



Biodiversity Duty Report

Newcastle-under-Lyme
Borough Council

December 2025



NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Biodiversity Duty Report

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Introduction & Background

Newcastle-under-Lyme borough Council is dedicated to the restoration and conservation of our local natural environment, from the ancient woodlands to the



diverse brooks and lakes in the borough. Through the Sustainable Environment Strategy & Delivery Plan the Council have made great strides with all services involved to nurture the local natural environment to grow and thrive, alongside the appreciation of local communities. This Biodiversity Duty Report details the Council's achievements and goals in creating a healthier natural environment in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough with input from services across the Council's responsibility.

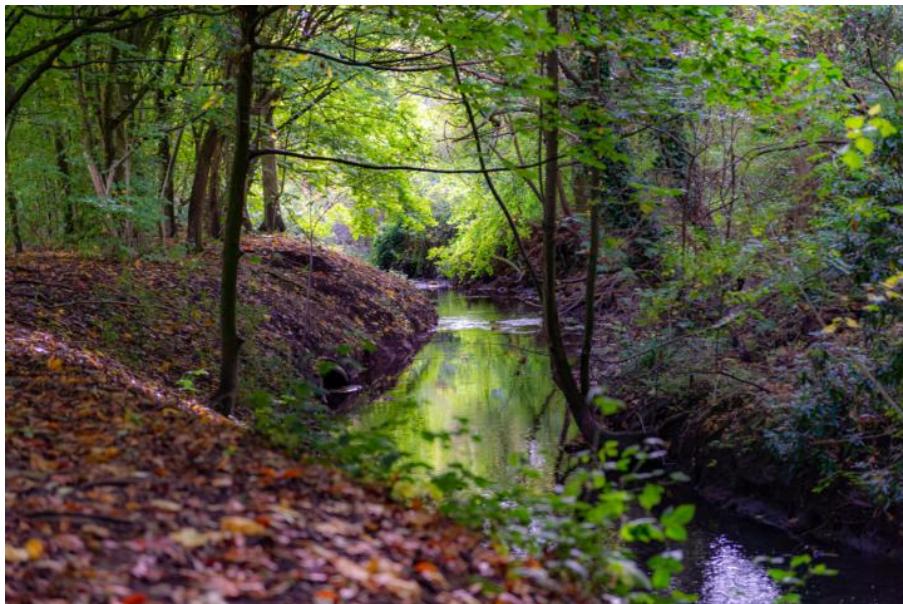


Figure 1. Photo of the Lyme Brook by Chris Hollingworth – Cemeteries Supervisor

Governance

This report will be developed and published by the 1st of January 2026 with guidance from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). After this, the end date of each reporting period will be within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period.

The Council will include the start and end dates of the reporting period in each report.

The Council will publish all reports within 12 weeks of the reporting period's end date.

This report relates to action NS13 in the SESDP. The actions outlined in this report are available in the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery plan - [A net-zero Newcastle – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)

Section 1 – Policies, Objectives & Actions

The actions seen below have been taken from various sections of the Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan has a bespoke section for natural environment and sequestration actions however many natural environment actions are also embedded in service level delivery plans which have also been included below.

The Council has the main aim to "Promote the natural environment in the borough to increase biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and storage." This aim is reflected by the actions below that the Council has set itself to achieve by various different deadlines. Actions in red have not been progressed yet, actions in yellow are progressing and finally those in green have been completed.

Natural Environment & Sequestration Delivery Plan

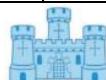
To ensure the borough is resilient against climate, storing carbon, beautiful and biodiverse we must focus on the promotion of the natural environment. Our natural environment keeps the borough healthy and stable. Without it, pollution would be worse, food systems would be unable to produce, and we wouldn't be able to enjoy great natural spaces that support our wellbeing. This delivery plan focuses on the natural environment and sequestering carbon to help create a net zero borough by 2050 and keep our borough safe and healthy.

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
NS1	To develop Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough into a natural rich area that is biodiverse and resilient.	By creating a biodiverse and resilient borough there are a relative amount of social, economic and environmental positive impacts that are seen.	Streetscene, Planning, Landscaping & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2050	To be identified through consultation	
NS2	To develop and adopt a long-term forestry and tree management plan for Council owned resources.	This strategy would aim to develop more woodlands in the borough and ensure their quality support and survival.	Streetscene, Planning, Landscaping & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2026	To be identified through consultation	A tree risk management plan and biodiversity plan has been adopted which will need to be embedded in a long-term plan.
NS3	To decarbonise the borough's	The land use operations in the borough	Streetscene, Planning, Landscaping	To be identified	2050	To be identified	

