

# Worthing's biodiversity duty - First consideration

## Background

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' which requires all public authorities in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty)

They must:

1. **Consider** what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity by **1 January 2024**.
2. **Agree policies and specific objectives** based on their consideration as soon as possible after 1 January 2024
3. Act to deliver the policies and achieve these objectives and report on them

## Biodiversity duty reporting

**Local authorities** will need to report on:

- actions we have taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- achievements resulting from our actions
- actions we plan to take in the next reporting period

**Local planning authorities** will need to report on:

- the actions we have carried out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations
- details of biodiversity net gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans we have approved
- how we plan to meet biodiversity net gain obligations in the next reporting period

The end date of your first reporting period should be no later than **1 January 2026**.

After this, the end date of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period.

## Step 1: First consideration of biodiversity actions

The following actions apply across the entire borough:

Work area	Relevant policies/strategies already in place	Detail	Future plans/comments
Corporate Strategies	Our Plan	Thriving Environment: Resilience to climate change and increased biodiversity by restoring natural habitats	
Green infrastructure / nature positive plan	In development	A joint plan which will set the strategic	The plan is expected to be adopted in mid 2024.

Work area	Relevant policies/strategies already in place	Detail	Future plans/comments
		direction of nature recovery across projects, policy and practices to enhance and connect our local green spaces and countryside.	
Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Supporting Authority role in relation to West Sussex LNRS. Neighbouring authority to East Sussex LNRS	The council is supporting the creation of these strategies through provision of evidence and advice.	Local wildlife sites (LWS) need further consideration with partners particularly because of their importance in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Protected sites	Management plans in place for some sites	The borough is home to a number of statutory and non-statutory nature conservation designations including Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and Cissbury Ring (located within the National Park) which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.	For sites in Council ownership, establish whether the condition needs to be improved and prioritise management plans for these sites to identify and implement the actions needed to improve site condition.
Nature Recovery	In development	Nature recovery projects across the borough including chalk grassland restoration at Cissbury Fields	Ongoing delivery, and identification of new opportunities
Parks	<a href="#">Renaturing in Worthing</a>	Identifying and exploring opportunities of where we can renature (also known as rewilding) within our parks and open spaces.	Ongoing delivery, and identification of new opportunities
Sussex Bay, forthcoming seascape development framework, 2024-2025.	We will stock-take all of the blue natural capital projects (in the sea) across the 100 miles of Sussex Bay and then produce a framework for future projects and investment.	The seascape development framework will enable Sussex Bay to produce investment ready projects should marine net-gain come into fruition from the government (it is currently at second public consultation stage) or via alternative	Keep a watching brief on government marine net gain developments, as we work up with partners, co-producing, our Sussex Bay seascape development framework.  Sussex Bay covers 11 Council areas, and we

<b>Work area</b>	<b>Relevant policies/strategies already in place</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Future plans/comments</b>
		pathways tbc. There are links to blue and green (sea to land) capital and links between marine net gain and biodiversity net gain.	will interact with and monitor the actions of all Councils to coordinate activity across Sussex Bay.

The following actions apply across the local plan area (the parts of the district that are not within the South Downs National Park):

<b>Work area</b>	<b>Relevant policies/strategies already in place</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Future plans/comments</b>
Planning policy	Worthing Local Plan 2023	Policy DM18: Biodiversity Policy DM19: Green infrastructure	Monitoring and reporting laid out in the plans  Produce a Technical Advice Note on Biodiversity Net Gain.  Produce a green infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document, reflecting the Nature Positive / Green Infrastructure Plan  some policies may be standardised as National Development Management Policies by DHLUC
Development Management	Determination of planning applications in accordance with current wildlife legislation and policy.	Covered by local plan policies above	Local Plan review may strengthen these policies and some may be standardised nationally by DHLUC