



Meeting	Health and Environment Policy Committee
Date and Time	Wednesday, 25th February, 2026 at 6.30 pm.
Venue	Walton Suite, Guildhall Winchester and streamed live on YouTube at www.youtube.com/winchestercc

Note: This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above. Members of the public should note that a live video feed of the meeting will be available from the council's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/winchestercc) during the meeting.

A limited number of seats will be made available at the above-named location however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 working days before the meeting. Please note that priority will be given to those wishing to attend and address the meeting over those wishing to attend and observe.

AGENDA

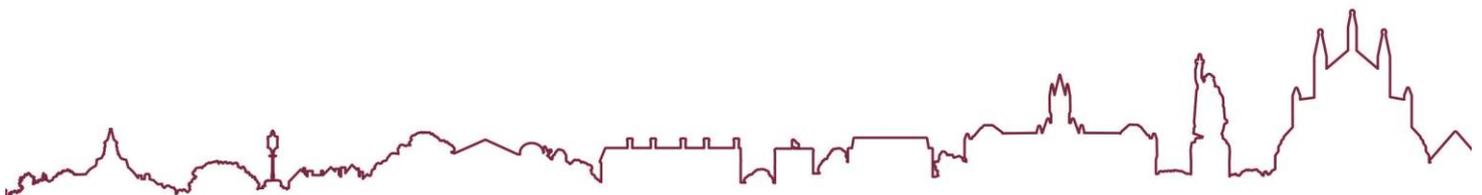
PROCEDURAL ITEMS

- 1. Apologies and Deputy Members**
To note the names of apologies given and deputy members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed members.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
To receive any disclosure of interests from Councillors or Officers in matters to be discussed.

Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs), other registerable interests (ORIs) and non-registerable interests (NRIs) in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

If you require advice, please contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer, prior to the meeting.

- 3. Chairperson's Announcements**
- 4. Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)
Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 December 2025.



BUSINESS ITEMS

5. **Public Participation**

To receive and note questions asked and statements made from members of the public on matters which fall within the remit of the Committee.

NB members of the public are required to register with Democratic Services three clear working days before the meeting

(contact: democracy@winchester.gov.uk or 01962 848 264).

Members of the public and visiting councillors may speak at this Committee, provided they have registered to speak three working days in advance.

Please contact Democratic Services **by 5pm on Thursday, 19 February 2026** via democracy@winchester.gov.uk or (01962) 848 264 to register to speak and for further details.

6. **Enhanced Biodiversity Duty - HEP046** (Pages 13 - 44)

7. **Support Creation of Local Carbon Credits - Presentation** (Pages 45 - 74)

8. **Public Spaces Protection Order and Enforcement - Presentation** (Pages 75 - 82)

9. **Building a resilient Waste Service for the Future - Presentation** (Pages 83 - 90)

10. **To note the meeting dates for the committee in 2026/27**

- 8 July 2026
- 17 September 2026
- 1 December 2026
- 25 February 2027

Laura Taylor
Chief Executive

All of the Council's publicly available agendas, reports and minutes are available to view and download from the Council's [Website](#) and are also open to inspection at the offices of the council. As part of our drive to minimise our use of paper we do not provide paper copies of the full agenda pack at meetings. We do however, provide a number of copies of the agenda front sheet at the meeting which contains the QR Code opposite. Scanning this code enables members of the public to easily access all of the meeting papers on their own electronic device. Please hold your device's camera or QR code App over the QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your screen and you will be redirected to the agenda pack.



17 February 2026

Agenda Contact: Claire Buchanan, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01962 848 438 Email: cbuchanan@winchester.gov.uk

**With the exception of exempt items, Agenda, reports and previous minutes are available on the Council's Website www.winchester.gov.uk*

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson: Pett (Liberal Democrats) **Vice-Chairperson:** Brophy (Liberal Democrats)

Conservatives

Miller

Liberal Democrats

Bennett
Latham
Power
Westwood

Green

Lee

Conservatives

Horrill & Warwick

Deputy Members Liberal Democrats

Eve & Tippett-Cooper

Green

Bailey-Morgan & White

Quorum = 3 members

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

Representations will be limited to a maximum of 3 minutes, subject to a maximum 15 minutes set aside for all questions and answers. To reserve your place to speak, you are asked to **register with Democratic Services three clear working days prior to the meeting** – please see public participation agenda item for further details.

People will be invited to speak in the order that they have registered, subject to the maximum time period allowed for speaking not being exceeded. Public Participation is at the Chairperson's discretion.

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting will be recorded and broadcast live from the Council's YouTube channel. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Access to Information Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution for further information, which is available to view on the [Council's website](#). Please note that the video recording is subtitled, but you may have to enable your device to see them (advice on how to do this is on the meeting page).

VOTING

- apart from the Chairperson, every Member has one vote when a matter before the meeting requires a decision.
- in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson may exercise a casting vote and that vote may be exercised in any way seen fit.

- a Member may abstain from voting, or vote differently from how they may have indicated during the debate, without further explanation.
- the way each Member voted will not be recorded in the minutes, unless a motion to have a Recorded Vote has been passed.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 2 December 2025

Attendance:

Councillors
Pett (Chairperson)

Brophy
Bennett
Lee

Power
Warwick
Westwood

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Latham and Miller

Deputy Member:

Councillor Warwick (deputy for Councillor Miller)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities) and Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for the Climate and Nature Emergency)

[Full Video Recording](#)

1. APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS

Apologies were noted as above

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Warwick declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of any agenda items it may impact due to her role as a Hampshire County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, she remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Lee made a personal statement that he was a Trustee of WinACC, should any discussion arise in this respect during the consideration of items.

Councillor Pett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of any agenda items it may impact, due to being a member of the South Downs National Park Authority. However, as there was no material conflict of interest,

he stated that he had a dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer that enabled him to speak and vote on these matters.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson made the following announcements:

- (i) Tender process for verge management contract (currently held by IdVerde) – The Chairperson had requested that the committee view the invitation to the future tender for the contract, which would be made available in the new year. It was agreed that the document be shared via email due to timeline pressures.

For clarification, the Strategic Director set out the deadlines of the process and emphasised that feedback from the parish councils would be incorporated into the draft tender specification.

- (ii) It was noted that timings had been allocated to business items on the agenda to allow the ample opportunity for each matter to be considered within a reasonable time.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings held on the 18 September 2025 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no comments or questions made during public participation.

6. **CLIMATE ADAPTATION - HEP045 AND PRESENTATION (45 MINUTES)**

Councillor Learney introduced the report, emphasising the climate emergency as the council's overarching priority, with preventing climate change through carbon reduction being the main focus. She made reference to the climate risks and impacts, due to the escalating severity of global warming and set out the need to protect residents and adapt to changes for the future. The report provided a progress update on the climate adaptation work carried out to date. The views of the committee and feedback on specific areas were sought to help inform and shape the development of the Climate and Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA), as set out within the report.

The Sustainability Manager and Sustainability Programme Manager gave a presentation setting out the context, identifying the risks and hazards and the changes in patterns across the district. Several questions were asked which were responded to by the Cabinet Member and relevant officers, including the following:

1. Further clarification was sought on why marine and coastal risks were excluded from the assessment given that the Winchester district contained a small section of coastline and neighbouring authorities faced high exposure to rising sea levels. In response, it was noted that the exclusion resulted from a materiality assessment based on a premise of limited impact, though the risk could be re-evaluated if members considered it was necessary.
2. A question was asked regarding the omission of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Countryside Land and Business Association (CLA) from the list of stakeholders, as farmers were significantly impacted by extreme weather events. Officers confirmed that these organisations would be noted for future engagement.
3. Further clarification was sought regarding the engagement of smaller family farms in river valleys which were at higher risk of flooding compared to larger farm clusters. It was noted that these stakeholders needed to be engaged as the work moved forward.
4. An enquiry was made concerning errors in the consultation table, specifically the listing of Hampshire twice and the omission of Portsmouth Water and the Environment Agency Southern Regional Flood Committee. It was agreed that these bodies would be included in the stakeholder list.
5. A question was asked why air quality was not listed as a top-level risk category in the assessment. It was responded that air quality factors were considered within the health and wellbeing category under risk H07.
6. Further clarification was sought on which climate risks would have the greatest impact on the district. Suggestions included flooding, drought, heatwaves, wildfires, and prolonged poor air quality, with some noting that the impact of high winds on infrastructure could affect thousands of residents. In addition, the creation of a matrix not only setting out the risks, but how these risks may affect different groups of people (such as those with vulnerabilities) was also suggested, setting out the measures of resilience and infrastructure in place to respond.
7. A question was raised regarding which council services would be most impacted by climate change. Suggestions included emergency planning, housing services, public protection, and communications.
8. An enquiry was made as to whether other local authorities in Hampshire were following similar models and timescales for their climate adaptation work. It was responded that several other authorities were leading on this work and that the council followed a model set by the national Local Partnerships toolkit.
9. A recommendation was made that councillors and staff should undergo water safety training provided by the Fire and Rescue service.

10. Further clarification was sought on the resilience of the district to once-in-a-generation events, such as significant snowfall, which could impact food and water supplies.

In conclusion, the committee thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for an informative update.

RESOLVED:

That the report and presentation be received and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

7. **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STRATEGY - HEP044 (45 MINUTES)**

Councillor Becker introduced the report which set out the draft strategy to build strong and resilient communities across the district. The strategy also facilitated direction and access of the support and opportunities that were available to communities. It was noted that five pathways and associated principles were proposed in the draft strategy to focus efforts, as outlined in the report. The views of the committee on specific questions were sought to help shape the draft strategy, as referenced within the report.

The Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing set out the context of the strategy, setting out the broad variety of communities across the district and how the council could contribute to empowering all these communities to build resilience and promote their capacity to thrive.

The committee were reminded that this was a draft strategy which would be formulated and finalised to create a publicly accessible document that signposted communities and promoted community engagement.

Several questions were asked which were responded to by the Cabinet Member and the Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing, including the following:

1. Further clarification was sought on the scope of the strategy and how it differed from an existing emergency response plan. It was explained that while the strategy was related to emergency response, it focused on building social capital and empowering communities to respond to challenges and improve their own well-being.
2. A question was raised regarding how the council balanced the celebration of local resources with the requirement to meet the safeguarding needs of vulnerable individuals. It was noted that the council's role involved supporting communities to understand safeguarding issues through awareness and education, such as by reviewing the policies of organisations during grant application processes.

