



**Melton
Borough
Council**

Biodiversity Duty Report

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Summary

Through its policies, partnerships and practical actions, Melton Borough Council has demonstrated clear and ongoing compliance with the biodiversity duty. The Council is committed to continuing and strengthening this work over the next five years to conserve and enhance biodiversity, support nature recovery, and create a greener, more resilient borough for residents and wildlife alike.

1 Introduction

This report sets out how **Melton Borough Council** has complied with the strengthened **biodiversity duty** under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, as amended by the **Environment Act 2021**, during the reporting period **1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025**.

The biodiversity duty requires public authorities to:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on that consideration; and
- Take action to deliver those policies and objectives.

This report fulfils the statutory requirement to publish a biodiversity report and draws on the Council's **First Consideration** and developing **Biodiversity Duty Action Plan**, setting out existing policies, actions already undertaken, and planned actions for the next five years.

By law, the report must include:

- a summary of the action you've taken to comply with the biodiversity duty
- how you plan to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period
- any other information you consider appropriate

Reports from local planning authorities must also include the following biodiversity net gain (BNG) information:

- the actions you've carried out to meet BNG obligations
- details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans you've approved
- how you plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

2 Policies, Objectives and Actions

2.1 Policies and Objectives

Melton Borough Council recognises the urgent need to address biodiversity loss and to enhance ecological resilience across the borough. Biodiversity considerations are embedded across a range of corporate strategies, planning policies and operational practices.

Key policies, strategies and frameworks that support delivery of the biodiversity duty include:

- **Corporate Strategy (2024–2036)**, which sets a long-term vision for Melton to be recognised as *clean, green and attractive*, and to progress towards becoming a net zero borough. Biodiversity is integral to this vision and is delivered through the Corporate Delivery Plan.
- **Corporate Delivery Plan (2024–2028)**, which includes actions to improve green infrastructure, develop and implement the Melton Country Park Masterplan, establish a ‘Pride in Place’ group, and support sustainable growth.
- **Melton Local Plan (2011–2036)**, adopted in 2018, which contains a comprehensive set of policies to protect and enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure, local green spaces, trees, habitats and ecological networks. A partial Local Plan update is underway to reflect new environmental requirements, including biodiversity net gain.
- **Climate Change Strategy (2024–2036)**, which recognises the interdependence of climate change and biodiversity, with actions focused on nature-based solutions, natural flood management, and greener settlements.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)** for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, led by Leicestershire County Council, with Melton Borough Council as a supporting authority. The LNRS provides a strategic, landscape-scale framework for nature recovery.

Other government strategies

- Species Conservation Strategies, established by the Environment Act 2021, aim to safeguard the future of the species that are at greatest risk. These strategies are in development and not published.
- Protected site strategies, established by the Environment Act 2021, will take a new approach to protecting and restoring species and habitats in protected sites. operating at a large scale across the surrounding landscapes. Natural England is looking to produce protected site strategies. There are no strategies currently published.

Together, these documents establish the Council's overarching objectives to:

- Protect and improve habitats, species and ecological networks;
- Protect biodiversity through planning policy
- Raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity among residents, partners and staff; and
- Ensure compliance with mandatory **Biodiversity Net Gain** requirements.

2.2 Actions Completed

During this reporting period, Melton Borough Council has undertaken a wide range of actions, both independently and in partnership, that deliver benefits for biodiversity.

Corporate and Policy Actions

- Completion of the Council's **First Consideration** of the biodiversity duty, establishing a clear understanding of existing activity and future opportunities.
- Ongoing preparation of a partial update to the Melton Local Plan, including revisions to environmental policies to reflect biodiversity net gain and updated national policy.
- Adoption of the Melton Mowbray Town Centre Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Documents (September 2025), promoting development that integrates green infrastructure and enhances biodiversity.
- Collaboration with Leicestershire County Council on the preparation and publication of the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**.

Planning and Development

- Determination of planning applications in line with **Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain** requirements, supported by ecological advice from Leicestershire County Council.
- Where possible and in accordance with local policies, integration of green infrastructure, planting and habitat features within new developments, including brownfield regeneration sites.

Land and Green Space Management

- Strengthening of tree inspection and maintenance regimes to maximise tree health and longevity.
- Adoption of practices that retain dead wood in situ, so providing valuable habitat.
- Creation of a new wildflower meadow at Melton Country Park, increasing habitat diversity and supporting pollinators.

- The reduction in pesticide use, including cessation of routine pesticide application in Melton Country Park and cemeteries.
- Reviewing management of invasive species, including work to address Himalayan balsam affecting riverbanks.

Partnership Working

- Ongoing partnership with Friends of Melton Country Park to support habitat enhancement and community engagement.
- Collaboration with Melton in Bloom to deliver planted areas and improve biodiversity within the town centre.
- Joint working with community groups such as Melton Wombles to improve environmental quality through litter collection.

