



Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2026: Progress Update

	Actions in the 2020 Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Recent actions undertaken	Ongoing actions
a	Put ecological issues at the heart of the Council's actions for climate emergency and ensure that opportunities to gain mutual benefits for both climate and the ecological emergencies are maximised.	Planning Policy Officers attend meetings led by the county-wide Climate and Planning Manager, who has reviewed all climate-related policies to ensure consistent alignment across the county.	Continue to work with the Council's Climate Change Team and the county-wide Climate and Planning Manager to deliver ambitious, consistent and efficient climate-related planning policies. Publish a retrofit and decarbonisation guide for residents.
b	Ensure that ecological emergency and nature recovery considerations are embedded in all work areas and decision-making processes.	The Council employs 3 FTE Biodiversity Officers. Biodiversity is considered in most planning applications and plan-making, helping ensure the Council delivers on its corporate priority to produce a new Local Plan with policies that are 'green to the core'.	Continue to consider biodiversity in the planning system.
c	Take a leadership role on the ecological emergency and nature recovery in the Cotswolds by engaging, influencing, and inspiring partners across the District, County, and region to drive meaningful process in nature recovery.	The Council's Biodiversity Officers have collaborated with the Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund and the National Trust to deliver two habitat banks in the district: Saintbury Grounds Farm and Sherborne Estate.	Continue to work with external stakeholders to deliver additional habitat banks across the district that deliver opportunities identified in the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.



		<p>Following March's Cabinet meeting, 10% of CIL is no longer ring-fenced to support the ecological and climate emergencies. However, Cabinet has agreed to the development and implementation of a detailed scoring matrix for bids to ensure an appropriate balance of projects are funded included those that respond to the climate and ecological emergencies.</p>	<p>Support the Planning Policy and Infrastructure Team to develop and implement a new scoring matrix that includes climate and ecology-related criteria.</p>
d	<p>Review the adopted Local Plan to ensure that the ecological emergency and nature recovery (including green infrastructure, ecosystem services, and natural capital) are strategic priorities for planning and new development, through site allocations, policies and an up-dated Cotswold Design Code.</p>	<p>New Cotswold Design Code places a greater emphasis on green infrastructure, natural capital and biodiversity.</p> <p>Biodiversity constraints have been fully explored on all potential site allocations, ensuring habitats of greatest value are retained and new opportunities have been identified.</p> <p>Biodiversity-related local planning policies have been strengthened.</p>	<p>Design briefs and master-planning for strategic site allocations will identify constraints and opportunities to deliver meaningful biodiversity enhancements that aid in connecting these sites to the wider ecological network.</p>
e	<p>Continue to support the development and implementation of the Gloucestershire Nature Recovery Network and the Gloucestershire Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital Mapping, including through the Local Plan, biodiversity net gain and developer contributions.</p>	<p>These documents and tools informed the development of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and have since been superseded by it.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
f	<p>Play a pro-active role in developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the County.</p>	<p>Cotswold District Council played an active role in preparing the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery</p>	<p>Cotswold District Council will 'have regard' to the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy in decision and plan-making.</p>



		<p>Strategy, which was endorsed by Cabinet in March 2026.</p> <p>The Council's website was updated to inform applicants and developers about the introduction of the strategy and its implications for the delivery of BNG on their proposals.</p>	<p>A member briefing will be delivered to help embed the strategy into the Council.</p>
g	<p>Promote tree/woodland planting and re-wilding in the right places and with the right species to maximise wildlife value, carbon sequestration and other benefits, in line the with the Gloucestershire Tree Strategy.</p>	<p>One of the Tree Officer posts has been increased from 0.4 FTE to 0.6 FTE, providing additional capacity to manage caseloads, support planning officers with consultation responses, and monitor and manage Council-owned trees.</p> <p>When processing Tree Preservation Order applications for tree removal, Tree Officers recommend replacement species based on site location, geology, and any other relevant constraints.</p> <p>Similarly, when reviewing planning applications that trigger biodiversity net gain requirements or require mitigation for impacts on trees, officers are recommending conditions to secure the 'right tree in the right place'.</p> <p>Discussions with Gloucestershire County Council have been successful</p>	<p>Discussions will continue with Gloucestershire County Council to identify further tree planting opportunities.</p>



		in securing tree planting for infill schemes across the district, including two locations in Stow-on-the-Wold and Cirencester, and one location each in Willersey, Bourton-on-the-Hill, Bourton-on-the-Water, Fairford, and Mickleton.	
h	Work with farmers and other rural land managers to support the move towards lower carbon emission farming and other actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change while at the same time increasing natural capital and providing additional ecosystem service benefits.	<p>The Council has worked collaboratively with the National Trust to establish a habitat bank at Sherborne Estate, which will create new species-rich grassland habitat on formerly arable land.</p> <p>Similar discussions are on-going with other external stakeholders.</p>	The Council will continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to raise awareness of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy among farmers and rural land managers. The strategy identifies nature recovery opportunities across the County which can enable access to relevant grant funding.
i	Ensure that the Council-owned land and buildings are managed in a biodiversity-friendly manner and that opportunities are taken to create new wildlife habitat.	<p>Land is managed in a sensitive manner e.g. wildflower planting in cemeteries.</p> <p>Tree planting opportunities explored where possible.</p> <p>An affordable housing scheme in Down Ampney – integration of biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.</p>	<p>Continue to integrate biodiversity-friendly practices on Council owned-land and buildings.</p> <p>Deliver habitat creation, enhancement and restoration in line with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>
j	Progress the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan to maximise biodiversity and other opportunities in the area.	Cotswold Lakes Trust, in partnership with the Council, has begun updating several Habitat and Species Action Plans within the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan to ensure they remain relevant, achievable, and	<p>Continue to work in partnership with the Cotswold Lakes Trust and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>Officer's will continue to attend the Cotswold Lakes Nature Conservation Forum to facilitate discussion to enable the implementation of the</p>



