

**Mansfield District Council**

# **Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report**

## **Mansfield District Council**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

March 2026



# Mansfield

## Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report Mansfield

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## Executive Summary

The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (EBD) was introduced under the Environment Act (2021). It requires all public authorities in England to consider how they can actively conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) requires all Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and Local Authorities to report and publish what actions they have taken during the reporting period, and plan to take over the next five years to meet the EBD. The first EBD report is due within 12 weeks from the 1st of January 2026 and will continue in five-year cycles.

The Mansfield District features numerous and diverse green spaces, of both national and local significance. Overall, MDC's designated site network is 990ha, covering 13% of the district. Designated sites include six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which cover 156 ha (2% of the district) and encapsulate some of the district's most important habitats including remnants of the ancient Royal Forest of Sherwood, lowland heathland, grassland and wetland. 16% of land within SSSIs is in favourable condition, below the national average of 35%. Ten Local Nature Reserves (LNR), covering 108 ha (1.4% of the district) and 81 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), covering 737 ha (9.6% of the district) provide further important ecological habitats and connectivity within the district. Tree canopy cover, a key asset for biodiversity, air quality and climate resilience, covers 1,391 ha, equivalent to 18% of the district, above the national target of 16.5%.

'Our Environment' is one of five key themes in the Mansfield District Council's (MDC) Corporate Plan entitled 'Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield'. MDC's Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038 and Procurement Strategy 2019 – 2023 all include aims, objectives and actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity. MDC's Local Plan 2013 – 2033 has a vision that 'natural assets in the district will have been protected and enhanced'. This vision is supported by strategic priorities, objectives and policies in the plan, which all relate to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. The Local Plan is supported by supplementary planning documents on Green Infrastructure (GI), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Across the Mansfield District, habitat creation and enhancement projects have improved biodiversity within both designated greenspaces and the public realm. Most notably, 7,000 trees have been planted since 2023 through the Trees for Climate project. Tree planting projects have included transforming a former landfill site at Mansfield Woodhouse into a woodland and creating several community orchards. MDC has prioritised nature-based solutions within urban areas. The council supported Severn Trent Water to install 343 SuDS providing biodiversity benefits and flood protection for 90,000 people. Dedicated action has also been taken by MDC to support native species, including the installation of five bat boxes on Mansfield Crematorium and the eradication of invasive and non-native species (INNS) such as Japanese knotweed within several council-owned sites.

MDC have been successful in applying for several external grants to fund biodiversity enhancements across the district. These include £61,000 from Defra's Nature for Climate Fund for the Trees for Climate project and £1 million from the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MoHCLG) for the Urban Greening Project.

Since February 2024, MDC has received 21 planning applications which require Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Two BNG plans have been approved by the LPA (as of the end of January 2026). As of February 2026, there are no registered off-site BNG habitat banks in Mansfield. This highlights the current financial and practical delivery challenges associated with BNG delivery but also demonstrates that there is an opportunity for MDC to ensure biodiversity gains remain within the Mansfield District.

Over the next five years, MDC and the future authority will work with partners and colleagues to embed the priorities of the incoming Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This will include increasing biodiversity provision with parks and open spaces with a particular focus on habitat provision, continuing to support partnership working and applying for external funding to deliver biodiversity enhancements and continuing to host events and develop initiatives which engage local residents and communities with biodiversity.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Purpose of Report

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to enable MDC to meet the requirements of their EBD, as per the reporting requirements for the period of 1st January 2024 – 1st January 2026.

**1.2** The report brings together existing work including policies, strategies and action plans that MDC have completed or have in progress. It sets out what actions MDC have taken for biodiversity since 2020 and takes a forward look at future actions to 2030. It provides a framework to assess current progress and sets a baseline for future reporting periods.

**1.3** Beyond Defra guidance, this report also presents a “state of nature” section providing a baseline of the quantity, quality and accessibility of nature-rich green space across the district. It provides an overview of key national and regional biodiversity targets and the progress that MDC is making toward helping to achieve them. Beyond biodiversity, the inclusion of elements focussing on climate resilience seek to emphasise the importance of joined up thinking and the reality of climate risks for now and the future, and how best to ameliorate them and work with nature-based solutions for people, nature and the climate.

**1.4** The EBD reporting process brings together different teams within the council whose work delivers, or can better deliver, for biodiversity. It helps to compile achievements, prompt and promote cross-team communications and streamline resourcing in achieving tangible gains for biodiversity.

### Why Nature Matters

**1.5** Nature is essential for all life on earth. We depend on it for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. It boosts health and wellbeing, captures and stores carbon and has a vital role to play in climate change adaptation. Nature underpins all economic activity, and the benefits received from nature is estimated to be valued at £95 trillion pounds.

**1.6** Nature also has intrinsic worth beyond the quantifiable value we attribute it via natural capital and ecosystem services thinking. It enriches us spiritually, brings us great joy and warrants an ethical consideration beyond the framework we conventionally ascribe value; an intangible, but important, aspect of our humanity and our connection with nature.

**1.7** In Mansfield, the conservation and enhancement of nature is key to delivering on the ‘*Our Environment*’ theme within the Council’s strategic plan ‘*Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield*’. Enhancing biodiversity will also help meet the ambitions and targets of other related strategies and plans across the district including the ‘*Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038*’ (see **Chapter 3 – Strategic Plans and Policies**).