3. Reference was made to the benefit of areas creating a 'village charter' as a blueprint to enable areas to build resilient communities in their local area. In addition, reference was also made to the Empowering Healthy Places LGA report which included a checklist for promoting neighbourhood health and wellbeing which could be signposted to within the strategy.
4. Further clarification was sought on how the council identified the causal relationships between local assets, such as pubs or churches, and community resilience. The response indicated that the strategy was an enabling piece of work intended to allow communities to lead and identify the assets that they considered important.
5. An enquiry was made as to whether the strategy would identify geographical "hotspots" of deprivation where community facilities, such as playing fields or halls, were lacking. It was stated that while mapping of such facilities existed through other health priority work, this strategy focused on the people-oriented side of how communities engaged and came together.
6. A question was asked concerning what "good" looked like in a resilient community and if there were specific examples that the council aimed to encourage elsewhere. It was noted that all communities possessed different strengths, but those that were self-sustaining and possessed proactive parish councils, such as Bishop's Waltham, were highlighted as positive examples
7. Further clarification was sought on how the council intended to reach non-participatory groups or areas that lacked formal governance structures to amplify their voices. It was explained that the council acted as a facilitator between agencies and was reviewing governance gaps in the Winchester town area, such as the St Luke area of Stanmore, where community channels were more challenging to identify.
8. An enquiry was made regarding the potential for the strategy to include a tailored blueprint or checklist for different types of settlements, such as market towns and rural villages. It was noted that community infrastructure and support for new developments were secured through planning agreements and the local plan to help foster a sense of identity.
9. A question was raised as to whether the council could celebrate instances where communities successfully provided their own resources to meet a need through parish newsletters. It was confirmed that the council would seek to share and celebrate such examples of community activity.
10. Further clarification was sought on the definition of "community" and whether the strategy adequately addressed non-geographical groups, such as those based on interest or specific needs. Officers acknowledged that the strategy needed to more clearly define and

incorporate these different dimensions of community to ensure it addressed the city environment and residents facing anonymity or loneliness.

11. A request was made to ensure that the final document included a clear definition of what the strategy was trying to achieve to prevent the focus from diverging.

The committee thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for an informative update.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

8. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26**

The Strategic Director advised that the following items would be added to the existing committee work programme for consideration by the committee at its meeting on 25 February 2026.

- (i) Public Spaces Protection Orders and Enforcement
- (ii) Building a resilient Waste Service for the future

In addition, the Strategic Director reminded the committee that an all member training session was due to take place on 19 January 2026 regarding green financing, following an action from Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairperson made reference to the two areas that were subject of a task and finish group as follows. He stated that both had recently met to define what was to be taken forward, with further work to progress in the new year.

1. Identifying current barriers to increasing the availability and accessibility of Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the Winchester.
2. Developing practicable incentives, including indicative costs, for householders off mains drainage to modernise private sewerage systems to reduce the risk of the leaching of nutrients into the surrounding land and watercourses.

In response, the Strategic Director emphasised that officers would need to be involved in this process, given that service planning for 2026/27 was taking place. Therefore, the work of the task and finish groups would need to feed into the wider service planning work so this could be facilitated accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme for 2025/26 and items for inclusion on 25 February 2026 as detailed in (i) and (ii) above, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.00 pm

Chairperson

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REPORT TITLE: ENHANCED BIODIVERSITY DUTY

25 FEBRUARY 2026

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Kelsie Learney – Cabinet Member for the Climate and Nature Emergency

Contact Officer: Nick Cutler Tel No: 07818 096121 Email ncutler2@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report sets out Winchester City Council's approach to embedding the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within its functions and decision-making processes. It provides an account of measures implemented and progress made for strengthening biodiversity outcomes across the council's operations for the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025 and outlines future priorities for the next reporting period.

The report is to meet the council's statutory obligation under the Environment Act 2021 to publish a biodiversity report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee are asked to note the content and comment on the proposed Biodiversity Duty Report prior to publishing by the deadline of 26th March 2026.

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Reporting will be completed within existing resource within the Ecology and Biodiversity team in the Sustainability and Natural Environment team (SANE). The Ecology and Biodiversity team consists of 1 FTE *Principal Ecologist and Biodiversity Officer* and 1 FTE *Ecologist and Biodiversity Officer*.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

2.1 Background

- 2.2 The Environment Act 2021 places a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' on local authorities to consider biodiversity in all functions of the council from service delivery and planning, through to estate management. The Act also requires public authorities to produce a report on actions taken to meet the biodiversity objective, ensuring transparency and accountability.

- 2.3 Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduced.

- 2.4 This means that, as a public authority, the council must:

- a) Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- b) Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration.
- c) Act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives.

- 2.5 The council must publish a report every five years (and submit it to Defra) and make this report publicly available by issuing it on our website. Appendix 1 includes the draft Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report. This is the first biodiversity report of the council under this duty and the next one will be required in 5 years' time (in 2031).

2.6 Details of proposal

- 2.7 Section 1 of the Report: Completed/on-going actions

- 2.8 To comply with the duty to report every 5 years on how the council is considering biodiversity in all its functions, the council will continue to implement the approved Winchester District Nature Improvement Plan (NIP) 2025 – 2030.

- 2.9 Following on from the council's published Biodiversity Action Plan, the council produced and published a new Nature Improvement Plan (NIP) in November 2025. The NIP outlines a new approach to ensuring the delivery of nature improvement across the district replacing the existing Biodiversity Action Plan. The NIP establishes a guiding set of principles for council functions in relation

to biodiversity and sets measures to be achieved for the next five years. The NIP and more detailed information is available on the council website. The NIP sets out how the council meets and continues to meet the biodiversity duty and will provide future evidence and data to feed into the 5-yearly Biodiversity Reporting under the strengthened Biodiversity Duty.

2.10 Section 2 of the Report: Future actions

2.11 As well as reporting on actions that the council have completed between January 2024 and December 2025 (inclusive), the report sets out potential future actions, that are also part of the Nature Improvement Plan. These potential future actions sit under the NIP's five pathways:

- a) Protect and manage land for nature
- b) Create new spaces for nature
- c) Deliver more nature-based solutions
- d) Prevent and control pollution better
- e) Connect more people to nature

2.12 Section 3 of the Report: BNG

2.13 The report also covers Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and how the council has taken certain measures to ensure the implementation of mandatory BNG and report on this. This has included making changes to procedures and processes in the planning system, tracking, monitoring and reporting BNG secured by eligible development in the district. The report also covers how the council will continue to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period of 2026-2031.

2.14 Appendix 1 includes the BNG Reporting 01.01.2024 – 31.12.2025 template required alongside the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report.

2.15 Conclusion

2.16 The report (Appendix 1) covers the three elements of the council's Enhanced Biodiversity Duty that have to be reported on, under the Environment Act 2021:

- a) Biodiversity measures implemented
- b) Progress made
- c) Future priorities

2.17 In publishing this report, the council will comply with the duty to produce a report on actions taken to meet the biodiversity objectives, ensuring transparency and accountability.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 3.1 WCC could not report on the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty, but this would be in contravention of the Environment Act 2021 and so has been rejected as an option. There is no statutory alternative to producing this report. With the details included in this report, the council have shown comprehensive cross-service evaluation, monitoring and reporting via the Nature Improvement Plan.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

HEP043 Nature Improvement Plan – 3 July 2025

Other Background Documents:-

Winchester District Nature Improvement Plan: [Nature Improvement Plan - Winchester City Council](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Winchester City Council Biodiversity Duty Report January 2024
– December 2025 (including BNG Reporting 01.01.2024 – 31.12.2025)

Winchester City Council Biodiversity Duty Report

Actions taken for Biodiversity between 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025

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Introduction

The Environment Act 2021 places a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' on local authorities to consider biodiversity in all functions of the council from service delivery and planning, through to estate management. The Act also requires public authorities to produce a report on actions taken to meet the biodiversity objective, ensuring transparency and accountability.

This report sets out Winchester City Council's approach to embedding the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within its functions and decision-making processes. It provides an account of measures implemented and progress made for strengthening biodiversity outcomes across the council's operations for the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025 and outlines future priorities for the next reporting period.

Appendix 1 provides the reporting on Biodiversity Net Gain. However, the overall figures and outcomes are presented in the main body of this report.

Section 1: Policies, Objectives and Completed Actions

This section details the relevant policies and objectives the council have contributed towards or set to meet the biodiversity duty. It also details the actions the council has completed or has undertaken with regards to biodiversity from the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and a Nature Emergency in September 2023. As a result, it had already begun taking action to support biodiversity prior to the start of this biodiversity duty reporting period.

1.1 Policies and Objectives

Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

On 8th December 2025 the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire was published. The LNRS is a new framework for nature recovery in Hampshire and is a key thread of the Environment Act 2021. The LNRS must be taken into consideration in planning decisions and more widely. The council's new Local Plan and its natural environment policies are closely aligned to the LNRS.

The council, alongside other local planning authorities, the County Council, statutory agencies, non-governmental bodies, and community partners, was involved in shaping the LNRS. Through regular workshops, meetings and consultations the council's Ecology team and other colleagues were involved in drafting the LNRS, providing technical input, ensuring that Winchester City Council's natural assets were given due prominence, and securing meaningful and deliverable actions for nature recovery across the district and beyond.

Winchester District Nature Improvement Plan 2025 - 2030

Following on from the council’s published Biodiversity Action Plan¹, the council produced and published a new Nature Improvement Plan (NIP) in November 2025². The NIP outlines a new approach to ensuring the delivery of nature improvement across the district replacing the existing Biodiversity Action Plan. The NIP establishes a guiding set of principles for council functions in relation to biodiversity and sets measures to be achieved for the next five years. The principles and measures are presented in figure 1 and tables 1 and 2 below. The NIP itself should be consulted for further information.

The NIP sets out how the council meets and continues to meet the biodiversity duty and will provide future evidence and data to feed into the 5-yearly Biodiversity Reporting under the strengthened Biodiversity Duty.

Nature Improvement Plan Principles

The principles in the NIP which the council has committed to adopt and will encourage others to follow are presented in figure 1 below.



Figure 1 Principles for Biodiversity as contained in the Nature Improvement Plan 2025- 2030

¹ [Biodiversity Action Plan - Winchester City Council](#)

² [Nature Improvement Plan - Winchester City Council](#)

Nature Improvement Plan Measures

The measures in the NIP are split into two sets, one for council-based actions on council owned and managed land, and one for district wide actions. These measures have been selected in order to help contribute to the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire.

