over 18 bulb planting schemes delivered with councillors, schools, Friends Groups, community organisations and volunteers, providing early season pollinator habitat and increasing community visibility of biodiversity work. Shrub bed enhancements and creation have also been completed across multiple locations, improving both biodiversity value and visual amenity.

Pond creation and enhancement projects have taken place at more than 9 sites, improving wetland habitats and supporting amphibians, aquatic plants and invertebrates. Works included planting, re-profiling banks, and installing or improving dipping platforms, demonstrating investment in wetland habitats supporting amphibians, invertebrates, and aquatic plants.

Invasive species management has been delivered at scale, including numerous Himalayan Balsam bashing events across Lostock Hall, Bamber Bridge, Leyland and Penwortham, supported by Friends Groups, schools, uniformed youth groups, community payback teams and corporate volunteers, delivering more than 400 hours of volunteer effort, showing strong community engagement and landscape-scale management of invasive species.

Grassland management and meadow cutting programmes have been undertaken by staff and contractors, supporting long term habitat health.

Much of this work has been mapped to provide a visual and long-lasting record of biodiversity improvement work across the Borough, an example of the output for Worden Park is given below.



Community biodiversity work has been strengthened through grant support to local groups. Eleven biodiversity grants have been awarded for shrub bed creation, school ground improvements, species conservation and monitoring, rainwater harvesting and mammal surveys. This activity helps empower local action and increases the number of community managed biodiversity spaces and reflects broad public involvement and sustained community stewardship.

Friends Groups have contributed many thousands of volunteer hours each year across parks and open space, helping to gain and retain the Green Flag status at five parks,

alongside conservation and amenity value improvements to many other areas of parks and open spaces across the borough.

Additional achievements include public engagement at Nature Days and community events, installation of wildlife interpretation boards, and school participation in habitat enhancements and species monitoring.

Social value contributions via Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) have provided valuable help to community conservation projects via administration and physical support, and donations of plants and materials. As this develops further over coming years it could provide a valuable form of support for many more conservation projects.

Despite this strong programme of delivery, the Council continues to face a number of challenges in maintaining and expanding biodiversity work across the Borough. Limited land ownership restricts the scale of habitat creation that can be delivered directly by the Council, requiring a high level of collaboration with private landowners and partners. Resource pressures, including staff capacity, long-term maintenance requirements, and rising costs for materials and specialist ecological support, also present ongoing difficulties.

Invasive non-native species remain a persistent issue, demanding sustained volunteer involvement and regular management to control their spread.

In addition, the increasing impacts of climate change—such as altered rainfall patterns, prolonged wet periods, and seasonal variability—affect habitat condition and require adaptive management approaches.

Meeting growing community expectations, balancing competing land use needs, and ensuring sufficient funding to deliver long-term monitoring and habitat enhancements all pose further challenges that will continue to shape future biodiversity work in South Ribble.

Overall, these activities demonstrate a coordinated, well supported and consistently delivered approach to enhancing biodiversity, strengthening ecological networks, and increasing community involvement across South Ribble. It demonstrates an organisation that is actively improving habitats, engaging communities, and embedding biodiversity across operational practice.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity activity in South Ribble is carried out through a combination of ecological surveys, site-based assessments, community feedback, and structured reporting across council services. The Council uses ecological data, species records, habitat condition assessments and annual progress updates to track delivery against its Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and statutory duties. This includes monitoring the condition and performance of newly created habitats, assessing long-term maintenance requirements, and using ecological evidence to inform adaptive management across our parks and open spaces.

Activity is evaluated through regular reporting on tree planting, meadow creation, pond enhancement, invasive species control and volunteer participation. Annual reviews of cutting regimes, woodland management, and habitat connectivity projects help determine whether interventions are delivering the intended ecological benefits. Specific programmes—such as District Level Licensing ponds, urban meadow sites and tree planting—are monitored to ensure habitats develop as projected and continue to support priority species.

The Council also uses geographic information systems (GIS) to map habitat changes over time, enabling clear visualisation of improvements, identification of opportunities, and alignment with the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Volunteer hours, community engagement events, grant-funded activities and school participation are recorded to measure social impact and demonstrate community involvement in biodiversity delivery.

Evaluation highlights strong outcomes, including sustained meadow expansion, increased tree and hedgerow planting, ongoing pond restoration, widespread community participation, and improved habitat connectivity. At the same time, monitoring helps identify areas where further work is required—such as long-term maintenance, invasive species management, and climate related pressures on habitat condition. These insights feed directly into forward planning, supporting a continuous cycle of improvement and ensuring that biodiversity actions remain effective, evidence led and responsive to environmental change.

Conclusion

South Ribble Borough Council has delivered an extensive and ambitious programme of biodiversity activity, demonstrating a clear commitment to protecting and enhancing the natural environment across the Borough. Through sustained habitat creation, landscape scale enhancements, community engagement, species monitoring and long-term stewardship, the Council has made measurable progress towards strengthening ecological networks and improving the quality and resilience of local habitats. The scale of delivery—ranging from tree planting and meadow creation to pond restoration, invasive species control, and the expansion of community led projects—reflects a strong organisational focus on climate and biodiversity priorities and a shared responsibility across departments and collaboration with partners.