**1.8** MDC’s approach to climate change, including the Mansfield Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan<sup>1</sup>, is heavily integrated with its work with nature. This reflects the interdependencies of the twin-crises and effort to mitigate and increase resilience. This report also includes emphasis on climate resilience to emphasise this interdependence and outline thinking on how to tackle the twin-crises of climate and nature in a joined-up way.

## The Mansfield Area

**1.9** The Mansfield District is an area of 30 square miles, situated in the Maun Valley, ~12 miles north of Nottingham, in the county of Nottinghamshire, England<sup>2</sup>. It shares district borders with Bassetlaw to the north, Newark and Sherwood to the east, Ashfield to the southwest and Bolsover to the west (see **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**).

**1.10** The district has a population of 110,482 residents (2021 estimate) which represents 13.39% of the total Nottinghamshire resident population of 824,822 people<sup>3</sup>.

**1.11** The district encompasses urban areas including Mansfield, Mansfield Woodhouse, Warsop and Forest Town, as well as rural areas including farmland, woodland and heathland. Areas of deciduous woodland and lowland heathland are remnants of the ancient Royal Forest of Sherwood which covered a fifth of Nottinghamshire during the Middle Ages<sup>4</sup> (see **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** in **Appendix A**).

## Mansfield District Council

**1.12** Nottinghamshire currently has a two-tier council structure. Nottinghamshire County Council is the first tier

authority with MDC making up one of the seven district councils of the second tier.

**1.13** MDC provides local services including social housing, recycling collections, processing planning applications and dealing with environmental licensing<sup>5</sup>.

**1.14** Under the Central Government’s Local Government Reorganisation scheme, these second-tier councils are set to be abolished. The government are currently undertaking a statutory consultation on proposals for an alternative governance structure. Ministers will decide on a preferred option in summer 2026. Shadow elections are due in May 2027 with Vesting day for the new authorities on 1 April 2028.

## Legal and National Policy Context

**1.15** This section summarises the national background context for the EBD and associated reporting and national conservation targets. MDC’s progress in fulfilling the national duties is presented in **Chapter 3**.

### The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006<sup>6</sup>

**1.16** The NERC Act 2006 first introduced the Biodiversity Duty, requiring all public authorities in England to consider what action they can reasonably take for the conservation of biodiversity.

### The Environment Act 2021<sup>7</sup>

**1.17** The Environment Act 2021<sup>8</sup> strengthened the Biodiversity Duty and amends the NERC Act. Under the strengthened duty, public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Act also introduced LNRS and BNG, amongst other key instruments for conserving and enhancing nature. LNRS, prepared by a Responsible Authority, identify priorities for nature recovery locally and propose measures in locations identified using local evidence and input from local stakeholders. BNG mandates that developers must deliver a biodiversity uplift of at least 10%, in some circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Mansfield District Council (n.d.) Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/3037/mdc-climate-change-strategy-feb-2022>

<sup>2</sup> Mansfield District Council (2024). Towards 2030 – A Strategy for Mansfield. Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/towards-2030-strategy-mansfield/4>

<sup>3</sup> Mansfield District Council (n.d.). Key facts about Mansfield district. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/council-councillors-democracy/key-facts-mansfield>

<sup>4</sup> The Sherwood Forest Trust (n.d). Sherwood Forest FAQs. Available online: <https://sherwoodforest.org.uk/faq/>

<sup>5</sup> LGR Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (n.d) Who we are. Available online: <https://lgrnotts.org/who-we-are>

<sup>6</sup> UK Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Available at:

<sup>7</sup> UK Government (2025) Environmental Improvement Plan 2025, Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/692d8d9c9ce50d215cae962a5/Environmental\\_Improvement\\_Plan\\_EIP\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/692d8d9c9ce50d215cae962a5/Environmental_Improvement_Plan_EIP_2025.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> UK Government (2021) Environment Act 2021, Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30>

### The Environment Improvement Plan<sup>9</sup>

**1.18** The Environmental Improvement Plan 2025<sup>9</sup> took forward the delivery of the Environment Act 2021<sup>7</sup>. It sets out the legally binding targets and actions needed for protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Defra will use EBD reporting to assist in their requirements to monitor the delivery of the Environmental Improvement Plan<sup>9</sup>.

### Levelling Up and Regeneration (LUR) Act 2023<sup>10</sup>

**1.19** The LUR Act 2023 instructs Public Authorities to “take account” of the LNRS; the Environment Act 2021 requiring public authorities to “have regard” for the LNRS. This strengthened duty places an onus on Local Authorities to consider how they can “take account” of the LNRS. The EBD provides a clear opportunity for these bodies to articulate how they have or are planning to deliver this duty.

### Methodology

**1.20** This report has been prepared by LUC. The process has included:

- 1. An inception meeting** to discuss the scope, timeline and relevant data to support delivery of the report.
- 2. Targeted research** to identify key targets, metrics, actions and other relevant quantitative and qualitative data that could help capture the local, regional and national objectives and measures and the progress in achieving them.
- 3. A workshop** with officers from across the organisation to discuss and identify relevant strategic targets and actions undertaken to deliver for biodiversity and climate change resilience.
- 4. Data analysis** including spatial analysis through GIS. With support from the local environmental records centre and analysis of other data collated to assess progress against targets.
- 5. The preparation of this report** efficiently and effectively capturing the research and analysis undertaken and delivering the requirements of the EBD reporting.

