

Worthing Borough Council

Biodiversity Duty Report 2024–2025

Reporting period: 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025

1. Introduction

The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the biodiversity duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, establish appropriate policies and objectives and take action to deliver them.

Worthing Borough Council published its first consideration of biodiversity actions in response to the strengthened duty. This identified action across corporate policy, nature recovery, green infrastructure, protected sites, parks, planning and partnership working.

The Council has also recognised the importance of nature recovery through its wider climate and ecological emergency commitments.

This report summarises action taken during the Council's first reporting period and identifies priorities for the next reporting period.

2. Action taken

During the reporting period the Council continued to integrate biodiversity and nature recovery into its wider environmental work.

Key actions included:

- supporting development of the **West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy**, including the provision of local evidence and advice;
- progressing **chalk grassland restoration at Cissbury Fields**;
- continuing to identify opportunities to **renature parks and open spaces**;
- working with community green-space groups and wider nature recovery partners;
- supporting strategic coastal and marine nature recovery through **Sussex Bay**;
- protecting and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure through the **Worthing Local Plan 2023**, particularly Policies **DM18 Biodiversity** and **DM19 Green Infrastructure**; and
- developing the Council's approach to **Biodiversity Net Gain, green infrastructure and habitat banking**.

3. Biodiversity Net Gain

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain came into effect during the reporting period. The Council incorporated the statutory requirements into its planning work and continued to develop its approach to BNG and associated green infrastructure guidance.

No statutory Biodiversity Gain Plans were approved by Worthing Borough Council during the reporting period ending 31 December 2025.

4. Priorities for the next reporting period

The Council will continue to conserve and enhance biodiversity through its functions. Priorities include:

- supporting implementation of the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- progressing habitat restoration and renaturing;
- improving ecological management of Council-owned land and protected sites;
- continuing coastal and marine nature recovery through Sussex Bay and other partnerships;
- integrating biodiversity and green infrastructure into planning policy and decision-making; and
- implementing and monitoring Biodiversity Net Gain, including approved Biodiversity Gain Plans.