



Wyre Council Biodiversity Duty Report: 2025

September 2025

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Introduction

Wyre Council as the Local Planning Authority is under a legal obligation to act in accordance with the conservations and enhancement of biodiversity. This is known as the Biodiversity Duty and is established by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as amended by the Environment Act 2021.

Local planning authorities are required to consider what action they can properly take to further the biodiversity duty. Actions associated with Local Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net gain should be seen in this context. They are then required to report on this consideration where a local planning authority considers that there are actions that can be taken in furtherance of the biodiversity duty.

Wyre Council as the Local Planning Authority undertook its first consideration of the biodiversity duty on 1 January 2024 in a so-called “baseline” report. Please refer to the baseline report at <https://www.wyre.gov.uk/downloads/file/1871/biodiversity-duty-january-2024> for further background on the Duty and the baseline position.

As set out in the baseline report, it is intended to report against the Biodiversity Duty on an annual basis, with the base date 1 January each year. Each report will look back at the previous 12-month period and forward over the next five years. Each report will consider:

- Current policies, objectives and actions; and
- How local nature recovery strategies, protected site strategies and species conservation strategies have been taken into account.

The LPAs consideration is set out below.

Consideration	LPA Response
Relevant strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSS) • species conservation strategies • protected site strategies 	Species conservation strategies and protected site strategies have yet to be introduced by the government. The Lancashire LNRS is led by Lancashire County Council. Wyre Council has a formal role as part of the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Steering Group (as a supporting authority). Wyre Council officers have taken an active role in the development of the Lancashire LNRS. At the time of writing, Lancashire County Council are preparing a draft LNRS for public consultation.
National goals and targets	The LPA will be considering how the emerging review of the current Local Plan (2011-2031) will be informed by national policies including goals and targets. It is understood that the government are undertaking a review of the national Nature Improvement

Consideration	LPA Response
	Plan. This will be a key area of government guidance that the emerging Local Plan will need to consider.
WBC land estate	Although the LPA has no responsibility for the council's land estate, the council's Green Infrastructure Strategy supports the use of the council's own land for biodiversity benefits.
Forest of Bowland National Landscape	<p>The Forest of Bowland National Landscape covers an area of 803 square kilometres straddling six local authority boundaries. The Rivers Wyre, Brock and Calder originate in the upland core of the Bowland Fells. Wyre Local Plan Policy SP5 Forest of Bowland AONB provides the basis for determining planning applications within the National Landscape. It protects the character, appearance and setting of the National Landscape irrespective of whether the proposed development lies within or outside the designation. The policy remains consistent with the National Landscape Management Plan (formerly the AONB Management Plan). SP5 will be reviewed as part of the current review of the Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031). This will by necessity involve changing the policy name to reflect the new designation.</p>
Public and stakeholders	<p>Engagement with the public and stakeholders currently takes place through the local plan production process and the determination of planning applications.</p> <p>In summer 2024 the council undertook a wide-ranging public consultation on an Issues and Options document. This identified the natural environment as a valuable resource and recognised the potential negative impact of development pressures. Specific issues identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood risk • Green Belt (loss of) • Biodiversity Net Gain, local nature recovery and ecology • Green infrastructure.

Consideration	LPA Response
Internal policies and procedures	Officers' reports on planning applications for determination either by planning committee or by the Head of Planning under delegated powers refer to all material considerations including national and local policy. As a matter of course, Local Plan policies including those relating to biodiversity and the natural environment, are addressed as appropriate.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	<p>During early 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain became a legal requirement for many planning applications. Implementing BNG involved the Planning Policy team at Wyre Council in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing local guidance for applicants to provide assistance to those submitting planning applications. • Continuing with training for officers and Members. • Publishing template legal agreements. • Reviewing and updating the published guidance for applicants (above) in the light of local and national lessons learnt. <p>Implementing BNG will remain a significant element of the council's obligations under the Biodiversity Duty.</p>
Other – Wyre Local Plan and Development Management	<p>Local Plan The baseline report referred to earlier provides the background to the link between the local plan and the biodiversity duty. Over the last 12 months, the LPA has progressed an Issues and Options consultation (see above) including a Sustainability Appraisal document. Work on the Local Plan is on-going.</p> <p>Development Management Policy CDMP4 provides the statutory planning basis for assessing planning applications in terms of protecting important habitats and seeking habitat enhancements. There is</p>

Consideration	LPA Response
	greater awareness of the need for applications to include boundary treatments which contain wildlife access points (e.g. for hedgehogs).

How the LPA plans to comply with the biodiversity duty over the next five years

Over the next two to three years the LPA will be particularly focused on the review of the Local Plan and bringing the reviewed plan to adoption. This will involve both the development of the Local Plan evidence base and a review of the specific objectives and policies of the current Local Plan (2011-2031). Post adoption, the focus will be on implementing the policies of the reviewed Local Plan with monitoring to ensure that the policies contained therein are delivering the expected outcomes. Future editions of this report will provide more detail on the integration of matters relating to biodiversity into the Local Plan policies and objectives as the review progresses.

How the LPA plans to meet BNG in the next reporting period

The LPA will work with relevant stakeholders to apply statutory BNG in accordance with the legislation, regulations and national policy and guidance. In particular, the LPA will wish to ensure that the LNRS process and the Local Plan provide a complementary strategic view of biodiversity issues and the application of policy.

Conclusion

The LPA has reported on its consideration of current approaches to ensuring that the service is meeting the biodiversity duty.

Looking forward to 2027 and beyond, there are several key areas of focus:

- The Local Plan review;
- The continued implementation of mandatory BNG;
- The development of the Lancashire LNRS and integration into local planning policy and development management decisions;
- Embedding further changes to the national town planning system including national development management policies;
- Considering any implications arising from any government review of the Environmental Improvement Plan; and

- The integration into local planning policy and development management decisions of species conservation strategies and protected site strategies as and when progressed by the national government.