		aligned with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Habitat and Species Action Plans set out within the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan.
k	Support and collaborate with our partnership organisations, including the partner organisations within the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, such as the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Woodland Trust, the Cotswold Lakes Trust, the National Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records.	<p>The Council continues to have a service level agreement with the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records.</p> <p>The Head of the Natural, Built and Historic Environment sits on Gloucestershire's Local Nature Partnership Board to represent Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>The Council and Habitat First Group work together to facilitate and coordinate nature conservation projects within Lower Mill Estate and on adjoining land that is connected to the Estate ecologically or hydrologically.</p> <p>The National Trust has secured funding twice from the Council's Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) fund, with a third bid currently under consideration.</p>	Officer's will continue to work collaboratively with external stakeholders to deliver meaningful ecological gains across the district.
l	Provide advice for local communities on how to incorporate biodiversity, green infrastructure and natural capital (ecosystem services) into their neighbourhood plans and other initiatives.	Chipping Campden, Moreton, Cirencester and Siddington Neighbourhood Development Plans are each at different stages of	Continued reactive support will be provided to Neighbourhood Development Plan groups.



		preparation and adoption. However, all of them include policies relating to biodiversity and green infrastructure.	
m	Progress the ongoing green infrastructure (GI) agenda by completing the draft Cotswold District Council GI strategy, ensuring high-quality, well-managed GI in new developments, contributing to the Local Plan review and neighbourhood plans, and providing inputs into the county GI strategy.	<p>Cotswold District Council's GI strategy (2023) was adopted by Cabinet in January 2024.</p> <p>Officers continue to promote the integration of the District GI strategy to incorporate high-quality, well managed GI in new development.</p> <p>The new Cotswold Design Code places a greater emphasis on GI, natural capital and biodiversity.</p>	Cotswold District Council's GI strategy (2023) will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated to support the Local Plan update.
n	Promote the creation of new natural green spaces and green links across the district.	The amended pre-application advice fee schedule now includes a bespoke biodiversity net gain service, enabling developers and applicants to engage directly with Biodiversity Officers. This ensures proposals meet the biodiversity gain objective while delivering meaningful ecological enhancements and robust green infrastructure.	The Local Plan update will include a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) strategy, allocating sites across the district to provide new natural green spaces that will help mitigate recreational impacts on the North Meadow (and Clattinger Farm) SAC and the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC.
o	Liaise with other partners to establish an ambitious biodiversity net gain system for Gloucestershire.	<p>Successfully collaborated with neighbouring authorities to embed biodiversity net gain into the planning system.</p> <p>Produced several guidance documents for developers and applicants which</p>	Continue to adapt the Council's approach to biodiversity net gain in response to any changes introduced by Government following the 2025 public consultation.



		<p>were adopted by neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>Worked collaboratively to develop legal agreements to secure off-site and significant gains and monitoring fees.</p> <p>Worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and external stakeholders to deliver the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>Champion the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and communicate its vital role in delivering biodiversity net gain.</p>
p	<p>Review how our natural environment can increasingly become a new part of the tourism offer of the Cotswolds.</p>	<p>A warden has been successfully funded through developer contributions collected by Cotswold District Council and neighbouring authorities to deliver Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation at the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC. Similarly, Cotswold District Council, working in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council, has agreed to advertise a warden post to support SAMM delivery at the North Meadow SAC. Together, these roles help raise awareness and educate visitors about the importance and sensitivity of these internationally designated sites.</p> <p>The Council has provided funding to the National Trust to deliver Suitable</p>	<p>Continue to explore opportunities to integrate biodiversity and nature recovery in tourism projects.</p> <p>Continue to work with neighbouring authorities to deliver SANG mitigation for the North Meadow SAC and the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC.</p>



		<p>Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) mitigation at the Sherborne Estate, helping to reduce recreational pressures on the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC arising from new development.</p> <p>The Council supports car-free Cotswolds and has provided funding to enhance opportunities for car-free leisure travel and tourism.</p>	
q	<p>Consider the implications for the Council of the Environment Act 2021.</p>	<p>Biodiversity net gain monitoring fees have been revised to ensure full cost recovery.</p> <p>The Council's website was updated to provide guidance on the requirements for a legal agreement.</p> <p>The Council published its first Biodiversity Duty report, which outlines existing actions taken to support biodiversity, identifies new opportunities for the next reporting period, and summarises progress on biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>Gloucestershire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy was approved by Gloucestershire County Council in January 2026, published in February</p>	<p>Adapt the Council's approach to biodiversity net gain in response to any changes introduced by Government following the 2025 public consultation.</p> <p>Prepare a Biodiversity Action Strategy detailing specific interventions to enhance biodiversity within the district, informed by the measures of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>



COTSWOLD
District Council

		2026, and endorsed by Cotswold District Council in March 2026.	
--	--	--	--