### Target Audience

**1.21** This report will provide key information to Defra to assist in the monitoring of Environmental Improvement Plan<sup>9</sup> delivery

and to enable them to evaluate whether public authorities are delivering their EBD.

**1.22** This report will be taken to Cabinet and provide a useful overview to Mansfield councillors and officers of the contributions that MDC has made to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the district to date, helping to bring cohesion and efficiency between the workstreams that the various teams deliver. Importantly, the EBD report sets the trajectory of actions for the next five years.

**1.23** This report will be published on MDC's website and provide information to residents to understand what action is being taken for nature in their district.

### Consultation

**1.24** This report has been prepared in consultation with MDC officers from a range of council departments. Data has been collated and analysed through targeted consultation and workshops with officers representing MDC's functions.

<sup>9</sup> UK Government (2025) Environmental Improvement Plan 2025, Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/692d8d9cce50d215cae962a5/Environmental\\_Improvement\\_Plan\\_EIP\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/692d8d9cce50d215cae962a5/Environmental_Improvement_Plan_EIP_2025.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> UK Government (2023) Levelling Up and Regeneration (LUR) Act 2023, Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2026/169/made>

## Chapter 2

### State of Nature

This chapter describes the current biodiversity baseline across Mansfield. Formed from a set of measurable criteria, it can be repeated in future iterations.

#### The State of Nature

##### Designated Sites

**2.1** MDC's designated site network is 990ha, covering 13% of the district. National and local wildlife site designations represent and protect the district's most important natural assets, including mosaics of deciduous woodland, heathland, grasslands, meadows and rivers. The designations, their purpose and distribution are set out below and mapped in **Figure 2** in **Appendix A**.

##### International Statutory Designated Sites: SPAs/SACs/RAMSAR

**2.2** There are no statutory designated sites of European or international importance within the Mansfield District. Although, the Sherwood Forest Area is currently being considered as a Special Protection Area (SPA) by Defra to protect populations of nightjar and woodlark.

**2.3** Birklands and Bilhaugh Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located <1km from the eastern border of MDC in the Newark and Sherwood district. This site is designated for its ancient acidophilous oak woods which host a rich invertebrate fauna, particularly spiders, and diverse fungal assemblages.

##### National Statutory Designated Sites: SSSIs

**2.4** MDC has six SSSIs, covering 156 ha (2% of the district). These SSSIs and the reasons for designation are presented below in order of greatest extent:

- 1.** Sherwood Forest Golf Course SSSI (60 ha) – Lowland dry heath
- 2.** Strawberry Hills Heath SSSI (31 ha) – Lowland dry heath

3. Hills and Holes and Sookholme Brook SSSI (30 ha) – Lowland calcareous grassland
4. Lord Stubbins Wood SSSI (25 ha) - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
5. Rainworth Lakes SSSI (6 ha) – Lowland wetland
6. Pleasley Vale Railway SSSI (4 ha) - Lowland calcareous grassland and Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

**2.5** The percentage of SSSIs in favourable condition within the Mansfield District is 16%, below the national average of 35%<sup>11</sup>. Lord Stubbins Wood SSSI is the only SSSI within the Mansfield District which has been assessed as favourable. The percentage of SSSIs in other condition statuses are as follows:

- 76% in unfavourable, recovering.
- 4% in unfavourable, no change.
- 4% in unfavourable, declining.

#### National Statutory Designated Sites: NNRs

**2.6** MDC has no NNRs.

#### Local Statutory Designated Sites: LNRs

**2.7** 10 LNRs sit within MDC, covering 108 ha (1.4% of the total district). These are relatively evenly distributed across the district (see **Figure 2**). Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF) includes a recommendation for 1 ha of LNR per 1,000 population. The England and Wales 2021 census recorded that the district's population was 110,500. Using these figures, the district should have a minimum of 111 ha of LNR. The district almost reaches this target, falling short by only 3 ha (2.7%).

#### Non-Statutory Designated Sites: LoWS

**2.8** Complementing the statutory network are 81 LoWS (737 ha, 9.6%), which provide critical stepping stones and buffers to the nationally and locally statutory designated sites and support species of local importance.

#### Habitats and Species

**2.9** Irreplaceable habitats, are those habitats which take a significant time to restore, recreate or replace once they are destroyed, often because of their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. MDC's irreplaceable habitats include 68 ha of ancient woodland (44% within a designation), ancient and

veteran trees and 1.1ha of lowland fen (100% within a designation).

**2.10** MDC supports a diverse range of priority habitats, totalling 611 ha and covering 8% of the district. 30% of all priority habitats are under a statutory or non-statutory wildlife site designation. The extent and distribution of these are discussed below and mapped in **Figure 3** in **Appendix A**.

**2.11** Deciduous woodland constitutes the largest extent of priority habitat within the Mansfield District, covering 507 ha (7% of the district). Small parcels of this priority habitat, remnants of the ancient Royal Forest of Sherwood, are scattered relatively evenly across the district, with larger expanses found in the north and the east. Lord Stubbins Wood SSSI, Minster Wood, Collier Spring Wood and Parsons Wood are all located in the north and are classified as ancient woodland and so are of particular importance. 22% of the deciduous woodland is protected under a statutory wildlife site designation.

**2.12** Often associated with deciduous woodland is lowland heathland, the second largest priority habitat extent within the Mansfield District covering 70 ha (0.9% of the district). The majority of lowland heathland habitat is located near the district's southeast border, with 83% of it protected under a statutory wildlife site designation.