	land use operations.	contribute significantly to our emissions - through the release of carbon from the soil and natural resources when constructed on - and should be decarbonised to reduce emissions and protect biodiversity by 2050.	& Sustainable Environment	through consultation		through consultation	
NS4	To develop a consultation on the borough's land use to develop actions for 2050.	Upon consultation the Council can then decide what actions best decarbonise our current land use operations.	Streetscene, Planning, Landscaping & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	
NS5	To partner with the County- wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy and deliver their objectives.	By adhering to the County's LNRS actions and strategy the Council can embed those actions in this plan and enact them.	Streetscene, Planning, Landscaping & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	The Council is awaiting an update from the Staffordshire LNRS group regarding their strategy and related actions.
NS6	To work with the County Council, District Councils and the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to commission the creation of a carbon sequestration and storage tool for natural resources.	This tool, once developed by a consultant would be used to generate the amount of carbon different natural resources sequester and store.	Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2026	To be identified through consultation	Consultants are currently being chosen for the development of this action. The Council have decided to not pursue this project due to the cost and interest from other local authorities (28/05/25).
NS7	To partner with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and other natural environment experts in Staffordshire to deliver this plan.	This action is to ensure all action relating to the natural environment is well informed and is backed by local experts.	Planning	To be identified through consultation	2024 - ongoing	To be identified through consultation	
NS8	To partner with the County Council to ensure out-of-boundary	Out-of-boundary waste such as fly-tipping from other districts or waste water from sewage or	Procurement & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	



	waste and wastewater is contained to outside the borough or treated upon entry.	industry can negatively impact the natural environment significantly.					
NS9	To adopt and deliver a Grassland Management Strategy	This action will promote the development of more long meadows in green spaces in the borough to increase biodiversity and sequestration.	Sustainable Environment & Streetscene	No associated cost The Council aims to reinvest savings from reduced mowing into high priority land management jobs.	April 2024	Sequestration of developed grasslands will be mapped once a tool is available and consulted on.	A Grassland Management Strategy has been adopted by Cabinet April 2024. The Strategy will be implemented through 3 phases detailed here Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 23rd April, 2024, 2.00 pm – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) . Phase 1 has been delivered, phase 2 and 3 will be delivered subsequently. Phase 2 discovered positives in engagement, resource efficiency, biodiversity and sequestration. Phase 3 has been approved (28/05/25).
NS10	To partner with Transforming the Trent Valley in restoring Lyme and Park Brook.	Transforming the Trent Valley is a project facilitated by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to restore and protect the Trent valleys watershed.	Sustainable Environment, Regeneration, Streetscene, & Landscape	To be identified through consultation	December 2030	No associated carbon savings	Currently creating a Cabinet Report to begin delivering this action and sign Terms of Reference (30/08/24).
NS11	To continue the regeneration of the borough's tree stock through	By planting more trees in the borough and increasing the stock the Council can create a	Landscape & Community Team	£161,382.72 spent to date	July 2021 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	The 6 th Phase of the Urban Tree Planting Strategy has just been developed and



	the Borough Tree Planting Strategy.	more resilient, biodiverse and healthy borough.					delivered. Over 20,000 trees have been planted since July 2021 (29/05/25).
NS12	To ensure 30% of borough land is managed for nature by 2030.	This is alongside the government's goal for delivering 30by30 . This will include a mapping of the borough and potential collaboration with local organisations.	Landscape, Planning, Property and Sustainable Environment	All natural environment associated costs.	December 2030	To be identified through consultation	
NS13	To complete the Council's Biodiversity Report Duty alongside government guidance.		Sustainable Environment, Planning, Landscaping & Community, Streetscene and Property.	N/A	January 1 st 2026 – Every 5 years	N/A	First Biodiversity Duty Report being developed (30.09.2025).

Figure 2. Natural Environment & Sequestration Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
Museum							
CDM2	To introduce a sustainability related activity annually at the Museum.	This will help introduce sustainability to visitors and residents to support sustainable behaviour change and awareness.	Museum	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	A wildlife walk has been created at the Brampton for visitors (29.05.25).

Figure 3. Natural Environment Actions from the Commercial Delivery Service Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
Housing							
RGH4	To develop and maintain the	Not only does this help the environment	Housing	To be identified	To be identified	To be identified	



	Thistleberry Allotment Site in Clayton with vulnerable residents of the borough as volunteers.	through a more managed natural site but the volunteering opportunity promotes good health and wellbeing to vulnerable residents who may volunteer.		through consultation	through consultation	through consultation	
Licensing							
RGL2	To engage businesses in the borough in sustainable action during routine visits.	The team support and regulate local businesses for licenses. These visits can be used to also share information regarding business sustainability. This relates to action BE507 & TT501.	Licensing and Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	July 2025 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Visits are regular every year. A webpage will be created for businesses to engage with (23/09/24). The Council has developed a Business Sustainability Guide for local businesses to use to help their sustainable journeys (28/05/25).