Education, Engagement and Awareness

- Raising awareness of the biodiversity duty across Council departments.
- Updates to the Council’s website to provide guidance and information on biodiversity and biodiversity net gain.
- Delivery of guided nature walks and inclusive outdoor activities within parks and open spaces.
- Promotion of positive biodiversity actions through Council communications.

3 Future Actions (2026–2031)

Over the next five years, and as it continues to navigate local government reorganisation, Melton Borough Council will build on existing activity to further embed biodiversity across all functions and deliver long-term ecological benefits.

3.1 Strategic Direction

The Council will continue to treat biodiversity as a corporate responsibility, ensuring that all departments contribute to delivery.

A **Biodiversity Duty Action Plan** will be developed to co-ordinate current and future action on biodiversity over a five-year period. Key teams from across the council will be involved in its creation and it will remain a live document, reviewed and updated in response to monitoring, new evidence, funding opportunities and policy change.

A Biodiversity Duty Plan is required to:

- Outline across all functions of the Council, what we are doing and planning to do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Form the basis for the Biodiversity Duty Reporting;
- Ensure that we are able to demonstrate how we are meeting the Biodiversity Duty from the policy level through to strategy, processes and practices; and
- Describe any specific projects that contribute to meeting the Biodiversity Duty.

Actions for the biodiversity duty plan include but are not limited to:

- Reviewing and updating any relevant policies and documents across all services;
- Raising awareness;
- Planning Policy Biodiversity Net Gain; and
- More biodiverse parks, green and open spaces.

Whilst the Council are already taking action to improve biodiversity it is important to consider what else can be done to fulfil the Biodiversity Duty and make Melton Borough more ecologically resilient and wildlife rich.

3.2 Monitoring and Reporting

Considering that climate change and biodiversity are particularly interconnected with cross-over actions involving the same departments, progress against the Biodiversity Duty Action Plan will be monitored alongside climate action through an Officer Group, supported by senior leadership, in addition to Member oversight provided through the Climate Change Working Group.

The Council will publish its next biodiversity duty report within five years of the end of this reporting period, using this report as a baseline for monitoring and evaluation.

3.3 Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

As the responsible authority Leicestershire County Council, through the LNRS steering group, are preparing guidance for local planning authorities to integrate the LNRS within planning processes. Progress on delivery of the strategy will need to be reported on within 3-8 years and approximately every 5 years thereafter.

4 Local planning Authority Reporting

As a local planning authority Melton Borough Council is also required to report Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) information:

4.1 Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations

The Council has a Memorandum of Understanding with Leicestershire County Council (LCC) Ecology Team which lays out the terms of LCC advice on planning policy, casework advice and the provision of constraint layers for protected species, habitat and BNG. Whilst the Memorandum of Understanding is in place this discharges the legal duties of each partner determining authority with respect to statutory BNG within these areas of work.

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

Methodology

- LCC Ecology Team uses Mastergov for uploading and processing of consultations.
- Only baseline habitat value must be confirmed at determination stage under the BNG legislation.
- At pre-determination of a planning application, the BNG intentions for post-development BNG may not reflect the later BNG, confirmed at the point of the discharge of the Net Gain Plan condition; and the Net Gain Plan condition discharge may differ from the final on-the-ground delivery. Therefore, we can only provide this Biodiversity Duty data from the Net Gain Plan condition discharge information.
- Extraction of quantitative data from 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2025 for each BNG condition discharge received on the Mastergov system for this reporting period broken down as follows: Number of Net Gain Plan condition discharges with recommended approval by LCC Ecology per district/county.

This methodology can carry through into the next reporting period, at which point the same level of information can be extracted from Mastergov on behalf of districts and counties. Therefore, this will satisfy the requirement to state, “**how you plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period**”.

Quantitative data

Local Planning Authority Name: Melton Borough Council

Number of Applications: 1

Biodiversity Net Gain Headlines

	Habitats	Hedgerows	Watercourses
On-Site Baseline	0.075	0	0
On-Site Post Intervention	0.0524	0	0
On-Site Net Change (Units)	-0.0226	0	0
On-Site Net Change (%)	-30.19%	0.00%	0.00%
Off-Site Baseline	0.016	0	0
Off-Site Post Intervention	0.0766	0	0
Off-Site Net Change (Units)	0.0606	0	0
Off-Site Net Change (%)	378.95%	0.00%	0.00%
Combined Net Unit Change	0.0077	0	0
SRM Deductions	0.0303	0	0

Final results

	Habitats	Hedgerows	Watercourses
Total Net Change (Units)	0.0077	0	0
Total Net Change (%)	10.23%	0.00%	0.00%
Target Units (10% per application)	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Baseline Units	0.075	0	0
Units Required	0.0825	0	0
Unit Deficit	0	0	0
Applications With Irreplaceable Habitats	0		
Applications Without Irreplaceable Habitats	1		