Table 1 Council Land Biodiversity Measures as contained in the Nature Improvement Plan 2025- 2030

Council Land 2030 Measures			Measure Achieved?
1	Protect and manage land for nature	1.1 100% of SSSI units achieving favourable/unfavourable-recovering condition	✓
		1.2 100% SINC's in favourable management	✓
		1.3 Achieve a minimum of 27.61% of WCC land managed for nature	✓
2	Create new spaces for nature	2.1 1 ha new green or blue habitat created or improved for nature	Ongoing
		2.2 500m hedgerow planted for nature	
		2.3 250 swift boxes and 50 bat roost features installed on council properties	Ongoing
3	Deliver more nature-based solutions	3.1 Additional carbon sequestered on 3 sites	
4	Prevent and control pollution better	4.1 10 Wastewater Treatment Works on council land upgraded to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous loading	Ongoing
5	Connect more people to nature	5.1 10,000 volunteer hours of nature conservation activities on our land	Ongoing
		5.2 20 events on WCC land which promote connection with nature (health and wellbeing)	Ongoing

Table 2 District Biodiversity Measures as contained in the Nature Improvement Plan 2025- 2030

District 2030 Measures			Measure Achieved?
1	Protect and manage land for nature	1.1 Support the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy and protect the sites included	✓
		1.2 Deliver a minimum of 88% of SSSIs units in the district achieving “favourable/unfavourable-recovering” condition	✓
		1.3 Maintain the achievement of a minimum of 61% SINC's (surveyed in last 10 years) under positive management	✓
		1.4 Achieve a minimum of 12.48% land designated for nature	✓

2	Create new spaces for nature	2.1	Discharge Biodiversity Gain Plans via Development Management to deliver habitat creation and enhancement of 500 biodiversity units.	Ongoing
		2.2	100 biodiversity units secured through signing agreements with habitat banks	
		2.3	10ha of Natural green or blue pace created	
3	Deliver more nature-based solutions	3.1	Sustain Tree canopy/woodland cover above 22.991%	✓
4	Prevent and control pollution better	4.1	Continue to deliver the council's nutrient mitigation strategy.	✓
5	Connect more people to nature	5.1	50 farmers and land managers supported with nature-friendly practices	Ongoing
		5.2	5 businesses supported with nature-based projects	Ongoing
		5.3	6 nature events/forums delivered	Ongoing
		5.4	Grants given to nature conservation groups to create spaces for nature and connect people to nature	Ongoing
		5.5	4 partnerships collaborated with to deliver 5 restoration projects	Ongoing
		5.6	10 community groups collaborated with to deliver nature conservation activities	Ongoing
		5.7	10 event/programmes delivered through partners which promote connection with nature (health and wellbeing)	Ongoing

1.2 Completed/On-going Actions- split out into council /district actions.

In line with the principles and measures set out in the Nature Improvement Plan (as set out above), the following activities have been undertaken / continue to be undertaken for biodiversity on council owned land and within the district.

The activities are grouped either by "on Council land" or "district and land parcel/topic area". They align with the measures identified in the tables 1 and 2 above.

Council Land

1.2.1 St Faith's Meadow (River Itchen SSSI) and Winnall Moors (River Itchen SSSI)

These two sites form part of the wider River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). They continue to be managed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust in partnership with the council. The condition assessment of these two SSSI units continues to be at Unfavourable- Recovering condition.

1.2.2 Whiteshute Ridge Winchester

- Scrub clearance and hay cut followed by conservation grazing by cattle of grassland- preventing scrub, grasses and coarse plants from dominating, keeping space for wildflowers.

1.2.3 Topfield Kingsworthy

- Sowing of yellow rattle on meadow areas to reduce grass dominance without heavy mowing, herbicides, or soil stripping.
- Spot treatment for Golden Rod- halting this non-native species from outcompeting native plants and reducing biodiversity.

1.2.4 Greenacres Otterbourne

- Scrub clearance – preventing scrub from dominating the grassland and maintaining open space.

1.2.5 additional biodiversity management actions

In addition to the specific activities on council owned sites, the council has also undertaken annual biodiversity management actions at the following locations:

- Bramdean Common- cut and collect of grassland
- Magdalen Hill Cemetery- cut and collect of grassland
- Chilcomb Recreation Ground- cut and collect of grassland
- St Gilles Hill- cut and collect of grassland
- West Hill Cemetery - cut and collect of grassland
- Scything of grassland and laying of green hay on the embankment by Winchester Sport and Leisure Park
- Sowing of wildflower meadow at KGV Sports Pavillion.

1.2.6 Wildflower Verge Project

The council continues to manage several road verges primarily in Badger Farm Winchester and New Alresford for biodiversity. This involves a reduction in the grass cutting regime at several selected locations where investigation of the existing seed bank has shown there is an opportunity to allow wildflowers to grow and thrive. This provides nectar and habitats for bees, butterflies and other important insects as well as enhancing the public realm by improving aesthetics and creating visual interest, benefiting health and wellbeing.

At present there are 129 verges that are being managed for biodiversity. The council continually reviews the project and looks to expand it where possible.

1.2.7 Tree Planting

The Council's tree team has been actively planting trees across the district.

From 1st January 2024 through to 31st December 2025 the Council's tree team planted 251 new trees. It also planted 41 replacement trees in this period to account for those trees that had to be removed for various reasons (Ash dieback, health and safety etc.)

1.2.8 Specific Species Monitoring

Reptiles

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group (HIWARG) undertakes monitoring on behalf of the council of the reptile populations at the following locations:

- Whiteshute Ridge
- West Hill Cemetery
- Greenacres

Butterflies

The Butterfly Conservation charity monitors the butterfly populations at Magdalen Hill Cemetery.

Breeding Birds

The council's ecologists undertake breeding bird surveys on Whiteshute Ridge in Winchester and Topfield in Kingsworthy.

Dormice

The council's ecologists undertake breeding bird surveys on Topfield in Kingsworthy and Dean's Copse Knowle.

1.2.9 Upgrade of Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW)

Recognising that the Winchester district is in an area where excessive levels of nutrients (particularly Nitrogen and phosphates) is leading to adverse impacts on internationally designated and important wildlife sites, the council has begun a programme of improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Works under its ownership. These WwTWs are for council owned housing sites in areas without access to a public sewer system.

In January 2024, the council completed upgrades to 2 of the WwTWs sites under its ownership at Northington Road near Itchen Abbas and the Goodens plant near Cheriton.

These upgrades have resulted in a reduction of nitrogen output, which has led to the creation of 'nutrient credits' which can be used to offset the excess nutrient load generated by other new residential buildings, ensuring development is "nutrient neutral".

1.2.10 Council Housing Reroofing Programme

The council's housing department has a programme of replacing aged/leaking roofs on council owned properties. As part of this process, ecology officers assess the potential for bats and nesting birds to be present within the roofs of these properties. In the period from 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025 council officers have assessed 174 properties for their potential to have bat roosts and nesting birds. Of these at least 21 properties were found upon further survey to have roosting bats and appropriate mitigation measures (such as the inclusion of integrate bat access tiles) have been put in place to prevent impacts on bats and provide additional roosting opportunities for them.

The council also offers residents of all properties subject to being reroofed the opportunity to have a swift box installed. For the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025 at least 34 new swift boxes have been installed on properties with a remaining 96 boxes still to be put up. As the reroofing work programme is still ongoing, it is likely that more swift boxes will be recorded as put up in the next reporting period. This is reflected in the council's future actions for biodiversity in section 2.

District Wide

1.2.11 Membership of external organisations and partnerships.

The Council continues to be an active member and provides support to the following organisations and partnerships:

- Bird Aware Solent Partnership Steering Group- providing strategic mitigation to reduce recreational disturbance impacts on the Special Protection Areas and Ramsar wetlands of the Solent coast.
- Solent Wader Brent Goose Steering Group- provides a mitigation strategy to protect and manage the network of sites used by overwintering wading birds and brent geese across the Solent coast, particularly within and around Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar wetlands.

- Test and Itchen Catchment Partnership- discusses and develops plans to address key issues currently affecting the health of the rivers within the catchment.
- East Hampshire Catchment Partnership- discusses and develops plans to address key issues currently affecting the health of the rivers within the catchment.
- Meon Valley Partnership- provides a co-ordinated, strategic approach to conserving and enhancing the Meon Valley
- Partnership for South Hampshire- working together with other local authorities in the area to promote sustainable economic growth, environmental stewardship, and cultural development across South Hampshire. Key areas of environmental focus include water quality and nutrient mitigation.
- Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre- the council financially supports the operation of the local biodiversity record centre.
- District Level Licence (DLL) for great crested newts- The council has joined the DLL which aims to improve species protection while supporting sustainable development.
- Local Authority Biodiversity Forum- a forum where other local authority ecologists in Hampshire meet to share best practice, discuss strategic environmental/ecological issues.

1.2.12 Grant Funding and Supporting Local Farmers, Businesses, and Community Groups

Winchester City Council recognises the important role that farmers, businesses and community and voluntary organisations have in delivering benefits and improvements to the natural environment and biodiversity in the Winchester district. The council has different grant funding streams available to support these organisations. Whilst not all of the grants given out relate to biodiversity, the following organisations/projects have received funding from the council and are biodiversity related. These have been split up by the different grants available.

Community grant funding programme

- Friends of St Giles Hill Graveyard received a small grant which enabled volunteers to clear an area of the graveyard from invasive growth, create gabion seating and plant specialised chalk grassland meadow mix.
- Bishops Waltham North Pond Conservation Group- Funding provided to build an artificial Sand Martin nest site on the Bishops Waltham North Pond.
- Micheldever Parish Council (Rights of Way Volunteers)- funding to support a new community garden area in Micheldever Village.
- Whiteley Town Council- creation of a community garden
- CPRE Hampshire -restoration of five sites containing fragmented habitats of chalk grassland in the Bar End area of Winchester
- Sustainable Droxford Biodiversity Group Union Lane- creation of a wildflower area
- Upper Itchen Restoration CIC - purchase a hand-held device to measure dissolved oxygen levels, monitoring the health of the River Itchen.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund

- Morton Pattison, a landscape services company received support, from both the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund, to help with the

purchase of a specialised cut and collect machine allowing them to better manage wildflower meadows for biodiversity.

- Marwell Wildlife have received funding towards their re-breeding programme for White-clawed Crayfish and Sand Lizards this is helping to re-establish wild populations across the south of England.
- Wonderseekers at Winchester Science Centre, in Chilcomb, received Rural England Prosperity funding to install fencing and native climbing plants between a children's play area and a public footpath. It is the first step in creating a sustainable Habitat Playpark.
- River Park path improvements included an area of natural flood mitigation which provides additional benefits for biodiversity
- Stabilisation works at St Giles Hill included native shrub planting on the new bank

Go Greener Faster grants

Whilst the go greener faster grants are primarily linked to climate change and carbon savings. There were two grants given that had a biodiversity element to them. These were:

- Balancing pond works for flood protection & Wildlife by Colden Common Parish Council
- Hampshire Market Garden CiC Solar Irrigation Project

1.2.13 Events

Carbon Neutrality Open Forum

The Council has hosted two Carbon Neutrality Open Forum events which aims to impart information to attendees to help address aspects of the climate emergency and share the realistic actions that will help the council meet its carbon neutrality goals. These events have a nature focus and included presentations from Campaign to Protect Rural England on the Hampshire Hedge Project and the Hampshire Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Greener Futures Partnership

The greener futures partnership provides a forum for organisations to share and collaborate on projects in support of our ambition of becoming a carbon neutral district by 2030. These also benefit nature and biodiversity in the district.

Green Fair

In September 2025 the council ran its first ever Green Fair. The fair was put on for residents and their families to come and get ideas and inspiration for living more sustainably which included how to look after and support the natural environment. The event was supported by some of the local species groups in Hampshire such as the Hampshire Bat Group and the Hampshire Swift Group as well as council officers from the Natural Environment team.