Figure 4. Natural Environment Actions from the Regulatory Services Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
ND1	To create a paperless service through digital mobile working.	Currently the service is responsible for a large amount of paper usage especially with enforcement, by reducing paper consumption and going digital the service can reduce emissions and it's impact on deforestation.	Neighbourhood Delivery, It & Digital, and Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2026	To be identified through consultation	The MMF Team are in consultation with DEFRA to provide a paperless animal enforcement service (25/07/24).
Customer Hub							

NDCH1	To raise awareness of sustainable initiatives to customers.	By being trained on the SESDP and knowing about different initiatives when engaging with customers, staff can make them aware about different opportunities.	Customer Hub & Sustainable Environment To be identified through consultation	2025	To be identified through consultation		
NDCH2	To drive forward a paperless letter service.	Around 64,000 letters are sent out every year and will emit around 1,728kgCO2e from just the transportation and distribution of this mail (Production of letters not included) and could save around £51,302.59 per financial year by going digital. The greenhouse gas emissions released by the Council's mail in 2024 is equivalent to driving an average small car for around 7,707 miles .	Customer Hub, Digital & IT, Sustainable Environment To be identified through consultation	2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Legislation currently constrains the service becoming completely paperless, the Council will endeavour to reduce their letter use as much as possible.	
Community							
NDLC1	Conduct monthly sustainability community outreach events.	Ensuring that our teams are out engaging the public in sustainability through events, activities and more!	Community & Sustainable Environment To be identified through consultation	2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Currently the Community Team lead weekly events with schools and organisations such as litter picks and gardening sessions.	



						Currently the Sustainable Environment Team lead school visits and awareness stalls about sustainability and waste.	
Landscaping							
NDLC2	To increase the amount and diversity of tree planting in the borough.	By using expertise from internal staff and external organisations the Council can plant more diverse tree species which can help local biodiversity and increase growth and carbon capture.	Landscaping & Sustainable Environment To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	The Council grows a variety of different tree species and have started to diversify singular site plantations. The Borough Tree Planting Strategy Phase 6 is out for consultation (30/08/2024). The strategy was delivered with now over 20,000 trees planted since 2021 (29/05/25).	
NDLC3	To support the partnership with the County-wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy and deliver their objectives.	More details are located in the Natural Environment & Sequestration Delivery Plan (Action Code NS5).	Landscaping & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	
MMFT							
NDMMF 1	Conduct environmental	By facilitating more	MMFT	To be identified	To be identified	Currently engaging	



	law outreach campaigns to raise local awareness.	outreach through events and communications with the public one environmental law we can raise awareness on how people can promote the environment instead do harm which can also reduce enforcement of these laws.	To be identified through consultation	through consultation	through consultation	residents through social media (NBC Green Team).	
Town Centres & Markets							
NDTCM 1	To deliver a program of sustainable markets including vegan and makers/artisan markets.	By delivering more sustainable markets the Council can encourage local and sustainable commerce with local businesses and residents, reducing our borough carbon footprint.	Town Centres & Markets	2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	The team is currently delivering this action.	
NDTCM 2	To embed sustainability in all current and future events programmes through the creation of a Sustainability Events Checklist.	This includes all markets, festivals and broader events the team are responsible for to ensure they have sustainability embedded in how they run and what they offer.	Town Centres & Markets, & Sustainable Environment	December 2024	To be identified through consultation	The team are currently designing a checklist for the Council and externals to use (25/07/24). A sustainable events guide has been sent to all partner event organisations including the BID and market stalls. It is available online here -	



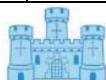
						Event organisers' toolkit – Newcastle -under- Lyme Borough Council (29/05/25).	
NDTCM 3	To digitise the markets and events booking system.	By digitising the markets and events booking system this would relieve the use of paper and travel for the current system.	Tow Centres & Markets	July 2025	To be identified through consultation	The team are currently working towards this goal however have hit barriers in software needed (25/07/24).	

Figure 5. Natural Environment Actions from the Neighbourhood Delivery Service Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
Recycling & Waste							
SERW 5	To deliver the decoupling of the garden waste service.		Recycling & Waste	To be identified through consultation	2025	To be identified through consultation	Purchase order raised for rooting to start in March (05/02/25).
Sustainable Environment							
SE1	Report the Council's and borough's carbon emissions, annually.	This allows the Council to be transparent about its emissions and develop actions to reduce significant areas of emissions through data analysis.	Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	June 2024 - Ongoing	Carbon saved from this action will be delivered through the actions that come from annual reports.	2023/2024 financial year finalised (30/05/25).
SE2	Facilitate the development of the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan.	The service will be responsible for ensuring the development and facilitation of the SESDP until 2050.	Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	June 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	

SE3	Facilitate the development of the Sustainable Environment Working Groups.	The service will be responsible for ensuring the development and facilitation of the Sustainable Environment Working Groups until 2050.	Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	June 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	All working groups for all services have been created and are ready to begin delivering the SESDP (30/05/25).
SE4	To facilitate the creation of an additional Sustainable Environment Officer focused on Sustainability.	By creating a larger Sustainable Environment Team the development of the SESDP can become more efficient.	Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2030	To be identified through consultation	
SE5	To train and certify all Council staff members and elected members (current and new) in Carbon Literacy, or something similar.	By training and certifying all members of staff and any new members of staff, the Council will have sustainability embedded in the entire organisation and staff will be well informed of the issues we face with climate change and how to solve it.	Sustainable Environment & People	£3,000 every 3 years and £10 per certified staff member.	June 2027	To be identified through consultation	The training has been sourced and the first training session will occur in June - July 2024. Over 100 staff have been trained (30/05/25).
SE6	To seek additional funding for the funding actions in the SESDP.	This includes funding from Salix, Central Government and other opportunities.	Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	June 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Have applied for Salix LCSF for feasibility studies on Knutton lane Depot, Bradwell Crematorium & Jubilee 2.