**2.13** The mosaic of deciduous woodland and heathland found within MDC is an important habitat for a range of species including birds such as tree pipit and woodlark, bats such as noctule and Leisler's and a wide range of invertebrates including beetles and spiders.

**2.14** MDC also features good quality semi-improved grasslands (15 ha, 0.2% of the district) and lowland calcareous grasslands (11 ha, 0.2% of the district), most notably around Pleasley in the west and Warsop Vale in the north. These habitats provide a riparian buffer zone to the river Meden and support a diverse range of species.

**2.15** Other priority habitats in MDC which cover <10 ha but still contribute considerable value to the diversity of the ecological network, include lowland meadows and traditional orchards. Such small fragments of priority habitat are particularly sensitive to management or land use changes.

**2.16** MDC's ecological network includes approximately 28 km of rivers<sup>12</sup> which support both terrestrial and aquatic species such as kingfishers, water voles and invertebrates. **Figure 4** in **Appendix A** displays these waterbodies and shows their ecological condition, as assessed through the Water

<sup>11</sup> Natural England (2025). Extent and condition of protected areas. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/england-biodiversity-indicators/1-extent-and-condition-of-protected-areas--2>

<sup>12</sup> Ordnance Survey (2025). OS Open Rivers. Available online: <https://docs.os.uk/os-downloads/products/water-portfolio/os-open-rivers>

Framework Directive<sup>13</sup>. The percentage of rivers within each ecological condition classification are displayed below:

- 23% are good.
- 30% are moderate.
- 47% are poor.

### Wider Green Infrastructure

**2.17** Wider green infrastructure, collectively forming key connections within the district's ecological network, covers 544 ha (7%) of the district. Public parks, gardens, playing fields and open spaces offer the largest extent and make up 298 ha (4%). Golf courses represent 90 ha (1%) of the district. Other green infrastructure, such as allotments (62 ha), sports facilities including bowling greens and tennis courts (62 ha), and religious grounds and cemeteries (31 ha) also contribute to this network.

**2.18** Tree canopy cover, calculated from National Forest Inventory of woodland, trees outside of woodland (TOW) and traditional orchards is estimated to cover 1,391 ha, (18% of the district<sup>14</sup>). This is above the national tree canopy cover target of 16.5% by 2050<sup>15</sup>. Tree canopy cover is a key asset for biodiversity, air quality and climate resilience.

**2.19** Average ward % canopy cover in MDC is 13%, above the national average of 10%. 11 wards (31%) exceed the national target of 16.5% canopy cover. Meden has the highest % canopy cover with 30%. Three wards have <5% canopy cover, these are Penniment (3.4%), Newgate (4.3%) and Hornby (4.9%).

### Green Belt

**2.20** Green belt land is a designation in the UK that serves as a buffer between urban development and the countryside. Green belt land is important within Nottinghamshire to prevent urban sprawl between the two cities of Nottingham and Derby.

MDC does not feature any Nottingham and Derby green belt land, but the neighbouring districts of Ashfield, Gedling and Newark & Sherwood do feature this land designation.

### Access to Nature

**2.21** Tree equity, a rating between 0 and 100, is a method to highlight inequitable access to nature and is shown in **Figure 5** in **Appendix A**. The average tree equity score across all of MDC's lower super output areas (LSOA) is 82. One (1.7%) of LSOA's have a tree equity score of 100 (Mansfield 013G – an area southeast of Mansfield between Windsor Road and Berry Lane<sup>16</sup>). Five LSOA's (006B – an area to the northwest of Mansfield<sup>17</sup>, 003E- north of Mansfield Woodhouse<sup>18</sup>, 010F - Ladybrook<sup>19</sup>, 008A – northeast of Ladybrook<sup>20</sup>, and 008B - north of Ladybrook<sup>21</sup>), have a tree equity score <70, meaning that low tree canopy cover is disproportionately impacting the communities that live there. These are areas where future tree planting should be focused to improve access to nature and to provide health benefits.

### Climate Change

**2.22** The Climate Just tool<sup>22</sup> shows that heat socio-spatial vulnerability, a measure of how climate change-induced higher temperatures will affect certain populations, varies within the Mansfield District, displayed in **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**. In total, approximately 70% of the district has been assessed as having a relatively high or extremely high heat socio-spatial vulnerability in comparison to the UK average. Mansfield town centre has the highest heat vulnerability, driven by the greater exposure to heat within an urban area in comparison to more rural areas.

**2.23** Some communities within MDC have a higher-than-average neighbourhood flood vulnerability as shown in **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**. Communities which have a high risk (a 3.3% chance of a flood occurring each year) include Warsop Vale, Mansfield Woodhouse and Mansfield<sup>23</sup>. The total area

<sup>13</sup> Environment Agency (2019). WFD Surface Water Bodies in England: Classification Status and Objectives - Cycle 2. Available online: <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/41cb73a1-91b7-4a36-80f4-b4c6e102651a/wfd-classification-status-cycle-2>

<sup>14</sup> National Forest Inventory (n.d.). Available online: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/national-forest-inventory/>

<sup>15</sup> Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (2025). Tree canopy and woodland cover Environment Act target delivery plan. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-canopy-and-woodland-cover-environment-act-target-delivery-plan/tree-canopy-and-woodland-cover-environment-act-target-delivery-plan>