1.2.14 Volunteer hours

The council has a few local groups who undertake various management tasks on council owned open spaces which benefit the local biodiversity present. The mains volunteer groups are:

- Friends of St Giles Hill
- Friends of St Giles Hill Graveyard
- Friends of Hyde Abbey Gardens

According to council records, approximately 1,000 volunteer hours have been spent in the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025 on managing council owned sites.

Section 2. Future Actions

The Nature Improvement Plan sets out an annual action plan at both the council and district level to achieve the measures that the council has committed to. The tables (3 and 4) below show the action plans for both council and district level for the period 2025/2026. These actions will help the council achieve/continue to achieve the measures it has set itself by 2030. It is intended that after the 2025/2026 period, a new set of action plans will be developed for the subsequent periods at least up to 2030.

Table 5 provides an indication of the likely future areas to come out of the Nature Improvement Plan up to 2030. These tables demonstrate how the council will continue to comply with biodiversity duty in next reporting period.

The council intends to report back on the progress of each of the action plans for its own purposes and for the purposes of demonstrating its compliance with the biodiversity duty as required by the Environment Act 2021.

Table 3 Council Land Action Plan 2025/2026 taken from the Nature Improvement Plan

Council Land - Nature Improvement Action Plan 2025/2026				
Pathway	2030 Measure	2025/2026 Actions	Delivery	
1 Protect and manage land for nature	1.1	100% of SSSI units achieving favourable/unfavourable-recovering condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the agreed annual actions within the management plan for SSSI land • Complete an annual report and rapid condition assessment on SSSI land 	Collaborate Collaborate
	1.2	100% SINCs in favourable management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the annual actions within the management plans for SINCs 	Deliver
	1.3	Achieve a minimum of 27.61% WCC land managed for nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the annual actions within the management plans for biodiversity sites • Scope and research the River Management Plan • Continue to deliver biodiversity management of 'non biodiversity open spaces' 	Deliver Collaborate Deliver
2 Create new spaces for nature	2.1	1 ha new green or blue habitat created or improved for nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved management of 0.1 ha of council owned verges/grassland • 0.1ha of tree planting (according to BNG metric calculator) 	Deliver Deliver
	2.2	500m hedgerow planted for nature		
	2.3	250 swift boxes and 50 bat roost features installed on council properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install 50 Swift boxes on council properties • Install 10 bat features on council properties 	Deliver
3 Deliver more nature-based solutions	3.1	Additional carbon sequestered on 3 sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Tree Strategy with regards to replacement tree planting 	Deliver
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore potential for woodland management to both sequester more carbon and improve biodiversity 	Collaborate
4 Prevent and control pollution better	4.1	10 WWTWs on council land upgraded to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous loading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade 2 WWTWs 	Collaborate

5	Connect more people to nature	5.1	10,000 volunteer hours of nature conservation activities on our land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable 2000 volunteer hours on our land 	Collaborate/ Enable
		5.2	20 events on WCC land which promote connection with nature (health and wellbeing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable 2 nature/health and wellbeing events and deliver 2 reoccurring programmes on council land 	Deliver/ Collaborate/ Enable

Table 4 District Level Action Plan 2025/2026 taken from the Nature Improvement Plan

Winchester District - Nature Improvement Action Plan 2025/2026					
Pathway	2030 Measure	2025/2026 Actions	Delivery		
1	Protect and manage land for nature	1.1	Support the SWBG Strategy and protect the sites included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to apply the SWBG mitigation guidance 	Report
		1.2	Deliver a minimum of 88% of SSSIs units in the district achieving favourable/unfavourable-recovering condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any degradation concerns to NE and understand when condition assessments will be undertaken 	Report
		1.3	Maintain the achievement of a minimum of 61% SINC's (surveyed in last 10 years) under positive management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver SINC survey programme through HBIC 	Collaborate
		1.4	Achieve a minimum of 12.48% land designated for nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing extent of designated land by ensuring that any development impacts to SINC's are adequately compensated • Report back on SINC amendments, creation and deletion • Report back on TPO and HRNs served 	Enable Report Report
2	Create new spaces for nature	2.1	Discharge Biodiversity Gain Plans via Development Management to deliver habitat creation and enhancement of 500 biodiversity units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to assess BGPs through Development Management • Report back on discharged Biodiversity Gain Plans 	Enable Report
		2.2	100 biodiversity units secured through signing agreements with habitat banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine council position to habitat banks. Assess 1 habitat bank proposal • Report back on amphibian habitat delivered through the District Level Licensing scheme 	Deliver Report
		2.3	10ha of natural green or blue space created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the Local Plan and assist with land transfers 	Enable

3	Deliver more nature-based solutions	3.1	Sustain Tree canopy/woodland cover above 22.991%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate replanting plans for development and TPO applications 	Enable
4	Prevent and control pollution better	4.1	Continue to deliver the council's nutrient mitigation strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back on the number of credits provided through the council scheme 	Enable
5	Connect more people to nature	5.1	50 farmers and land managers supported with nature-friendly practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with 10 farmers and land managers through cluster work 	Deliver
		5.2	5 businesses supported with nature-based projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support 1 business to deliver a nature-based project 	Enable
		5.3	6 nature events/forums delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver NIP launch event 	Deliver
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver nature engagement as part of Green fair 	Collaborate
		5.4	Grants given to nature conservation groups to create spaces for nature and connect people to nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide grants to appropriate nature conservation groups 	Deliver
		5.5	4 partnerships collaborated with to deliver 5 restoration projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 1 restoration project through a partnership group 	Collaborate
		5.6	10 community groups collaborated with to deliver nature conservation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support 2 community groups 	Enable
		5.7	10 event/programmes delivered through partners which promote connection with nature (health and wellbeing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable 2 nature/ health and wellbeing event/programmes across district 	Enable

Table 5 Potential Future Work Areas taken from the Nature Improvement Plan

Pathway		Future work area
1	Protect and manage land for nature	Project investigating SINC management and opportunities
2	Create new spaces for nature	Assessment of potential Biodiversity Net Gain habitat banks within the district and on council land. Creation of management plans to deliver BNG on WCC land.
3	Deliver more nature-based solutions	Assessment of potential for creating carbon credits on WCC land. Creation of management plans to deliver CC on WCC land.
		Assess, measure and monitor tree canopy cover to allow continued successful management of existing and new tree stock and woodland.
4	Prevent and control pollution better	Assessment of nutrient neutrality and potential for creating credits on WCC land. Creation of management plans to deliver NN on WCC land.
5	Connect more people to nature	Signpost people to relevant opportunities, groups, advice and campaigns.

Section 3. Biodiversity Net Gain

BNG is an approach to development that ensures habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than beforehand. It is now a mandatory requirement for all development (save for some exemptions) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021).

Under this framework, every grant of planning permission is subject to a pre-commencement 'biodiversity gain condition' where the developer is required to submit a 'Biodiversity Gain Plan' (BGP). The BGP must set out certain information including pre- and post-development biodiversity values of the onsite habitat (i.e. within the red line boundary), details of any registered offsite biodiversity gains allocated to the development, and/or biodiversity credits purchased for the development.

3.1 Actions taken by the council to meet BNG obligations

The council has taken various measures in order to implement mandatory BNG. This has included making changes to procedures and processes in the planning system, tracking, monitoring and reporting BNG secured by eligible development in the district. This is set out in more detail below.

Procedural change

The council has implemented changes in the planning system and officer training to ensure BNG is properly assessed and addressed by planning and biodiversity officers in line with the mandatory legislation and government guidance. This includes:

- Validation stage - checking applications against relevant validation criteria including eligibility, minimal information requirements, site degradation and impacts on irreplaceable habitat.
- Application stage – scrutiny of plans, statutory metrics and habitat condition assessment sheets; appropriate response wording/input from internal Biodiversity consultees; addition of the Biodiversity Gain condition to the Decision Notice and any appropriately worded planning condition to secure onsite BNG; consideration and drafting of legal agreement as needed
- Discharge of condition – scrutiny of submitted BGPs and accompanying information including finalised metrics, plans and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMPs).
- Post-approval stage – monitoring of BNG delivery as per planning condition or S106; updating of recording spreadsheets.

Monitoring BNG

The council monitors BNG in the district in two ways:

- Tracking expected BNG gains and losses from approved eligible developments using data from approved Biodiversity Gain Plans and statutory metrics, carried out manually using spreadsheets.
- Review of BNG monitoring reports submitted by developers for significant onsite BNG where agreed and secured by a s106 with the council. Monitoring of onsite BNG delivery will commence in line with the relevant planning obligations for each development (generally commencing in the autumn of Year 1 of BNG delivery). The council's ecology officers will review monitoring reports sent in by the developer and will carry out spot checks as necessary. Monitoring is expected to commence in 2026/27. This is funded by a BNG monitoring fee

Reporting BNG

The data from BNG monitoring informs annual reporting under the council's Nature Improvement Plan as well as the council's 5-yearly Biodiversity Reporting under its strengthened Biodiversity Duty (this report forms the first of these).

Supporting the local BNG market

The council has also held preliminary discussions with several landowners in the district offering them support and guidance to set up their own habitat banks however, these are yet to come online.

The council has also begun the process of investigating and baselining council land for Biodiversity Net gain provision. This is to assess the potential to set up habitat banks on council land to help facilitate the council's own future development schemes where necessary.

3.2 Biodiversity Net Gain data for development in Winchester District covering period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025

Appendix 1 sets out data gathered from all approved BGPs in Winchester district for the reporting period February 2024 (since mandatory BNG came into force for major development) to 31st December 2025. The headline results are detailed below:

- Eligible planning permissions – 6 Biodiversity Gain Plans have been approved over the reporting period. Three of these developments have secured their BNG entirely onsite and three have secured BNG delivery solely through offsite units.
- Overall expected gains and losses- the overall average % net change in biodiversity units onsite is 17.13%. The overall average % net change in biodiversity units offsite is 280%. No developments in the district have secured BNG through the purchase of government statutory credits.
- Impacts on irreplaceable habitat- no BNG-eligible developments in the borough have impacted irreplaceable habitat.
- Location of offsite biodiversity units- no developments have secured BNG delivery solely through offsite units within the LPA boundary. All three developments have sought BNG from a habitat bank outside of the LPA boundary (Isle of Wight, Cambridgeshire and East Sussex).
- Results of monitoring biodiversity gains – no monitoring of reports/spot checking has yet occurred due to the early stage in the process. This is expected to commence in 2026/27.
- Composition of habitat gains (areas)- the gains come mainly from creation and/or enhancement of grassland and individual tree habitat. (Habitat losses come mainly from cropland and urban habitat types.)
- Composition of habitat gains (hedgerows and lines of trees) - gains originate mainly from creation and/or enhancement of species-rich native hedgerow and native hedgerow. (Habitat losses come from non-native ornamental hedgerow.)

- Composition of habitat gains (watercourses) - gains originate from enhancement of ditch habitats.

Monitoring of onsite BNG delivery will commence in line with the agreed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) associated with each development. This is generally commencing in the autumn of Year 1 of BNG delivery. The council's ecologists will review monitoring reports sent in by the developer and will carry out spot checks as necessary. Monitoring is expected to commence for the developments who have an approved BNG Plan in 2026/27.