The evidence presented in this report highlights not only the breadth of work undertaken, but also the depth of partnership working that underpins it. Collaboration with Friends Groups, schools, volunteers, ecological specialists, landowners and local organisations has been critical to achieving these outcomes and has significantly increased the borough's capacity for nature-based action. Community involvement continues to grow, supported by grant funding, education projects and accessible opportunities for participation in practical conservation work.

At the same time, the Council recognises the ongoing challenges that shape its approach to biodiversity delivery, including limited land ownership, resource pressures, climate related impacts and the long-term requirements of habitat management. Addressing these challenges will require sustained collaboration, continued investment, and an adaptive approach to land management informed by robust ecological evidence and monitoring.

Overall, the activity outlined in this report demonstrates a strong, coordinated and forward-looking approach to biodiversity enhancement in South Ribble. It provides a solid foundation on which to build future action and ensures the Council remains well placed to meet its statutory duties, contribute to the wider Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and support a healthier, more resilient natural environment for the benefit of residents, wildlife and future generations.

Glossary of Terms

Ancient Woodland

Woodland that has existed continuously since at least 1600 AD and is recognised for its high ecological value.

Biodiversity

All the different living things—plants, animals and microorganisms—and the habitats they live in.

Biodiversity Action Plan

A plan that sets out what needs to be done to protect and improve important habitats and species.

Biodiversity Duty

A legal requirement for Councils and Planning Authorities to take action to protect and enhance biodiversity and to report on their progress under Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021.

Biodiversity Gain Plan

A document submitted by a developer to demonstrate how their proposal will achieve the required Biodiversity Net Gain, including baseline data, habitat changes and long-term management commitments.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

A mandatory planning requirement ensuring developments deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value compared with the pre-development baseline, measured in biodiversity units.

Biodiversity Units

A scoring system used to measure the biodiversity value of habitats, taking account of habitat type, condition, distinctiveness, location and ecological significance.

Biological Heritage Site (BHS)

Locally designated sites recognised for their wildlife and habitat value.

Climate Change

Long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns, such as warmer temperatures and increased rainfall.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A planning charge used by local authorities to fund infrastructure and environmental improvements arising from development.

Condition Assessment

A survey that checks how healthy or good-quality a habitat is to help inform management decisions and biodiversity unit calculations.

District Level Licensing (DLL)

A national scheme designed to support conservation of Great Crested Newts through strategic creation and management of ponds and terrestrial habitat.

Ecological Survey

An assessment of habitats, species and ecological features used to inform planning decisions, land management and biodiversity monitoring.

Exacom

A software module used by the Council to record, track and monitor Biodiversity Net Gain cases.

Friends Groups

Volunteer-led community groups that support conservation, maintenance and improvement of local parks, woodlands and open spaces.

Green Flag Award

A national benchmark for high-quality parks and green spaces, recognising good management and community involvement.

Habitat Connectivity

The degree to which habitats are physically linked, so wildlife can move between them.

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

A 30-year plan outlining how newly created or enhanced habitats will be maintained, monitored and managed to deliver long-term biodiversity gains.

Hedgerow Units

A measurement used to assess the biodiversity value of hedgerows, based on length, type, condition and species richness.

Invasive Non-native Species (INNS)

Plants and animals introduced from outside the UK that can spread quickly and harm local wildlife.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

A local plan that identifies important habitats and where nature recovery should happen, identifying local priorities, habitats and areas for biodiversity improvement.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)

The Council body responsible for assessing and determining planning applications.

Monitoring

The process of checking that biodiversity enhancements are delivered and maintained over the required 30-year period.

National Character Area (NCA)

A landscape classification developed by Natural England that defines distinct areas based on shared environmental and geographic characteristics.

Parks, Play and Open Spaces Strategy

A Council strategy (2026–2032) guiding investment, accessibility, biodiversity enhancement and long-term management of parks and open spaces.

Peat-free Compost

Compost that does not contain peat, used to reduce environmental impacts associated with peat extraction.

Planning Condition

A requirement attached to a planning permission to ensure that specific actions—such as biodiversity improvements—are completed before development can proceed.

Ramsar Site

A wetland of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Section 106 Agreement (S106)

A legal agreement used to secure financial contributions or environmental commitments from developers, including biodiversity monitoring obligations.

Species-rich Grassland / Meadow

Grassland containing a high diversity of plant species, supporting pollinators and other wildlife.

Special Protection Area (SPA)

An area designated under the Birds Directive for the protection of rare and vulnerable bird species.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A nationally protected site designated for its wildlife, geology or landform.

Urban Meadows

Managed areas of grassland within urban settings that are enhanced or sown to support biodiversity.

Wildlife-friendly Grass Cutting

A management approach that includes reduced cutting frequencies and seasonal adjustments to benefit pollinators and other wildlife.