<sup>16</sup> MapIt UK (n.d.) Mansfield 013G, Available at: <https://mapit.mysociety.org/area/154753.html>

<sup>17</sup> MapIt UK (n.d.) Mansfield 006B, Available at: <https://mapit.mysociety.org/area/39764.html>

<sup>18</sup> MapIt UK (n.d.) Mansfield 003E, Available at: <https://mapit.mysociety.org/area/94419.html>

<sup>19</sup> MapIt UK (n.d.) Mansfield 010F, Available at: <https://mapit.mysociety.org/area/94389.html>

<sup>20</sup> MapIt UK (n.d.) Mansfield 008A, Available at: <https://mapit.mysociety.org/area/94368.html>

<sup>21</sup> MapIt UK (n.d.) Mansfield 008B, Available at: <https://mapit.mysociety.org/area/94369.html>

<sup>22</sup> Climate Just tool (2025) Available online: <https://www.climatejust.org.uk/map.html>

<sup>23</sup> Environment Agency (2025). Risk of flooding from surface water (RoFSW) map. Available online: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>

classified as at high risk of surface water flooding within the Mansfield District is 1%, which is lower than the risk related to heat.

**2.24** The Council Climate Action Scorecard is an assessment of the action that UK Councils have taken towards net zero<sup>24</sup>. The Climate Action Scorecard is run by Climate Emergency UK, an external voluntary body who assess all Councils in the UK. In 2025, MDC scored 25%, below the national average of 36%. Within the biodiversity section, which scores Council's on their action to protect and increase biodiversity, MDC scored 9%. This score is significantly lower than the national average score of 28%. Actions that MDC can take to improve their Climate Action Scorecard for biodiversity are:

- Using peat-free compost or soil in all landscaping and horticulture.
- Avoiding the use of pesticides on all council owned and managed land.
- Employing a planning ecologist to scrutinise planning reports for improvements to biodiversity in new developments, such as BNG.

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<sup>24</sup> Climate Emergency UK (2025). Action Scorecards. Available online: <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/councils/blaby-district-council/>

## Chapter 3

### Meeting the Biodiversity Duty

This chapter sets out the plans, policies and strategies that form the principal instruments to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Mansfield and the actions for nature the district has committed to through the delivery of its functions.

#### The Enhanced Biodiversity Duty

**3.1** The EBD was introduced under the Environment Act 2021. It requires all public authorities in England to consider how they can actively conserve and enhance biodiversity.

**3.2** Public Authorities must report their consideration, actions they've carried out to comply with the EBD and how they will comply with it over the next five years.

**3.3** By law, the report must include;

- The policies and objectives they have set to meet the biodiversity duty and the actions completed to date.
- What strategies (including the Nottinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy) have influenced their policies, objectives and action and how they have contributed to their preparation.
- How they plan to comply with the EBD in the next reporting period.
- Any other information they consider appropriate.

**3.4** Reports from local planning authorities must also include:

- Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations.
- Details of gains resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans they've approved.
- Plans to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period.

## Local Context and Progress

**3.5** This section reviews MDC's local policies, strategies and plans which refer to biodiversity. **Appendix B** pulls together all targets and actions within these plans and summarises MDC's progress to date.

## Corporate Plan

### Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield<sup>25</sup>

**3.6** Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield sets out the overall strategic direction, the vision for the future and the ambitions and priorities that MDC will focus on.

**3.7** The strategy is centred upon five themes including 'Our Environment' which has an ambition that Mansfield's 'communities are protected and benefit from measures to tackle the impact of climate change'. Priorities under this theme include to 'support and encourage sustainable development with biodiversity'.

## Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents

### Mansfield District Local Plan 2013 - 2033<sup>26</sup>

**3.8** The Mansfield District Local Plan (2013-2033) forms part of the statutory development plan for the district and is used to guide development and inform decisions on planning applications.

**3.9** The vision for the district includes 'The natural assets in the district will have been protected and enhanced to help shape new places to live, increase biodiversity, and improve connectivity to benefit wildlife and the health and wellbeing of the district's residents'.

**3.10** The Plan has 15 strategic priorities. Those with direct impacts upon biodiversity include:

- SP10 - Managing the impact of planned growth and development on European Habitat Sites.
- SP12 - Managing the impact of planned growth and development on the strategic green infrastructure network.

**3.11** The plan includes 14 objectives that have been identified as central to the delivery of the vision for the district and are the guiding principles for the policies set out in the Local Plan.

Objectives which directly relate to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity include:

- Objective 12 - Protect, enhance, restore and maintain important natural resources, in and adjoining the district including wildlife, soil, air quality and geological resources, and the network of habitats and designated sites.
- Objective 13 - Encourage new development to be water sensitive by addressing water efficiency, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and reducing flood risk and pollution, whilst at the same time ensuring the effective design and location of SuDS and naturalising the river environment to create a more attractive healthy environment for residents.

