

Biodiversity Duty Report

Appendix 1

Table 1: Example Torbay Council Policies and Objectives and how their identified actions align with the Biodiversity Duty Requirements, and those actions that have been delivered between January 2024 and January 2026.

Policies & Objectives	Summary	Actions identified	Actions which have been delivered
Torbay Council Community and Corporate Plan 2023-2043	<p>Commits the Council “<i>to protect and enhance our natural environment</i>” and “<i>work in partnership to address the climate emergency and create a sustainable future</i>”</p> <p>This document recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing Torbay’s natural environment through the Council’s mission and approach.</p> <p>Wider corporate policy framework and other strategies (such as the Local Plan below) contributes to the delivery of the Corporate Plan and includes detailed actions.</p>	<p>Corporate Priority Protect and enhance our lived, built and natural environments, including our green spaces.</p>	<p>See below – actions to deliver improvements in the natural environment more specifically delivered through the strategies below.</p>
Torbay Council Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2026	<p>This Action Plan primarily focuses on what the Council will do reduce it’s own carbon dioxide emissions.</p> <p>It has been developed by many officers from across the Council, SWISCo and Torbay Harbour Authority, with support from members, and focusses</p>	<p>Install new streetlighting control system and full LED rollout to cut energy and carbon.</p> <p>Carry out whole-building decarbonisation assessments for 10 worst- performing- buildings.</p> <p>Introduce a new climate & environment impact assessment tool for all council construction project</p>	<p>Council have approved a new streetlighting control management system. Street lighting upgrades to LEDs to reduce energy use has been rolled out. The installation of a control management system and more energy efficient lighting will deliver significant carbon savings. Between 1st April 2019 – 31 March 2025 consumption reduced by 50% from</p>

	on the areas of the Council where most carbon emissions arise from. These include the operation of our estate, fleet and business travel. As a wholly owned company of the Council, who deliver a range of services for the Council, actions that relate to SWISCo are also included in this action plan.	Develop actions to reduce carbon from staff business travel, including replacing grey fleet use Refresh the Environment & Carbon Neutral Policy	4,912,041kwh to 2,437,007kwh. The reduction in energy consumption can be attributed partly to the replacement of over 60% of the council's streetlight inventory from Holophane lanterns to more energy efficient LED. This resulted in carbon emissions reducing from 903 tonnes to 505 tonnes, a 44% reduction. Purchase of three electric fleet vehicles.
<u>Torbay Council Environment and Carbon Neutral Policy</u>	Sets out how Torbay Council will change the way it works to minimise environmental impacts and achieve its climate commitments. It applies to all Council employees, SWISCo, and all commissioned services.	Reduce carbon emissions Protect and enhance the natural environment (embedding the NERC duty into corporate policy) Build climate resilience Measure and report progress	Policy adopted in 2023 and implemented from then onwards. All staff must support and deliver this policy wherever possible in their job roles. Line managers are expected to challenge their teams and individuals to ensure this policy is adhered to.
Greener Way For Our Bay (GWFOB) Framework 2024 - 2027	Forms Torbay's wider climate and nature recovery framework and GWFOB identifies <i>nature-based actions</i> among its ten priority areas for climate and nature recovery	Greener Way For Our Bay Framework sets out ten priority objectives. Of these, three directly relate to conserving and enhancing biodiversity, and two indirectly support biodiversity through climate adaptation and nature based- action.	New Draft Local Plan out for public consultation including net zero and climate resilient design and construction standards 10 climate related community engagement sessions to bolster awareness and more local action Range of climate action and support for schools including two new Miyawaki forests, three rainwater gardens and classroom activities. All of which also help reduce localized flooding
SWISCo Business Plan 2024-2029	Sets out the mission, objectives, and operational priorities for SWISCo as Torbay Council's wholly owned company	Commitment to maximising biodiversity and carbon sequestration opportunities (OB6) Biodiversity centred- Park Management Plans (PG1)	In 2024/25, SWISCo recycled over 700 tonnes of seaweed into compost for community use. Commercial recycling rose to 20.5%.

		Deliver an inclusive Green Infrastructure strategy. (Tree and woodland strategy and Open Spaces Strategy). (PG3)	SWISCo achieved EA permit compliance across all sites and advanced feasibility work on a new Waste Transfer Station, which will improve environmental compliance and expand reuse and recycling capacity. Reducing emissions through implementation of electric street sweepers and barrows. Secured council approval to implement dynamic LED street lighting.
Torbay Local Plan 2012 – 2030 (adopted)	Sets out the strategic planning framework for how Torbay will grow, change, and protect its natural and built environment up to 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect and enhance Torbay’s countryside, landscape and natural environment through designated areas (Countryside Areas, Urban Landscape Protection Areas, Undeveloped Coast). - Safeguard heritage and nature conservation, including Conservation Areas and European Protected Sites. - Allocate land for Country Parks and green infrastructure, supporting biodiversity and access to nature. - Manage development to minimise environmental damage and ensure resilience to climate change. 	Continued protection of designated Countryside Areas, Urban Landscape Protection Areas, and the Undeveloped Coast through development management decisions. Delivery of biodiversity-related planning obligations through the Local Plan’s evidence base (e.g., HRA requirements, mitigation for European Sites) Delivery of development which incorporates biodiversity enhancements, mitigation and provision of open spaces for public use. Support for nature conservation measures in identified sites including Berry Head & South Hams SAC (as part of Local Plan HRA updates)
Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2010	The Vision for Torbay’s Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan is: “To build a sustainable Torbay for the future that protects and enhances the health and beauty of our natural environment, serves the needs	The strategic aims of the Plan are to: Enhance biodiversity and landscape character; Improve economic prosperity and support regeneration of the Bay; Benefit people and create healthy communities; Adapt to climate change; Support a low carbon	Target BL15. Ensure biodiversity standards e.g. provision for urban biodiversity are set out in developer guidance and validation documents: Updated Planning department’s Local Validation List to require all development proposals to submit the “Torbay Wildlife and Geology Checklist”