SE7	To adopt the Staffordshire County Adaptation Strategy	The County's Strategy covers the entire County and should be adopted by all district Councils. Find the Strategy here Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy	Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	December 2024	No associated carbon savings	The County's Adaptation Strategy has been created and now must be adopted by the Council.
SE8	To embed adaption into Council risk processes.	By creating an adaptation and resilience plan for the Council and borough, we can reduce the impact of climate change on our operations and on the public.	Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	April 2025	No associated carbon savings	A risk assessment has been created to inform the creation of an adaptation plan for the borough.
SE10	To create a high level "The Green One Council Meeting" to overlook all sustainable action and embed this in the current governance structure of the SESDP.	This includes members, leadership staff and relevant managers/office rs to direct sustainable action at the Council	Sustainable Environment	N/A	January 2025	N/A	First meeting was the 6 th of November 2024 and will soon be discussed about its purpose in the governance system (07/11/2024). The Meeting has been embedded in the SESDP Governance Structure.
SE11	Embed sustainability into every single service through working groups.	This is a monthly meeting with every service director and their managers to discuss and deliver action.	Sustainable Environment	N/A	April 2025	N/A	Completed, all services now facilitating meeting s



							(03/06/2025).
SE12	To engage staff in behaviour changing campaigns.	By engaging with staff on how to use transport and buildings more sustainably the Council can reduce its emissions.	Sustainable Environment	N/A	Ongoing	N/A	Behaviour Change surveys have been conducted with all services and offices of work (26/11/25).
Streetscene							
SES2	Deliver the Grassland Management Strategy (Action Code NS9).	More detail is located in the Natural Environment & Sequestration Delivery Plan.	Streetscene & Sustainable Environment				Phase 1 has been delivered, Phase 2 & 3 are yet to be complete (30/08/24). Phase 2 and 3 have been adopted (30/05/25).
SES3	To develop and deliver a long-term forestry and tree management plan for Council owned resources (Action Code NS2).	More detail is located in the Natural Environment & Sequestration Delivery Plan.	Streetscene & Sustainable Environment				A tree risk management plan has been adopted (30/05/25).
SES4	To develop an efficient litter bin collection service.	This will allow for bins to be collected more efficiently and be placed in better areas to enhance the Council's litter capture and reduce energy use by fleet vehicles.	Streetscene	No associated cost	2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	A system of litter bin collections and placement has been developed and continues to run an efficient service.
SES5	To work with local institutions and	This will allow for the Council to see the	Streetscene & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	October 2025	To be identified through consultation	This project begins

	research the biodiversity of local churchyards with reduced mowing regimes.	impacts on the natural environment from a reduced mowing regime					on June 1 st 2025 (30/05/25).
SES6	To reduce the use of harmful weed killer (Glyphosate) by as much as possible.	Areas that may not be able to reduce use in the borough are hard to reach, in the town or in other unique places until a better alternative is identified.	Streetscene & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	September 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Streetscene are currently removing the use of glyphosate in areas that spraying is no longer needed (30/08/24).
SES7	To implement perennial planting schemes where there are bedding plants currently being transitioned seasonally.	By using perennial plants instead of bedding plants, the Council will save resources as well as be able to create more biodiverse environments in the borough.	Streetscene & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	September 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Streetscene have introduced perennial schemes at Queens Gardens, Bradwell Crematorium/Cemetery and other sites (29/05/25).
SES8	To reduce the use of peat in sourced soil for planting schemes where possible.	Where peat cannot be reduced, this will be due to lack of product on the market or small amounts of peat in sourced soil.	Streetscene & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	June 2025 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Streetscene are currently sourcing mostly peat free soil where possible (23/06/25).

Figure 6. Natural Environment Actions from the Sustainable Environment Services Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
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TS1	To transition the Council to a completely digital system and to paperless. All service level paperless actions are located in their own Service Delivery Plans.	This would aid in reducing emissions and biodiversity loss. This includes supporting the elections team becoming paperless (see Legal & Governance Service Delivery Plan)	Technology Services	To be identified through consultation	2030	To be identified through consultation	The Council has begun to go paperless and digital especially through the use of more digital software such as Sharepoint.
TS2	Ensure that the Council uses digital software and hardware suppliers that are ethical and sustainable.	This will be included in the Sustainable Procurement Strategy however will need to be highly focused to ensure all digital services staff use align with our ambitions.	Technology Services, Procurement & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	The Council uses an IT recycling service which is certified.
TS3	Calculate the annual emissions from paper and cloud energy use.	By calculating the carbon emissions of annual paper usage, the Council can understand and review the solutions.	Technology Services & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	This has been done and included for the next carbon footprint (30/05/25).
TS4	Facilitate the migration to cloud services.	By migrating Council services to the cloud, the Council can digitise much of its paper resources and reduce its data centre footprint.	Technology Services	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	

