

North Yorkshire Council

Environment Executive Members

22 April 2026

Biodiversity Duty Reporting

Report of the Assistant Director – Environment and Transport

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Executive Member approval to publish the Biodiversity Duty Report covering the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' which requires all public authorities in England to consider what action they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Act 2021 places a legal requirement on authorities, to report on biodiversity outcomes, including biodiversity net gain.
- 2.2 The attached report outlines our approach to protecting biodiversity and how we intend to meet our Biodiversity reporting duties. These duties contribute to both the interim and statutory Environment Act targets and commitments (Appendix A).
- 2.3 This report covers the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Subsequent reports must cover the next 5 years, and our next report will be published before 01 April 2030.
- 2.4 North Yorkshire Council intends to publish an annual report update (non-mandatory) as well as producing an interim review at year 3 (in 2028) to convey progress and to strengthen working relationships within the local authority.

3.0 SCOPE OF THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

- 3.1 The report covers the following aspects:
- North Yorkshire Council's biodiversity related policies, objectives and actions which will help the council meet its Biodiversity Duty.
 - What other biodiversity-led strategies, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, have been considered.
 - How North Yorkshire Council plans to fulfil the biodiversity duty over the 5 years following the end of this reporting period.
 - A summary of the actions North Yorkshire Council has taken to meet the biodiversity net gain obligations.
 - Details of biodiversity gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans.
 - A summary of how North Yorkshire Council plans to meet the biodiversity net gain obligations in the next reporting period.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

4.1 There has been engagement and liaison with several service areas across the Environment, Community Development and Health and Adult Services directorates at North Yorkshire Council.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1 The Biodiversity Duty reporting will contribute to the vision of the Council Plan (2024-2028) particularly in respect of building on our natural capital and supporting a good quality of life for all. The vision is underpinned by five ambitions and actions arising from Biodiversity Duty reporting will support place and environment by contributing to a clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit and by encouraging communities to work together to improve their local area. It will support economy by helping to reverse the decline in nature and in doing so, contribute to sustainable tourism. It will contribute to health and wellbeing by supporting people to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 We have been required to follow the Biodiversity Duty reporting statutory guidance set out by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and so no alternative options have been considered.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising directly as a result of the report. The work on Biodiversity Duty reporting is undertaken by professional roles funded by the Council's base budget.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Environment Act 2021 requires all local authorities in England to prepare and publish a Biodiversity Duty report every five years.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening was completed, and no equalities issues were raised (Appendix B).

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Supporting nature is one of the three pillars of the NYC Climate Change Strategy 2023-2030 and within that theme there are seven priorities. The Biodiversity Duty reporting supports those priorities and is therefore expected to have a positive outcome for Climate Change and Nature. Assessment available (Appendix C).

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 North Yorkshire Council has followed all the statutory guidance therefore authority to publish Biodiversity Duty report is recommended.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 To seek Executive Member approval to publish the Biodiversity Duty Report covering the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Biodiversity Duty Report

Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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