3.3 Meeting the BNG obligations in the next reporting period

The council plans to meet BNG obligations over the next reporting period through the following specific actions:

- Continue to track, monitor and report on BNG in the district;
- Adapt processes and procedures as required with any future legislative or national policy changes to the mandatory framework;
- Develop local plan policy to appropriately reflect BNG in line with national policy and where necessary, provide guidance to developers and landowners;
- Encourage the use of the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to target offsite BNG in the most ecologically optimal areas of the district;
- Exploring the possibility of delivering habitat bank(s) on council-owned land – habitat baselining;
- Engage with partners and government on BNG guidance and policy development;
- Continue to support where possible, landowners and habitat bank scheme promoters to provide offsite BNG solutions within Winchester district.

Appendix 1 Biodiversity Net Gain data for development in Winchester District covering period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2025

Eligible planning permissions granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring biodiversity net gain

ID	Consented applications requiring net gains	Number	Proportion
A	Total number of planning permissions granted that require biodiversity net gain in the reporting period	52	not applicable
B	Total number of planning permissions granted in the reporting period where an exemption to the biodiversity net gain condition applies	1729	not applicable
C	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period	6	not applicable
D	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through on-site units only	3	50%
E	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through off-site units only	3	50%
F	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through statutory credits only	0	0%
G	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site and off-site units	0	0%
H	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site units and statutory credits	0	0%
I	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of off-site units and statutory credits	0	0%
J	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period securing BNG through a combination of on-site, off-site units and statutory credits	0	0%

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

ID	Overall expected gains and losses	Total or Average	Area	Hedgerow	Watercourse
A	Total number of pre-development biodiversity units approved on-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	2.86	2.57	0.29	0
B	Total number of post-development biodiversity units approved on-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	3.34	2.96	0.38	0
C	Total net unit change in biodiversity units, on-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	0.49	0.39	0.1	0
D	Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, on-site	17.13%			
E	Total number of baseline biodiversity units approved off-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	0.89	0.69	0.15	0.05
F	Total number of post-intervention biodiversity units approved off-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	3.4	2.98	0.31	0.11
G	Total net unit change in biodiversity units, off-site broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	2.5	2.29	0.16	0.05
H	Average percentage (%) change in biodiversity units, off-site	280.90%			
I	Total number of biodiversity units offset using statutory credits broken down by area/hedgerow/watercourse	0	0	0	0
J	Total net unit change in biodiversity units (including any units offset using credits)	0	0	0	0
K	Average percentage (%) change (including statutory credits)	0	0	0	0

Impact on Irreplaceable Habitat

ID	Impact on irreplaceable habitat	Total	Proportion
A	Total number of biodiversity gain plans approved in the reporting period where the on-site change negatively impacts irreplaceable habitats	0	6

Location of off-site biodiversity units

ID	Location of off-site biodiversity units	Total	Proportion
A	Number of off-site biodiversity units located inside LPA boundary or NCA of impact site.	0	0
B	Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside LPA or NCA of impact site, but in neighbouring LPA or NCA	2.88	84.71%
C	Number of off-site biodiversity units located outside of LPA or NCA of impact site and neighbouring LPA or NCA	0.52	15.29%

Results of monitoring biodiversity gains

ID	Results of monitoring biodiversity gains where the LPA is part of the legal agreement	Total	Proportion (%)
A	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans including the delivery of 'significant' on-site gains	0	0
B	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements and habitat delivery expectations for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0
C	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements but not meeting habitat delivery expectations for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0
D	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are failing to meet monitoring requirements for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0
E	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans where the status of monitoring requirements is unknown for 'significant' on-site gains	0	0
F	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans including the delivery of off-site gains, where the LPA are responsible for monitoring.	0	0
G	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements and habitat delivery expectations for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0
H	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are meeting monitoring requirements but not meeting habitat delivery expectations for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0
I	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans that are failing to meet monitoring requirements for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0
J	Number of applications with approved biodiversity gain plans where the status of monitoring requirements is unknown for offsite gains where the LPA is responsible for monitoring	0	0

ID	Enforcement actions taken in the reporting period	Total	Proportion
L	Number of enforcement actions taken during the reporting period associated with Biodiversity Net Gain policy	0	6

ID	Tracking monitoring of biodiversity gains	Free Text
K	Please describe how you have collected information on monitoring (e.g., use of digital software to collect and analyse monitoring data/ manual checking of monitoring reports/ internal monitoring system etc.	Currently manually recording and checking of BNG however the council is in the process of purchasing Mycelia Software to enable a smoother and quicker monitoring process.

Composition of biodiversity gains - areas

ID	Habitat Type - Area	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total hectares at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total hectares post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in hectares
A	Cropland	0.69	0.32	0.00	0.00	-0.69	-0.32
B	Grassland	8.71	0.81	11.91	1.15	3.20	0.34
C	Heathland and Scrub	0.29	0.07	0.29	0.07	0.00	0.00
D	Lakes						
E	Sparsely Vegetated Land	0.12	0.01	0.12	0.01	0.00	0.00
F	Urban	0.58	0.76	0.2	0.7	-0.38	-0.06
G	Wetland						
H	Woodland and Forest	4.12	0.31	4.12	0.31	0.00	0.00
I	Intertidal sediment						
J	Coastal Saltmarsh						
K	Rocky Shore						
L	Coastal Lagoons						
M	Intertidal Hard Structures						
N	Watercourse footprint	not applicable		not applicable		not applicable	0
O	Individual Trees	1.95	0.49	2.15	0.58	0.2	0.09
	Total	16.46	2.77	18.79	2.82	2.33	0.05

Composition of biodiversity gains - hedgerows and lines of trees

ID	Habitat type - hedgerows and lines of trees	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total kilometres at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total kilometres post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in kilometres
A	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch					0	0
B	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees					0	0
C	Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch					0	0
D	Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch					0	0
E	Species -rich native hedgerow			0.11	0.01	0.11	0.01
F	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch					0	0
G	Native hedgerow with trees					0	0
H	Ecologically valuable line of trees					0	0
I	Ecologically valuable line of trees - associated with bank or ditch					0	0
J	Native hedgerow	0.54	0.12	0.68	0.18	0.14	0.06
K	Line of trees					0	0
L	Line of trees associated with bank or ditch					0	0
M	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.05	0.05	0	0	-0.05	-0.05
	Total	0.59	0.17	0.79	0.19	0.20	0.02

Composition of biodiversity gains - watercourses

ID	Habitat type - watercourse	Total biodiversity units at baseline	Total kilometres at baseline	Total biodiversity units post - development	Total kilometres post - development	Net change in biodiversity units	Net change in kilometres
A	Priority Habitat					0	0
B	Other Rivers and Streams					0	0
C	Ditches	0.30	0.10	0.40	0.10	0.1	0
D	Canals					0	0
E	Culverts					0	0
	Total	0.30	0.10	0.40	0.10	0.10	0.00

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Supporting the creation of local carbon credits

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HEP Committee

25th February 2026

Agenda Item 7



Contents

1.Strategic context

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2. Carbon credits and markets

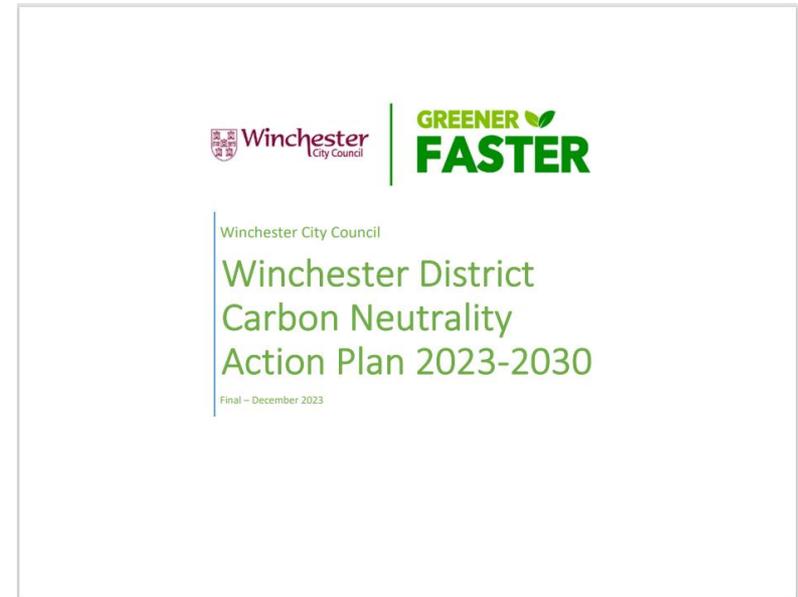
3. Supporting the creation of local
carbon credits

Part 1 – Strategic Context

Strategic Context

Climate Emergency

- Council declared a climate emergency in 2019
- Set ambitious target to become a carbon neutral district by 2030
- Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) 2023-2030 sets out the key actions and activities required to achieve carbon neutral target
- Supporting the creation of local carbon credits is a key pathway within the CNAP (Pathway 5)



Strategic Context

CNAP Pathways

1. Reduce energy consumption

2. Reduce transport carbon emissions

3. Increase renewable energy generation / purchase

4. Carbon sequestration through nature based solutions

5. Support creation of local carbon credits

Part 2 – Carbon credits and markets

Carbon credits

Definition: “a tradeable certificate that represents an emission reduction or removal of one metric tonne of CO₂, or an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases (CO₂e)”

- Purchasers of a carbon credit can ‘**retire**’ carbon credits on a registry to claim the underlying reduction or removal towards their own carbon reduction goals
- The buying and selling of carbon credits takes place within **carbon markets**
- Two types of carbon market – voluntary and compliance
 - **Voluntary carbon market (VCM)** - enables organisations to voluntarily purchase and sell carbon credits that represent the avoidance, reduction, or removal of GHGs from the atmosphere. Operates not because of legal obligation but as a way of demonstrating corporate social responsibility and/or making voluntary climate claims such as carbon neutrality or net zero
 - **Compliance carbon market** – mandatory, government-regulated systems, such as the UK Emissions Trading System (UK ETS), that set a cap on GHG emissions for specific industries

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Carbon credit types

Carbon credits can be generated through a variety of different projects or activities – categorised into two main types:

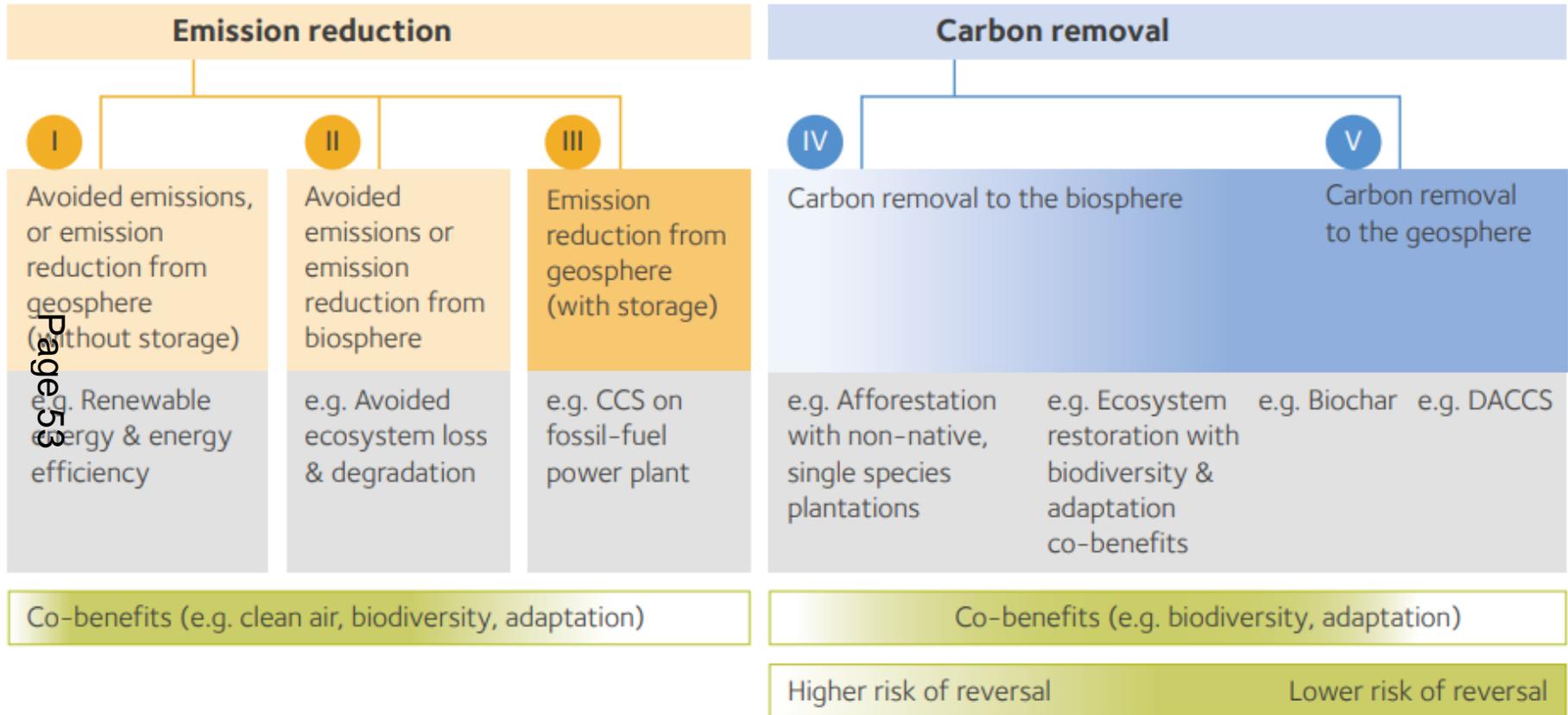
Carbon reduction

- Generated by activities that reduce or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that otherwise would have occurred. This includes methods such as improving energy efficiency, increasing renewable energy generation, or preventing deforestation.
- Whilst these activities help to reduce the rate of new GHG emissions entering the atmosphere, they do not remove GHGs that are already in the atmosphere.

Carbon removal

- Generated by activities that remove GHGs directly from the atmosphere and store it.
- Emissions removal methods can be divided into two sub-categories:
 - Nature-based solutions such as afforestation, peatland restoration, and soil carbon sequestration that store the carbon in the biosphere; and
 - Engineered solutions such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), direct air carbon capture and storage (DACCS), and enhanced weathering that store the captured carbon in the geosphere.

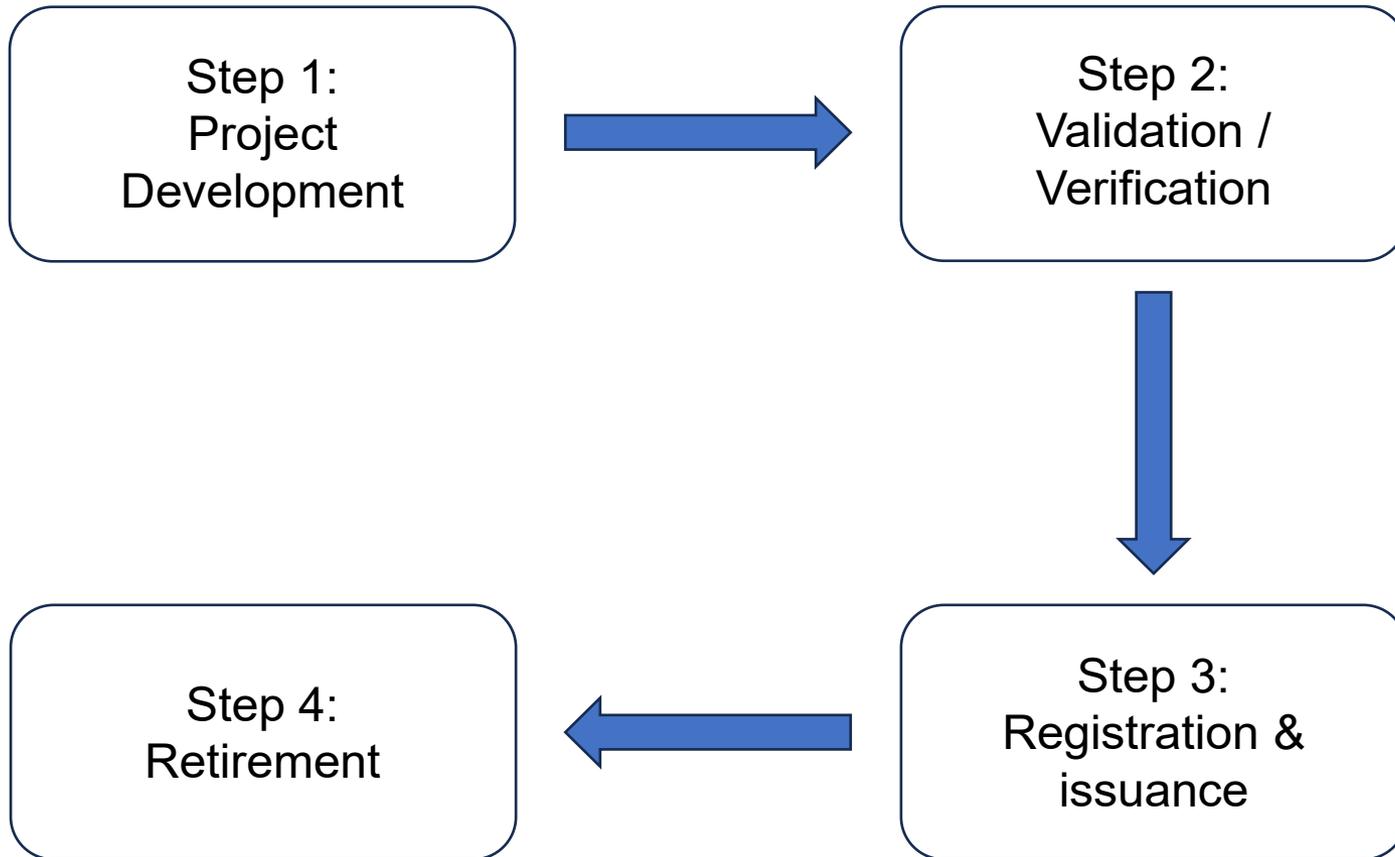
Carbon credit types



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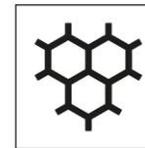
Image: [The Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting \(Revised 2024\)](#)

Carbon credit lifecycle



Carbon standards/codes

Active



Wilder Carbon
Native habitats. Natural solutions.

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In development

Seagrass
Carbon Code

Saltmarsh
Carbon Code

Soil Carbon
Code

Example: Woodland Carbon Code



- The UK's voluntary carbon standard for woodland creation projects
- Provides confidence around the carbon savings that woodland projects can achieve by providing:
 - A high quality, robust voluntary carbon standard
 - A transparent UK Land Carbon Registry
 - Robust science to predict and monitor carbon sequestration
 - Independent validation and verification of projects

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Project Developers	End Buyers
Project developers have recognised procedures and standards for woodland management and carbon accounting	Carbon buyers have confidence that they have invested in a responsible scheme and can see the benefits that it will provide.
Project developers can sell the carbon sequestered in their woodland through woodland carbon units	Woodland carbon units from verified WCC projects can help organisations compensate for their unavoidable emissions

Best practice

Standards and Guidance

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Supply-side

Demand-side

Best practice

Mitigation hierarchy

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Avoid

Avoid carbon-intensive activities



Reduce

Reduce GHG by optimising operations and implement emission-free alternatives.



Neutralise

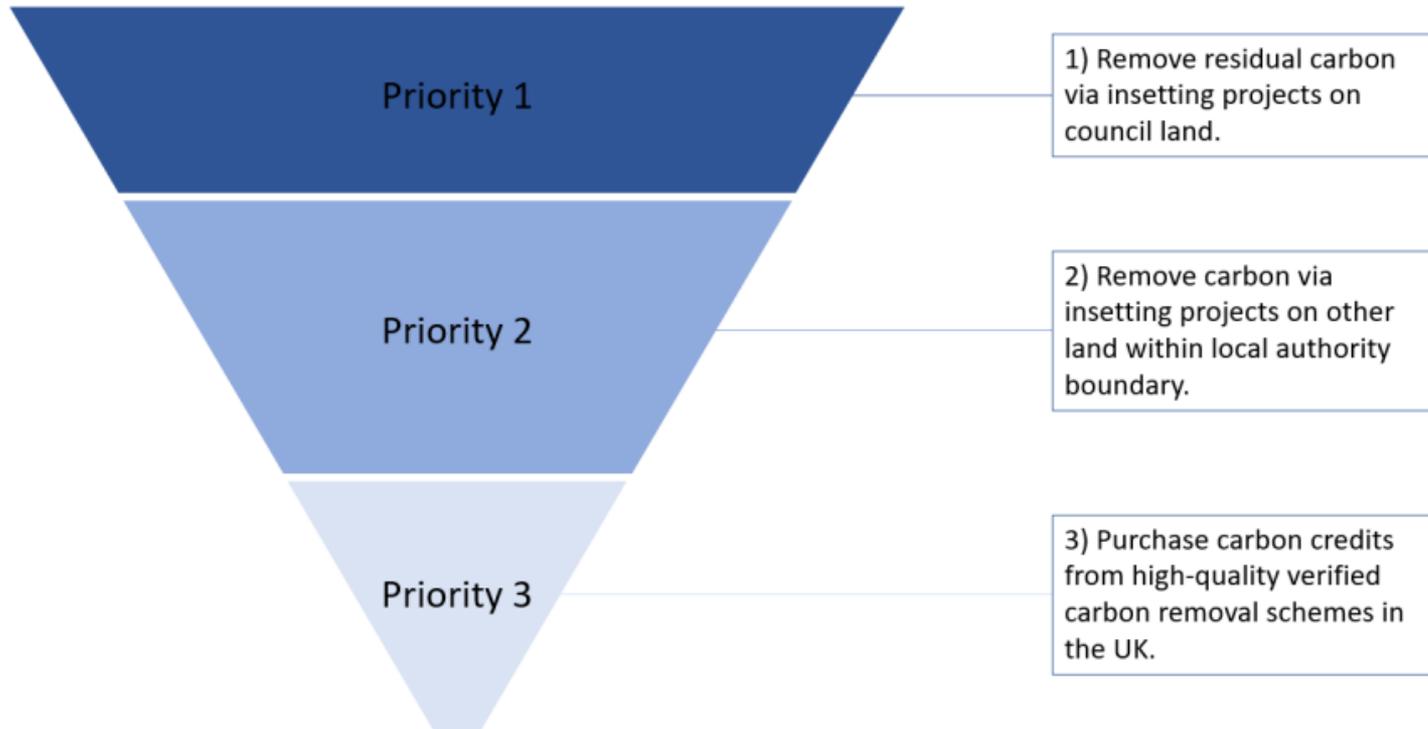
Remove the remaining emissions that cannot be eliminated through high-quality, durable carbon removal