	of local people and supports economic development”	economy; Safeguard ecosystem services	
Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Local Nature Recovery Strategy	A statutory strategy for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay required under the Environment Act 2021. It sets out local biodiversity priorities, a mapped network of important habitats, and agreed actions to support nature’s recovery across the whole county. Final publication expected in March 2026 .	Make space for wildlife everywhere: provide shelter, nesting sites and food Delight in the unruly! Reduce emissions and adapt to climate change Look after Devon’s soils Control invasive species Minimise light pollution Minimise pollution and biocides Minimise recreational disturbance and litter	Cabinet (17 th February 2026) provided consent for DCC to publish the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy	A county-wide strategy (covering Devon, Plymouth and Torbay) that sets out a long-term plan to protect, expand, improve and manage Devon’s trees, hedges and woodlands up to 2050.	Increase canopy cover by 4ha per year in Torbay to reach 2050 canopy cover target Expand, protect, improve and restore woodland habitats, including Devon’s temperate rainforest, orchards, hedgerows and ancient woodlands. Enhance woodland resilience to climate change (warmer, wetter winters; hotter, drier summers)	Strategy adopted region-wide—Torbay now working with partners to determine its specific contributions toward tree-cover expansion. Existing Torbay tree-planting programmes (e.g., via Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest, community planting schemes) already contributing towards the Strategy target of increasing tree cover.
Devon Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic approach	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory in England on 12 February 2024. BNG is a requirement under the Environment Act 2021, which amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It mandates that developers must leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development, with a	Cross boundary BNG working group to ensure consistency throughout Devon. Updates to internal processes and development management Identification of potential habitat creation opportunities	A dedicated BNG officer. Regular BNG group meetings. The Council contribute to a joint Devon-wide BNG guidance website for developers, landowners interested in providing BNG This guidance aligns with the Council’s updated validation checks. Officers received several training sessions since early 2024 covering legal frameworks, planning roles, and BNG metrics.

	minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value		To assist with the delivery of BNG conditions and support BNG delivery through development. Torbay Council is investigating the possibility of habitat banking on its land and looking at sites for their potential to provide offsite BNG units.
Municipal Waste / Resource Management Strategy (2020-2023) -out of date but still applicable	The Torbay Resources and Waste Strategy seeks to support a path towards carbon neutrality by 2050 and to consider the amount of embedded carbon in the materials that are collected for recycling and the environmental benefit of recycling.	<p>Prioritising waste prevention, reuse, and recycling, reducing ecological pressures</p> <p>Protecting the natural environment through improved waste systems Eliminating landfill impacts through Zero Waste to Landfill achievement</p> <p>Strengthening environmental enforcement to safeguard habitats</p> <p>Supporting climate mitigation Reducing pollution, littering, and fly tipping that harm wildlife</p> <p>Educating residents and businesses on sustainable behaviours</p>	Yearly increases in annual recycling rate (0.5% increase in 2024/25 compared to the previous year) and garden waste subscriptions
Torbay Port and Harbour Masterplan (addendum) 2019-2024	The Masterplan (2013) provides a longterm framework for the sustainable development and management of Tor Bay Harbour and the harbours at Brixham, Paignton and Torquay, informing future land use-, marine activity, and environmental stewardship.	<p>Ongoing efforts to minimise the impact of human activity on Tor Bay’s natural environment – while also allowing, where possible, for those activities to take place. The Harbour Authority have been closely involved in several Bay-wide initiatives to improve sustainability. Highlights environmental measures to ensure the Harbour Authority makes a</p>	Partnership working with marine stakeholders has supported local biodiversity initiatives, including eco-mooring and anchoring improvements (e.g., Advanced Mooring Systems deployed with partners in Torbay), reducing physical seabed damage. Sensitive Habitat Marker Buoys and Voluntary No-Anchor Zones implemented

	Port area includes environmental designations, supporting the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity	positive contribution to the environment and amenity, including sustainable harbour management. Commits to sustainable management of maritime activities, including fishing, eco-tourism, and marine businesses, which supports healthy ecosystems	in seagrass areas, protecting key marine habitats such as seagrass meadows and seahorse habitat.
Torbay Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2015	This LFRMS highlights the steps that are to be taken to improve knowledge of flood risk within Torbay, to work with other FRMA's and the public towards reducing the risks whilst aiming to balance the need of communities, the economy and the environment.	To take a more sustainable approach to flood risk management at a catchment level; considering natural land use management techniques, such as managing flood plains and restoring wetlands and upland woodlands. SuDs are also an opportunity to ensure that amenity and biodiversity are considered with the same importance as managing volumes of water	Implementation of the Torbay SUDS Design Guide suds-design-guide-version-20_sept22.pdf that support sustainable drainage methods that protect natural flow regimes and can provide a natural habitat for wildlife