Figure 7. Natural Environment Actions from the Technology Services Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
LGS1	Reduce documentation transport and storage through digitisation.	The Council stores many important documents that sometimes need transportation to and from sites if they are paper copies which can contribute to carbon emissions from transport and energy used in the storage facility.	Legal & Governance	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	Working with Oasis to digitise this process (30/05/25).
Electoral Registration & Elections							
LGEE 1	To work towards paperless and digital elections.	Under legislative requirements the Council is required to send a paper version of a poll card, an invitation to register or an absent vote paper application form. The Council will work in	Electoral Registration, Elections & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	To be identified through consultation	Begin investigation on elections carbon footprint (14/02/25).



	other areas of elections to become paperless.						
Information & Governance							
LGIS1	To make Information & Governance Data Protection, FOI, Land Charges, and Complaints Paperless.	These processes contribute to a significant amount of paper which can be detrimental to natural resource use and carbon emissions.	Information & Governance	To be identified through consultation	2024	To be identified through consultation	All relevant processes are now paperless.
LGIS2	To digitise the corporate post service.	Posting items can increase local emissions through the transport and production of post.	Information & Governance & Technology Services	To be identified through consultation	2030	To be identified through consultation	Work in progress (14.02.25).
Contracts, Procurement, Insurance & Risk							
LGCP 1	To create a sustainable and ethical procurement strategy for Council suppliers, contractors and partners.	To ensure the Council reduces all its emissions including scope 3. the organisation must set standards for the organisations/services it uses. This includes the net zero and natural environment ambitions of externals, their production and extraction and their workers' rights standards. This will include all suppliers of the Council to have some sort of ambition to become net zero by 2030, promote the natural environment by 2050, and be an ethical employer.	Contracts, Procurement, Insurance, Risk & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2027	To be identified through consultation	The Council are currently researching best case studies and are developing a strategy (17/12/24).
LGCP 2	To create a sustainability implications template.	For the team to create a template that can weigh the implications of different policies and actions on the sustainability of the Council and borough.	Contracts, Procurement, Insurance, Risk, Policy & Strategy, & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2026	To be identified through consultation	
LGCP 3	To use DocuSign to reduce the use of paper Council wide.	By using DocuSign the Council won't have to use physical documents and have them sent to be printed and signed by staff.	Contracts, Procurement, Insurance, Risk	To be identified through consultation	December 2024	To be identified through consultation	DocuSign has been implemented and is being used by the Council (17/12/24).
Legal							
LGL1	To make all Legal procedures paperless.	The production and transportation of paper contributes to natural resources use and carbon emissions.	Legal	To be identified through consultation	2030	To be identified through consultation	
Committee							



LGC1	To make all Committee procedures paperless.	The production and transportation of paper contributes to natural resources use and carbon emissions.	Committee	To be identified through consultation	2030	To be identified through consultation	
LGC2	Provide Digital Literacy Training to all current and future members.	By providing digital literacy training to members, member meetings can be made digital and remove the use of paper.	Committee	To be identified through consultation	2030	To be identified through consultation	This was attempted in the past however without extensive training so was not successful (17/12/24)

Figure 8. Natural Environment Actions from the Legal & governance Service Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
People & OD							
SP1	To implement an updated compulsory sustainability training session for all current and new staff members at the Council to do every 3 years.	By implementing compulsory sustainability training for all staff we will be able to ensure all new and current staff have the knowledge to engage with sustainable initiatives and drive them forward.	People & Sustainable Environment	~£1,000 annually	July 2024 - Ongoing	Associated carbon with staff changing behaviours.	A new sustainability training module will be published soon alongside a new training service for staff. A new sustainability module has been introduced for all staff online and will be introduced in-person (31/07/24).
SP4	To continue to seek Gold Thrive accreditation and complete Thrive sustainable initiatives.	Thrive lead an accredited awarding scheme for local authorities that also focuses on sustainability.	People & OD	To be identified through consultation	2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Working on silver with Thrive, need to appoint a travel plan champion, TGN appointed (16.10.24).
SP5	To create a employee sustainability incentive scheme including an annual sustainability award for a service, team and individual.	By creating an incentive staff may change their behaviours more often to achieve these awards.	People & Sustainable Environment	~ £100 annually	April 2025	To be identified through consultation	

Communications & Marketing							
SCM1	To support the creation of new social media networks for the Environment and Sustainability	By creating new social media such as Instagram and Facebook for our Streetscene and Sustainable Environment Services to engage different and new audiences in the borough.	Communications, Marketing & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	September 2024	To be identified through consultation	A new Instagram and Facebook page are ready to publish when the SESDP is adopted. An E&S Facebook page has been created Facebook (31/07/24).
SCM2	To share and publicise sustainable opportunities and social posts on corporate messages.	By sharing different sustainable initiatives on corporate pages when needed more of the public can engage with the subject.	Communications, Marketing & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	July 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Corporate communications have begun to share sustainable initiatives with the public.
SCM3	To internally share sustainable themes for all internal communications including Connexus and Castle News.	By sharing sustainable themes in internal communications staff can learn more about sustainability and get involved.	Communications, Marketing & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	July 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	Internal communications have begun to always include sustainable themes.
Policy & Strategy							
SPS1	To include regular updates on the SESDP in Castle News.	By including regular updates of the SESDP in Castle News staff can stay in the loop and shout out about successes.	Policy & Strategy, & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	August 2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	
SPS2	To develop and use PowerBi dashboards in mapping sustainability related data.	This includes data like emissions from the Council so teams can identify next steps and actions for delivery as well as progress to date.	Policy & Strategy, and Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	September 2024	No associated carbon savings	Dashboard currently in development
SPS3	To integrate the SESDP into service planning and Cabinet Reporting through PDPs and reports.	Embed the Delivery Plan through integration into the council's service planning framework.	Policy & Strategy, and Sustainable Environment	No associated cost	March 2025	No associated carbon savings	Current PDPs already include section on sustainability. Both Done (16/10/24).
Commercial Delivery (SPP)							
SCD1	To capture the sustainable benefits of commercial initiatives and actively seek to improve sustainability in the borough through	This will be through the initial phase of assessments undertaken when evaluating a commercial action which also includes cost, time etc.	Commercial Delivery & Sustainable Environment	No associated cost, however there are associated monetary savings.	April 2025	Carbon savings made with service efficiencies	Identified mileage savings for Streetscene litter diesel vans which saved 2,754.576 kg CO2e per year (15/10/24).