Best practice

Spatial hierarchy

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Best practice

WCC Offsetting Policy

Cabinet approved the WCC Carbon Offsetting Policy in January 2023 ([CAB3386](#))

Policy sets out a hierarchical mitigation approach in line with best practice:

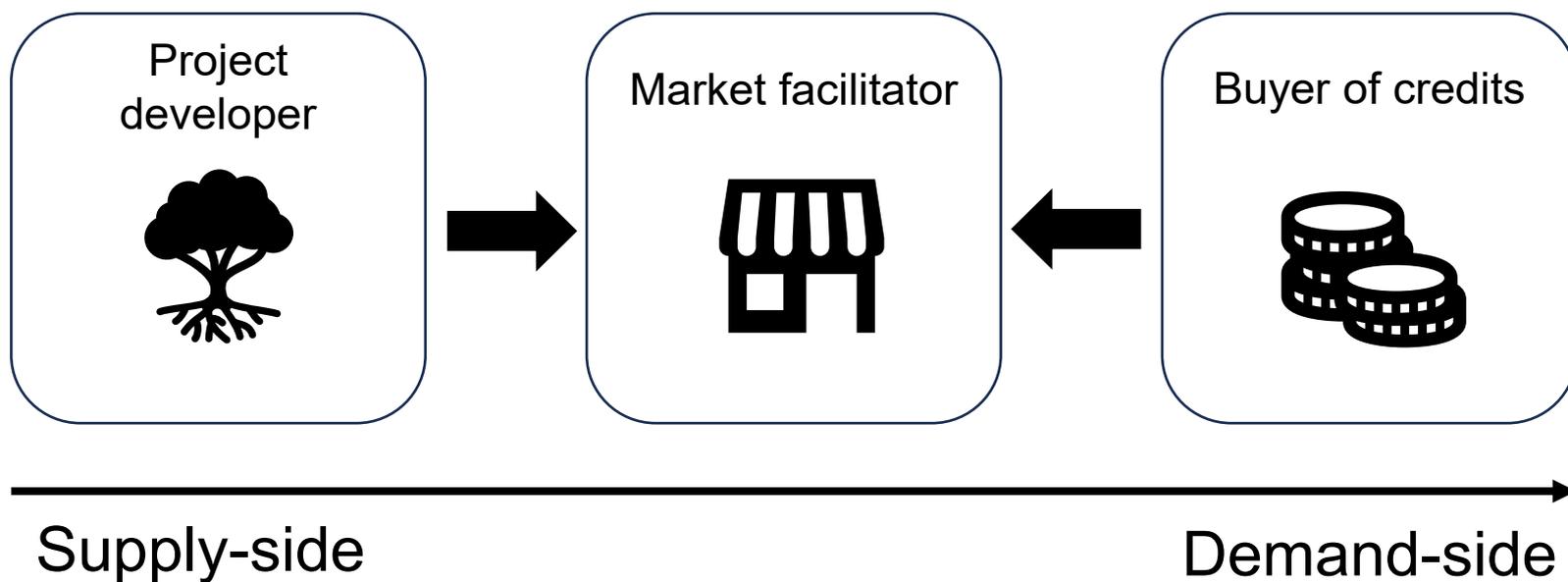
1. Prioritise carbon emission reduction
2. Invest in delivering carbon removal projects on council land to generate credits
3. Invest in third party carbon removal projects on land within the Winchester district to generate credits
4. Purchase credits from accredited nature-based projects in the UK, as a last resort

Part 3 – Supporting the creation of local carbon credits

Role of the council

What role could the council play in supporting the creation of local carbon credits and fostering local carbon markets?

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Role 1: Project developer

- Councils are increasingly using their land to generate supply of carbon credits
- Using nature-based solutions like tree planting/woodland creation and soil management (i.e., woodland carbon code)
- Some local authorities are proactively purchasing additional land specifically to deliver nature-based carbon removal projects (e.g., Devon and York)
- Projects can provide a new source of income if sold or provide source of credits to offset the council's own unavoidable residual emissions ('insetting')
- Delivery mechanisms - council can take on role of project developer or partner with third party project developers

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Project developer



Role 1: Project developer

Case Study: City of York Council

- Council purchased 78 hectares of former agricultural land in 2020
- Partnered with Forestry England the White Rose Forest to create and manage the woodland
- Officially opened to public in August 2024
- Over 200,000 trees planted and developed in line with Woodland Carbon Code
- Removes 18,500 tCO₂e over the next 100 years
- Multiple co-benefits in addition to carbon sequestration

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Role 1: Project developer

Case Study: Shropshire Council

- Approved £2 million spend on the installation of a pyrolysis unit to produce biochar and carbon credits
- Delivered via a Joint Venture with a local pyrolysis unit manufacturer (Woodtek Ltd) to develop a pyrolysis unit to remove carbon
- Estimated annual returns for council from sale of biochar and carbon credits are £115,000 per annum
- Carbon sequestration of 1600 tCO₂e per annum
- Initially trading carbon credits to pay off £2m commercial loan, but intend to use to offset emissions in the future

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Role 1: Project developer

Winchester City Council approach

The council is currently undertaking baselining and opportunity mapping to identify potential opportunities for nature-based projects.

- **Baselining** – mapping and assessing council-owned nature sites to determine carbon removal capability
- **Opportunity mapping** – identifying opportunities for nature-based projects on council-land and/or third-party land with the potential to achieve carbon removal
- **Detailed site assessments** – to identify the best opportunities, and to screen out unsuitable sites
- **Business case development** – baseline data, opportunity mapping and site assessments will support with identifying opportunities for capital investment in nature projects.

Aim is to develop business cases for viable sites prior to LGR – shovel-ready schemes for delivery by the new unitary council

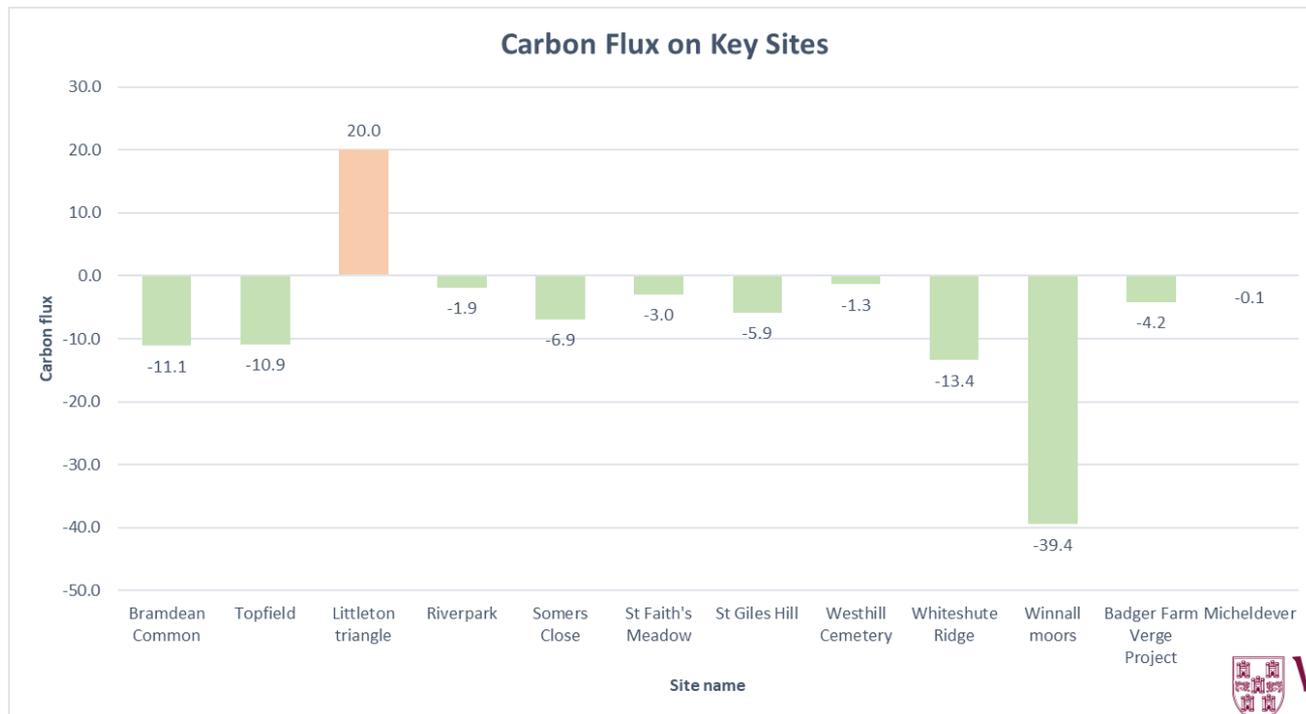
Sale of carbon credits could be used to fund the creation of additional carbon saving projects.

Role 1: Project developer

Arcadian carbon assessment

- WCC Commissioned Arcadian (HIWWT) to undertake assessment of council landholdings for carbon sequestration
- Overall carbon sequestration from WCC land is approximately 125tCO_e/yr
- Further investigation of 12 key sites to better understand their current sequestration rates and the potential increase in annual carbon sequestration that could be achieved

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Role 2: Market facilitator

To ensure a functioning local market and facilitate transaction of units between buyers and sellers, some local authorities have started acting as **market facilitators**

This could involve:

- Page 68
- Acting as matchmaker for carbon project developers and project funders seeking to voluntarily offset their residual emissions or meet CSR goals
 - Setting up local carbon market matching services/platforms whereby local authority acts as intermediary and helps structure investments and attract funding – e.g. Area Based Insetting (ABI)

Focuses investment on developing supply of carbon credits within the local authority area rather than outside the district

Market facilitator



Role 2: Market facilitator

Winchester City Council approach

- There have been attempts by local authorities to develop and facilitate local/place-based carbon markets as an alternative to traditional voluntary carbon markets
- For example, Anthesis developed a mechanism called 'Area-Based Insetting' which aimed to develop a platform for local authorities to connect project developers with end buyers of credits to finance carbon reduction and removal projects within their geographic boundaries
- No solution currently exists that is sufficiently mature to facilitate a complete end-to-end transaction between project developer and funder (support for ABI has been withdrawn)
- UKSPF funding allocated to SDNP in 2023/24 to work with [Revere](#) to engage Winchester Farm Cluster to assess woodland in the district and produce a woodland plan to enable woodland creation and credit trading
- Developing bespoke market platform for trading carbon credits in the Winchester district is very resource-intensive and not considered a priority
- **Therefore, council will focus on project developer role and developing a supply of carbon credits for the district**

Role 3: Buyer of credits

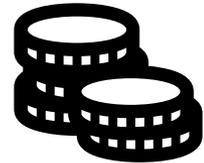
Some local authorities purchasing carbon credits to offset their own unavoidable residual emissions within their local area.