**3.12** Policies in the local plan with potential impacts on biodiversity include:

- Policy NE2 Biodiversity and geodiversity
  - Development will be supported where it protects, enhances and contributes to the management of the ecological network of habitats and sites of international, national and local importance, avoids and/or minimises adverse individual and or cumulatively impacts, on biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystem services, seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and prioritises the de-fragmentation, restoration, retention and sensitive management of habitats and landscape features, to allow for the movement of wildlife. Planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss, deterioration and/or fragmentation of irreplaceable habitats and on sites supporting protected species.
- Policy CC4 River and waterbody corridors
  - Development proposal will be supported when they lead to deculverting and naturalising of watercourses, avoid culverting watercourses, provide or retain a minimum 8m natural or semi-natural habitat buffer to a watercourse and contribute to the creation and / or enhancement of green SuDS priority areas.
- Policy S4 Urban regeneration
  - Development will be supported when it takes opportunities to restore the river ecology of the River

<sup>25</sup> Mansfield District Council (2024) Towards 2030: A strategy for Mansfield, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/1347/towards-2030-a-strategy-for-mansfield>

<sup>26</sup> Mansfield District Council (2013) Mansfield District Local Plan 2013 – 2033, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/1645/mdc-adopted-local-plan-2020>

Maun and create green infrastructure, including open space and wildlife corridors.

- Policy IN2 Green Infrastructure
  - Development will be approved when it can demonstrate that the functions and key assets of the green infrastructure network are protected and reasonable opportunities for enhancement of these are secured to deliver a diverse range of benefits for people and wildlife.
- Policy IN5 Allotments
  - Allotments are protected and the creation of new allotments is supported.
- Policy IN6 Designated Local Green Space
  - Local green space is protected from development and new development should not impact on the functions of designated local green space.
- Policy P5 Climate Change and New Development
  - Development will be supported when it demonstrates mitigation and adaption to the impacts of climate change via green infrastructure and landscaping and SuDS.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD<sup>27</sup>

**3.13** This SPD is designed to assist prospective developers and applicants by providing guidance on how proposals can demonstrate they have met the requirements of planning policy related to SuDS in the Mansfield District. The SPD states that SuDS in the Mansfield District should seek to deliver multiple benefits including that they seek to enhance biodiversity.

**3.14** Policies in the SPD related to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity include:

- SUDS SPD 3 – SuDS measures on large sites
  - The development of major new developments should consider a range of SuDS interventions including ponds, wetlands and rain gardens.
- SUDS SPD 4 – Small scale SUDS
  - Proposals for smaller developments <10 dwelling should seek to deliver SuDS including green roofs and rain gardens.

### Biodiversity Net Gain SPD<sup>28</sup>

**3.15** This SPD is designed to assist prospective developers and applicants by providing guidance on how to best meet the requirements of planning policy related to BNG in the Mansfield District. The SPD seeks to increase certainty in relation to BNG in the development process and ensure that BNG provision is based on a clear and consistent approach.

**3.16** All Local Planning Authorities in Nottinghamshire have agreed to work together to develop an aligned approach to delivering BNG. The aims of the partners are that:

- 10% National Target is the minimum target for Nottinghamshire,
- Partnership members will pursue a higher target of 20% on all developments above a threshold of 10 units where viability evidence permits; and
- Partnership members will engage with promoters/developers of strategic sites to secure levels of at least 10% as part of the development of green and blue infrastructure.

### Green Infrastructure (GI) SPD<sup>29</sup>

**3.17** The SPD is designed to support applicants in meeting the requirements of planning policy related to GI in the Mansfield District. The SPD seeks to increase understanding in relation to GI in the development process and ensure that GI provision, protection and maintenance is based on a clear and consistent approach.

**3.18** The SPD sets out that GI should seek to deliver multiple benefits including:

- Nature conservation - including enhancement and provision of designated and non-designated habitats and protection of species (including networks for movement of species), ecosystem functions and biodiversity.

**3.19** Policies in the document relating to conserving and enhancing biodiversity include:

- GI SPD 1 – Types of GI to be considered - All new developments should consider the impact on existing GI and opportunities to provide new or enhanced existing GI of the right type in the right place. The following types of Green Infrastructure in the Mansfield District should be considered in the following ways:

<sup>27</sup> Mansfield District Council (2023) Sustainable Drain Systems SPD, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6635/sustainable-drainage-systems-spd-final-version-for-adoption>

<sup>28</sup> Mansfield District Council (2023) Biodiversity Net Gain SPD, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6365/bng-spd-version-for-adoption-september-2023>

<sup>29</sup> Mansfield District Council (2024) Green Infrastructure SPD, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6505/gi-spd-adopted-version-march-2024>

- Woodlands, hedgerows and trees - Green infrastructure should enhance existing woodlands, hedgerows and trees and create new areas linking existing woodlands.
- Natural environment - Green infrastructure should seek to integrate with the natural features and habitats.
- Urban green spaces - Green infrastructure should accommodate nature, wildlife and heritage and cultural assets, and provide for sport and recreation within urban green spaces.
- Habitats of importance for their Biodiversity - Green infrastructure should maintain and enhance biodiversity resulting in a net gain of protected species and habitats and species and should support nature to recover and thrive everywhere, in towns, cities and countryside.
- GI SPD 3 – GI functions and assets - All development proposals, including those that directly impact on areas of existing identified GI should seek to protect their assets and functions. The following Green Infrastructure Assets and functions should be protected and enhanced:
  - Nature conservation - designated sites, habitats and habitat opportunity areas. Also include ecological networks made up of a combination of designated sites and areas of habitat outside these designations.
  - Allowing movement of wildlife along corridors and providing locations for habitats to form and thrive.
  - Strengthen ecological networks, allow for ecosystem functioning and reduce fragmentation of habitats.
  - Contribute to cross species objectives such as pollinator strategies and help achieve targeted individual species recovery.
- GI SPD 4 – Connected Green Infrastructure - Where development proposals are located within or adjacent to Strategic Green Infrastructure, opportunities to bridge any physical gaps in GI or provide meaningful connections to existing GI should be explored.
- GI SPD5 - Optimising impacts on GI - All new developments should seek to add value and avoid adverse impacts to existing Green Infrastructure. The following approaches should be pursued:
  - Create
  - Enhance
  - Restore
  - Manage
  - GI SPD7 - Improving the quality of GI networks – a variety of ways that GI can be improved in the district including through tree planting, restoring natural habitats, new ponds and water areas, discourage harmful recreational disturbance, improving ecological links, provide SuDS and introducing opportunities for enhanced biodiversity.
  - GI SPD 9 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain - Where new development is required to provide Biodiversity Net Gain, opportunities should be explored to provide the BNG within areas of Green Infrastructure.
  - GI SPD 10 Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Drainage Systems - All new developments should consider the potential to deliver Green Infrastructure that contributes towards SuDS including street trees / planters and rain gardens.