	<p>commercial delivery.</p> <p>This includes the creation of a sustainability priority policy to evaluate actions based on their commercial and environmental impacts.</p>						<p>Identified areas of transition from paper mail to email for invoices, such as for contaminations, bereavement care at 0.21 tCO2e. Currently working towards digitising Council Tax paper mail which would save 0.22 tCO2e. (15/10/24).</p> <p>Currently working with Streetscene to optimise diesel/HVO street sweeper routes to reduce mileage and emissions (15/10/24).</p> <p>Looking to identify any positive carbon actions (15/10/24).</p>
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Figure 9. Natural Environment Actions from the Strategy, People & Performance Service Delivery Plan

Action Code	Action	Summary	Lead Service(s)	Cost (£)	Achievement Date	Carbon Saved (tCO2e)	Progress
Planning Policy							
PPP1	To implement a 10% Biodiversity Net-Gain (BNG) Policy for new developments in the new Local Plan.	Certain new developments in the borough will have to have 10% Biodiversity Net-Gain according to new Government legislation.	Planning & Sustainable Environment	To be identified through consultation	2024	To be identified through consultation	Local Plan is soon to be adopted with this policy included. Planning are currently working with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) on BNG.

PPP2	To partner with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and other natural environment experts in Staffordshire on Local Planning for the Natural Environment.	This action is to ensure all action relating to the natural environment is well informed and is backed by local experts.	Planning	To be identified through consultation	2025	To be identified through consultation	
PPP3	To adopt a new Local Plan that includes sustainable initiatives such as BNG.	The Local Plan can have a large impact on the local area and has included policy regarding biodiversity and more sustainable built environments.	Planning	To be identified through consultation	2024	To be identified through consultation	Local Plan is soon to be adopted with sustainable initiatives included.
Development Management							
PDM1	To ensure all new developments adhere to national environmental health, sustainable development and BNG regulations.	This action will be ongoing till 2050 as new regulations develop.	Planning	To be identified through consultation	2024 - Ongoing	To be identified through consultation	The Council currently ensure new developments are as sustainable as they can be and are up to national regulations.

Figure 10. Natural Environment Actions from the Planning Service Delivery Plan

Section 2 – Future Actions

Most future actions are included in section 1 which portrays the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan and its actions relating to the natural environment and biodiversity. Future actions the Council will be putting more focus on includes:

- Adaptation in the Borough through natural environment actions. This also includes embedding adaptation into current risk assessments and business continuity plans.
- Continuation of the current strategies surrounding the natural environment such as the Grassland Management Strategy, Urban Tree Planting Strategy, Long-Term Tree Strategy and BNG.
- To embed the County's LNRS into NuLBC's Strategy and deliver actions identified in the LNRS.
- To begin consultation on 30/30 in the Borough.

Section 3 – Biodiversity Net-Gain

The Council has been undertaking BNG for planning applications since the legislation applied from February 2024. The Council has received 269 applications since 01 April 2025 of which BNG exemptions apply on 232 applications. The different applications are detailed below:

- 46 De Minimus
- 132 Householder Development
- 8 Planning application submitted before BNG
- 14 Retrospective Planning Permission
- 15 Self build/Custom development
- 17 Temporary exemptions (non major)

Section 4 – Information Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is composed of roughly 450 staff with 8 different services. The Council facilitates public facing services including planning, streetscene, recycling & waste, enforcement, customer hub, environmental services, regeneration, housing, cost-of-living and much more. The Council is currently focused on 4 main values, shown below:

- One Council delivering for local people
- A successful and sustainable growing borough
- Healthy, active, and safe communities
- Town centres for all

At Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council the governance and management structure starts with the Chief Executive at the top of the structure followed by the Deputy Chief Executive. The Deputy leads the Service Directors for Planning and Commercial Delivery who then led their various managers and teams. The Chief Executive line manages the Service Directors for Strategy, People & Performance, Regulatory Services, Legal & Governance, Neighborhood Delivery, Sustainable Environment, Finance and IT & Digital.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council can affect the local biodiversity of the borough both positively and negatively. The Council aims to only impact the natural environment positively through everything that the Council undertakes in all services.