Case Study: [Devon County Council](#)

- Identified need for offsetting via credit purchases to address residual emissions by 2030 carbon neutral target
- Attempted to purchase carbon credits from certified schemes on the open market via a RFQ – unsuccessful
- Purchased woodland carbon credits from The Woodland Trust and the North Devon Biosphere Foundation's Natural Capital Marketplace
- Purchased credits more recently from regenerative farming projects certified to the UK Code of Carbon Conduct (UKCCC)

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Buyer of credits



Role 3: Buyer of credits

Winchester City Council approach

Council's approach to buying credits is set out within the WCC Carbon Offsetting Policy

Policy sets out a hierarchical mitigation approach with purchasing credits as a last resort option:

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1. Prioritise carbon emission reduction
2. Invest in delivering carbon removal projects on council land to generate credits
3. Invest in third party carbon removal projects on land within the Winchester district to generate credits
4. Purchase credits from accredited nature-based projects in the UK, as a last resort

Local carbon credits

Summary

- Council recognises the value of local carbon credits as a mechanism to finance carbon reduction and removal projects within the district and achieve carbon neutral target (see CNAP Pathway 5)
- Council can play a range of roles to support the creation of local carbon credits – i.e., project developer, market facilitator, buyer of credits
- Key focus is on identifying opportunities for the council to develop local nature-based projects to generate a source of carbon credits and enhance the natural environment
- Aim to identify project opportunities and develop business cases for viable sites prior to LGR – shovel-ready schemes for delivery by the new unitary council
- Council's approach is informed by best practice and agreed within the WCC Carbon Offsetting Policy

HEP is asked:

How can we best engage with Parish Councils to explore potential opportunities in their areas?



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Public Space Protection Orders

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Health and Environment Policy
Committee 25th February 2026

Agenda Item 8



What is a Public Space Protection Order?

- **Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.**

Designed to deal with specific, persistent, and unreasonable nuisances in particular public areas that negatively impact the local community's quality of life.

- **Purpose:** To ensure public spaces can be enjoyed safely, free from anti-social behaviour (ASB).

- **Duration:** They last for a maximum of **three years**, after which they must be reviewed and can be extended.

- **Scope:** They apply to everyone in the designated area in respect of identified activities or behaviours.

- **Breach Penalties:** Failure to comply with a PSPO is a criminal offence, potentially resulting in a **£100 fixed penalty notice (FPN)** or a fine of up to **£1,000 upon conviction**.

PSPO: Commonly Restricted Activities/Behaviours

- **Alcohol/Drugs:** Designated zones, refusing to surrender alcohol, or using psychoactive substances.
Current: Alcohol PSPO already in place – 3 years up in September 2026 (extension to be considered at June 2026 Licensing and Regulation Committee).
- **Dog Control:** Fouling, failing to carry waste bags, or not keeping dogs on a lead in specific areas.
Current: Use Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 covers whole district.
- **Behavioural Issues:** Urination, defecation, spitting, or aggressive begging.

PSPO: Commonly Restricted Activities/Behaviours

- **Public Nuisance:** Noise in the street i.e. Busking

Current: Use of Stat Nuisance s79 of EPA 1990 and Busker's code. Ambiguous and labour intensive.



- **Littering and Waste:**

Current: Littering an immediate offence, EPA 1990 s87 empowers LAs to serve Fixed Penalty Notices. Commercial Waste controlled through EPA 1990 s33 and s34

PSPO: Implementation and Compliance

- **Aim:** To simplify a range of different legislative regimes within a specific area.
- **Scope:** Pilot within a defined place.
- **Proportionality:** Restrictions must be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate to the harm, according to Home Office guidance.
- **Consultation:** Councils must consult with local police and community representatives before introducing or extending an order.
- **Signage:** Reasonable signage must be placed in the restricted area.
- **Enforcement:** Authorized council officers, police officers, PCSOs and other 'agents' authorized by the Council.
- **Targeted Approach:** PSPOs should not be used to target specific groups, such as the homeless, based solely on their status.
- **Alternatives:** Other tools, should be considered before a PSPO is used i.e. pre-existing/bespoke legislation



PSPOs in Winchester

Context

- No's of FPNs Served in Winchester is low
- Current FPN £ rates are low - limited deterrent
- Limited enforcement capacity – limited deterrent
- Ongoing concerns locally with ASB and Littering
- Current alcohol PSPO expires September 2026
- PSPO can strengthen controls within Public Realm
- Aligns with 'Taking Pride in Winchester' approach

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Opportunities

- Expand PSPO area and delivery profile
- Increase FPN levels
- Improve enforcement visibility
- Consider pilot external enforcement agency model

PSPOs in Winchester

Seeking input in some key areas of policy formation

- **Early co-design of proposed PSPO– What do we want?**
 - A safe, welcoming and inclusive Winchester
 - Co-design to shape the outcomes, with principles, consultation and engagement
 - To define geography and behaviours to be controlled

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- **Shape outcomes**
 - To establish delivery model
 - Steer on priorities education and enforcement
 - Communications i.e. focus on prevention?
 - Pilot
 - Define how to measure success



PSPOs in Winchester – Close

Benefits

- A Cleaner, Safer, Fairer street scene
- Enforcement underpinned by public education
- Collaborative - Supports BID & Police

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Next Steps

- Identify activity/behaviours that merit PSPO controls
- Identify area(s) for PSPO (Winchester City/whole district)
- Identify Challenges and Solution on delivery and enforcement i.e. use of external enforcement agency
- Benchmark and research success/failures from other PSPOs
- Commence Stakeholder Consultation
- Write Cabinet Paper outlining detailed options

Health and Environment Policy Committee

Recycling: Looking to the future

Wednesday 25th February 2026





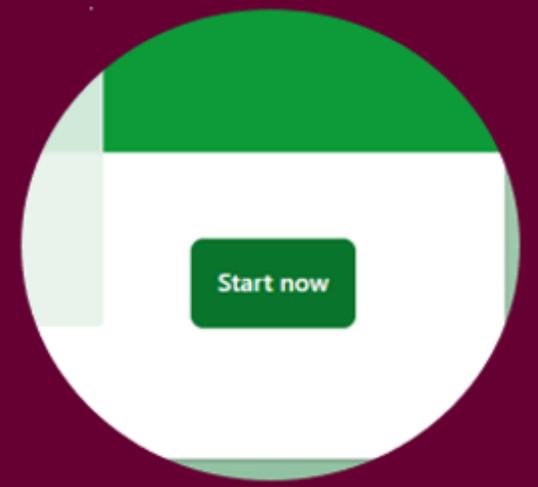
25 Extended producer responsibility



25 Commercial recycling



Now Food waste



Now Recycling survey

Page 84



26 Campaign



27 Deposit return scheme



28 New MRF



28 LGR





28 Emissions TS

Emissions Trading Scheme

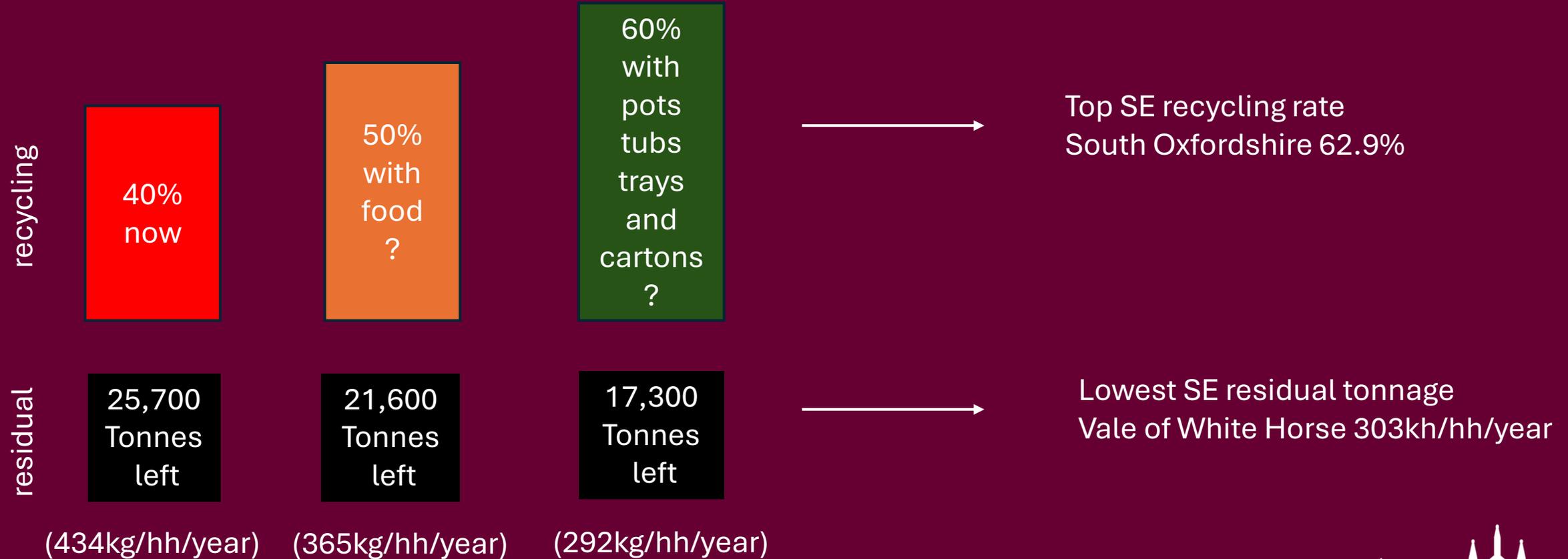
£2.5 million for Winchester

£20-30 million across Hampshire?

Behaviour change needed....



What does behaviour change look like?



How do we prepare the communities of Winchester for the changes?

Members views on

Behavior campaign tailored from residents feedback on

- how they want to recycle, and
- how we improve our rates.



How do we prepare the communities of Winchester for the changes ?

Members views on

- how we build meaningful engagement to inform decisions about how Winchester delivers.



How do we prepare the communities of Winchester for the changes ?

Members views on

- How we engage with businesses on changes in the waste sector that have impact on them



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