### Mansfield Town Centre Master Plan (June 2023)<sup>30</sup>

**3.20** The Mansfield Town Centre Masterplan provides a vision and delivery plan to guide the regeneration of the Mansfield town centre to 2038.

**3.21** The vision statement includes ‘*enhancing its existing character will form a key part of the vision for a new greened , climate change resilient town centre including high quality SuDS interventions*’ and ‘*the River Maun is an important feature that passes through the town centre and has the potential to be opened up and enhanced resulting in environmental and well-being benefits*’.

**3.22** The master plan has eight key principles to deliver the vision. These include ‘*greening Mansfield*’ and ‘*valuing Mansfield’s public space*’.

**3.23** The master plan includes sites guidance for specific named sites including key objectives. Enhanced biodiversity is included as a key objective for Market Place, Toothill Lane Car Park and The Station.

<sup>30</sup> Mansfield District Council (2023) Mansfield Town Centre Master Plan June 2023, Available at:

<https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6340/final-mansfield-masterplan-report-june-2023>

### Mansfield Town Centre Design Code<sup>31</sup>

**3.24** This design code directs design requirements for new developments to ensure the vision and aspirations set out in the Mansfield Town Centre Masterplan are realised.

**3.25** The design code sets out twelve town wide design rules which state the requirements for all development proposals. Those rules include:

- T10 – Biodiversity - All applications within the town centre must comply with the requirements of the Biodiversity Net Gain SPD.
- T8 – SUDS - will add value in terms of Green Infrastructure and biodiversity.
- T11 – Trees and Soft Landscape - Tree planting must be included in all developments of the town centre.

## Strategic Plans and Policies

### Mansfield Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan<sup>32</sup>

**3.26** The strategy and plan set out MDC's ambitions to embrace the challenges and opportunities that climate change will bring.

**3.27** The strategy has seven themes and related ambitions including '*Natural Environment - to enhance and protect the natural environment to support carbon sequestration and climate resilience*'.

### Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038<sup>33</sup>

**3.28** This strategy sets the vision and priorities for parks and open spaces across the Mansfield District until 2038.

**3.29** The strategy has seven key themes including '*ecology and environment – work to enhance our local biodiversity and increase sustainability of our open spaces*'.

**3.30** Actions within the 'ecology and environment' theme include:

- Increase biodiversity within parks and open spaces with a greater appreciation for developing appropriate habitats for plants, birds, and other wildlife.

- Increase the sustainability of parks and open spaces by encouraging environmental practices.
- Work with Friends Of groups and charitable organisations to support environmental projects such as tree planting, wetland recovery and repairing fire damage.
- Ensure regular inspections and maintenance is carried out on the extensive number of trees within our parks and open spaces to ensure they are healthy and continue to enhance the environment.

**3.31** Actions within the '*education and learning*' theme include:

- Develop strong links with Mansfield District's schools and academies to work together to support environmental learning.
- Encourage participation in environmental activities of all abilities.

### Toward 2030: A Plan for Wellbeing<sup>34</sup>

**3.32** This document outlines the delivery plan for the Wellbeing theme within MDC's corporate strategy '*Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield*'.

**3.33** One of four priorities outlined in the strategy is to '*create an environment where people lead safe, healthy lifestyles and have the opportunities to be physically active*'. Although this does not directly refer to biodiversity, time spent in nature has been proven to improve both physical and mental wellbeing, and actions to improve biodiversity could contribute to meeting this priority.

### Procurement Strategy 2019 – 2023<sup>35</sup>

**3.34** This strategy sets out how MDC will procure goods and services efficiently. The strategy supports the economic agenda around local wealth creation along with wider priorities such as carbon reduction and sustainable environmental initiatives.

**3.35** The overall objective of the strategy is to help MDC commission and procure goods, services and works in a way

<sup>31</sup> Mansfield District Council (2023) Mansfield Town Centre Design Code, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6462/05867-final-issue-03-design-code-low-res-adopted->

<sup>32</sup> Mansfield District Council (2021) Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/3037/mdc-climate-change-strategy-feb-2022>

<sup>33</sup> Mansfield District Council (2023) Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6488/parks-strategy-2023--2028>

<sup>34</sup> Mansfield District Council (2024) Toward 2030: A Plan for Wellbeing, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/1432/plan-for-wellbeing>

<sup>35</sup> Mansfield District Council (2019) Procurement Strategy 2019 - 2023, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/1905/mansfield-district-council-procurement-strategy-2019-2023>

that supports local wealth creation, reduces the district's carbon footprint and helps protect Mansfield's environment.