The Council maintains a large expanse of land in the Borough with the most important being our green spaces such as Lyme Valley Park, Bathpool Park, Brampton Park, Clough Hall Park, and Wolstanton Park. Many of these sites are and will be protected as carbon capture and Fields in Trust sites. The Council's Planning service now ensures alongside government legislation that all applicable planning applications and developments have BNG embedded to ensure sites are enhanced for the natural environment. The Council not only advise residents and businesses on natural environment decisions especially in conservation or protected areas but also advise all services on natural environment actions ensuring the Council's impact is minimal on biodiversity. This is done through monthly service working groups conducted through the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan where service leadership meets with the Sustainable Environment Team to discuss actions and embed sustainability.

The Council raises environmental awareness with the community through many different venues including social media, webpages, and in person engagements. In person, engagements include school visits, events in the town, community center visits, and consultations. During these engagements the Council will share key information on biodiversity projects, basic natural environmental information and consultations to inform Council about action. The Council aims to involve the public with everything that is undertaken with the natural environment from planning developments to new projects that are biodiversity facing, like the grassland management strategy. For example with the Grassland Management Strategy during phase 2 the public opinion was captured through the official comments procedure, social media and in person conversations to review where grasslands should be and where they may be invasive to the public and return to usual mowing regimes.

The Council's operations directly affect the local environment especially when it comes to decisions regarding planning, borough maintenance and enforcement. By enforcing environmental legislation the Council can help remove ground pollution and inform the public how to protect the natural environment. The borough maintenance the Council provides aims to help nature flourish especially through the Council's Urban Tree Planting Strategy, Long Term Tree Risk Management Plan, Grassland Management Strategy, Natural Environment & Sequestration Delivery Plan and Sustainable Environment Delivery Plan which all protect different aspects of Council owned green spaces.

Section 5 – Top Achievements

As a local authority not only in the last year but since the adoption of the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan, the Council has been able to deliver valuable natural environment work for the recovery of the area's biodiversity. The plan has covered all natural environment actions to date since June 2024 and has allowed for the Council to rewild, recover natural environments and reduce the Council's impact on the local environment.

Current Achieved Actions

- Creating emissions reductions from HVO, Electric vehicles and Building Efficiency which reduces the Council's impact on the local environment in terms of climate impact and noise and air pollution.
- Securing of £2.8M for the decarbonisation of Jubilee 2 for ASHP and solar thermal which will reduce overall pollution and climate impacts to the local environment once delivered in 2028.
- The evolution of the Urban Tree Planting Strategy to cover the entire borough and continue planting 1,000s of trees has incredibly helped restore environments in the Borough.
- The Grassland Management Strategy now in its final and lasting phase has initiated the creation of 100s hectares of long grass in the Borough which has shown to increase pollinator and invertebrate species.
- The Long Term Tree Risk Management Strategy has allowed the Council to nurture and protect all NULBC owned trees which there are over 150,000 of them.
- The Council has started a Perennial Planting Scheme throughout spaces like Bradwell Cemetery and Queens Gardens to lower intensity of grounds maintenance and introduce pollinator friendly plant species year-round.
- Embedding BNG in the development planning process.
- The Sustainable Environment Strategy & Delivery Plan has helped achieve all of these actions and encompasses all future action as well.

Future Actions

- To embed the County's LNRS into NuLBC's Strategy and deliver actions identified in the LNRS.
- To embed adaptation into the Council's business continuity and risk management plans.
- To begin consultation on 30/30 in the Borough.
- To deliver Phase 7 of the Urban Tree Planting Strategy.

- The Council is seeking to protect 88 green spaces with the Fields in Trust charity.

Section 6 – Considering other Strategies

Local nature recovery protected sites and species, and conversation strategies have been taken into account through the Sustainable Environment Strategy & Delivery Plan influencing certain actions of the Council especially when it comes to protected sites, however most of these sites sit with the County or Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Protected sites and species in the Council's ownership are under environmental protection and receive priority of care from staff such as tree surveyors and ecologists.

To further this work the Council is working with the County and districts on the County wide LNRS which will strengthen local protections for sites and species. The new LNRS, hopefully adopted in the New Year (2026), will be adopted within the Council's SESDP. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has also advised the Council on natural environmental actions allowing for additional expert input, especially on BNG, 30/30 and other actions. Finally, the Council is working as part of the Transforming the Trent Headwaters project to recover and conserve the Borough's local waterways, this partnership can be found here [Transforming the Trent Valley.](#)

Section 7 - How NuLBC's Policies, Objectives & Actions have helped the Environment

The Council has conducted many biodiversity projects that have helped to conserve, restore and enhance species populations and habitats. One such example is the Grassland Management Strategy where the Council grew and studied long grass throughout 11 sites of bereavement. Keele University supplied 1 student researcher to look at invertebrate and pollinator populations in long grass compared to well-maintained grass on each site. They concluded that the long grassland supported higher numbers and biodiversity of invertebrate and pollinator species.

The Council's work in rewilding through perennial planting in green spaces and tree planting has both helped enhance local environments and support the growth of local species. However, also has engaged the local community by involving them in planting. This includes schools, businesses, members, and community groups facilitated by the community team through Britain in Bloom.

The Council has both been involved in the LNRS and a Staffordshire Wildlife Project with the national Lottery looking at the recovery of the Trent Headwaters which involved the restoration of the Lyme Brook in the Borough. Both of these long-term projects will help with the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the Borough.

The destruction of local biodiversity and wildlife is due both to the extreme weather caused by Climate Change and new developments, especially housing. The Council recognises these impacts and is significantly reducing emissions to combat climate impacts and is working with planning to ensure the protection of green space from new housing developments, especially with the introduction of BNG.

Overall, the Council has positively impacted the local natural environment; this work will continue to expand with the development of the LNRS which will be embedded into the Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Section 8 – Raising Awareness & Educating the Community

The Council raise awareness and advise on biodiversity in the community in many different ways. In terms of raising awareness the Council facilitate multiple activities internally and externally to educate people on the natural environment, this includes:

- Delivering Carbon Literacy Training or something similar for all staff to learn more about natural impact and recovery. This training has also been started for businesses in the local area through SBEN, Carbon Literacy UK and GIKI.
- Sharing environmental stories and running campaigns such as No Mow on social media for residents to engage with available here - [Facebook](#)
- Sharing everything the Council is doing on the natural environment through the sustainability webpages available here - [Sustainability – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)
- Finally, the Council conduct occasional visits to schools with businesses and residents to raise awareness of the surrounding the natural environment. This is done through stalls, business events, school presentations, enforcement, and community events.

The Council advises on how to conserve and enhance biodiversity through multiple different networks including:

- Using BNG in Planned Developments as well as advising on certain planning applications when there is impact on the natural environment and conservation are constraints, such as protecting TPO trees.
- The Council enforces the Environment Act and advises residents and businesses on how best to care for the local environment, especially when it comes to land and water pollution.

- The Council advises residents on relevant natural environment actions through the webpage where there are lists of actions to advise residents and businesses on what they can do to help the local natural environment.
- Similarly the Council's social media also advises residents and businesses through educational posts that creates local understanding of what needs to be done to support local biodiversity growth.

Throughout all the activities listed, biodiversity and the natural environment are embedded in the information given to the audience present to ensure they have a good understanding of it and can put their knowledge into action. The Borough's Biodiversity Duty not only relies on the Council's aspirations for a more biodiverse borough but also from the public, which is why it's so important to undertake all of the neggamene twork listed in this section.

Section 9 – Action Monitoring & Evaluating

The Council aims to measure the impact of all its environmental actions. This is mostly done through the Council's available tools like EzyTreev and GIS which maps planted trees, their predicted carbon sequestration and health. In terms of studying grasslands, Keele University provided a Keele student to study the impacts of the long grasslands around the borough where they found positive impacts. Other Council projects have yet to be measured for impact mostly due to lack of ecological resources within the local authority to undertake the surveys needed for data collection and analysis. This is why the Council partners with Keele University and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for their ecological expertise and resources as it also adds value to their work where they study Council land in the Borough.

All strategies are adopted via senior leadership and elected members in partnership or with advice from local expert organisations like Keele or Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. These projects contribute to 30/30 national legislation and will be more aligned with the national aims on biodiversity once the authority adopts the County's LNRS. The Council does also conduct tree surveys and low-level ecological surveys for owned sites when creating new action for biodiversity. Through current surveys the Council haven't found any significant concerns other than ensuring new developments don't hinder biodiversity growth especially when implemented in green space.

Section 10 – Biodiversity Highlights & Challenges

The Council's main biodiversity highlights are included in section 5 and 8 with the most notable actions being the creation and delivery of the Grassland Management Strategy

and the hundreds of engagements with the public on the natural environment and biodiversity through social media, the website and in person engagements.

The main challenges the Council has faced when taking action on biodiversity comes down to the funding of these opportunities and the expertise available in ecology to understand best practice and impact of those actions. Funding has mostly come through partnership working such as the Trent Headwaters Project where there is a couple dozen partners being funded by the National Lottery. The Council itself has not had the opportunity to receive much funding externally but has internally funded projects such as tree planting, grassland, perennial planting and other sustainable grounds maintenance schemes. In term so of expertise the Council does have members of the Sustainable Environment Service who are ecologists and studied environmental science however the Council lacks the tools to capture biodiversity data and advise on all actions that may impact the natural environment in any way. To offset this, the Council engages with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Keele University for advice, expertise and data collection/analysis of biodiversity important sites/projects. Overall, there are significant challenge for a small district Council to implement biodiversity focused projects however through partnerships with external organisations and other authorities the Council has been able to develop important recovery work for local biodiversity needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Borough Council has made great efforts with current resources and opportunities to revitalise the natural environment in the Borough. However, there is so much work still to be done. The Council is in a great position especially with current funding from local organisations and the LNRS coming into force to create further action for local biodiversity. The Council will continue to push the natural environment to the top of the agenda for the health of local biodiversity, people, and air.



Figure 11. Photo of the Perennial Planting Scheme at Queens Gardens