**3.36** The strategy states that above value for money and cost, MDC will also consider social and environmental factors at all stages of the procurement cycle, commonly referred to as 'social value'.

**3.37** The strategy has three themed objectives: economic, social and environmental. The environmental objective is described as '*minimising the environmental impact of goods, services and work procured*' and includes the following outcomes:

- Biodiversity, nature conservation and greening,
- Improving air quality; and
- Resource efficiency, waste reduction and recycling

**3.38** Actions in the strategy that could benefit biodiversity include:

- Considering environmental sustainability in the early stages of each project; identifying goods, works and services with significant impact.
- Considering environmental factors where appropriate in supplier selection and tender evaluation.
- Taking a whole lifecycle approach to costs – including considering external costs and environmental impacts, where these can be quantified.
- Wherever possible, opting for the least environmentally damaging option when choosing between comparable products.

## Regional Context and Progress

**3.39** This section reviews regional policies, strategies and plans to which MDC contribute and which refer to biodiversity. **Appendix B** pulls together all targets and actions within these plans and summarises MDC's progress to date.

### Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

**3.40** The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS was published in November 2025<sup>36</sup>.

**3.41** As a supporting authority, MDC contributed to the creation of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS. This

involved attendance at several workshops focusing on engagement, biodiversity priorities and potential measures for nature recovery within Nottinghamshire. MDC also provided an update on the LNRS at their Developer Forum in June 2025 with the aim to encourage developers to get involved in the consultation process of the draft LNRS and to highlight the opportunities for funding<sup>37</sup>.

**3.42** The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS can be summarised into seven core aims:

- Increase the area of natural habitats in the county.
- Improve condition of natural habitats.
- Improve connectivity of natural habitats.
- Increase specie abundance.
- Increase greenspace in urban areas.
- Improve on farm habitats for biodiversity.
- Maximise biodiversity benefits from large scale and strategic development.

**3.43** 16 species have been prioritised including plants, invertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles, freshwater fish and crustaceans. Measures to boost the abundance of these priority species include reintroduction programmes, creation of habitats and improved management techniques.

**3.44** How MDC will "take account" (as per the requirement in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS is included in **Chapter 7** of the report. Progress MDC has made in achieving these priorities in the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS will be recorded in future EBD reporting cycles.

### Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026<sup>38</sup>

**3.45** This document details the strategy for the transport system across Nottinghamshire. One of the three goals in the strategy is to '*minimise the impacts of transport on people's lives, maximise opportunities to improve the environment and help tackle carbon emissions*'.

**3.46** MDC contributes to this target through the incorporation of soft landscaping including SuDS into transport schemes and development.

<sup>36</sup> Nottinghamshire County Council (2025). Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Available online: <https://notts.nature.recovery.co.uk/index.php?contentid=17>

<sup>37</sup> James Biddlestone (2025). Developer Forum. Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6900/mansfield-developer-forum-13-06-2025>

<sup>38</sup> Nottinghamshire County Council (2011) Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026, Available at: <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/123040/local-transport-plan-strategy.pdf>

### Creating a Wilder Nottinghamshire by 2030

**3.47** This document, produced by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, introduces a 10-year strategy to achieve a ‘people-powered nature recovery’<sup>39</sup> in Nottinghamshire. This strategy has three goals, two of which are relevant and actionable by MDC and detailed below:

1. *A movement for nature* so that at least one in four people in Nottinghamshire are inspired and empowered to take urgent action for nature and the climate in their daily lives.
2. *More space for nature* by growing the nature recovery network so that at least one third of land and water, which equates to 64,800ha, within Nottinghamshire is wilder.

**3.48** MDC contributes to the strategies goal of ‘more space for nature’ through the implementation of the Urban Greening and Trees for Climate projects and the creation of 15.7 ha of wildflower meadows and wildlife corridors (see **Chapter 4 – Integrated Action**). MDC supports people to act for nature in the district via involving residents and school children in the Trees for Climate project and via environmental awareness exhibitions across the district’s museums and galleries (see **Chapter 4 – Education and Engagement**).

### Biodiversity Net Gain Framework for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham

**3.49** This framework was produced by the BNG Working Group for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, in collaboration with other organisations, including MDC<sup>40</sup>.

**3.50** It aims to ensure that all the LPAs in Nottinghamshire are working towards a shared vision to effectively deliver BNG within the County, contributing to the creation of a national Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and helping to deliver the Government’s commitment of achieving 30% of land protected for nature by 2030.

## National Context and Progress

### Environmental Improvement Plan<sup>9</sup>

**3.51** The Environmental Improvement Plan 2025<sup>9</sup> sets binding national targets for habitat restoration, species recovery, tree cover, and protected area expansion. Key commitments include restoring or creating 500,000 ha of

wildlife-rich habitat by 2042, halting species decline by 2030 and protecting 30% of England’s land and sea for nature by 2030.

**3.52** MDC contributes to the Environmental Improvement Plan<sup>9</sup> through delivery of the LNRS, local planning policy and Council strategies including the Mansfield District Strategy (Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield) and the Mansfield Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan. Habitat creation and enhancement projects (such as the creation of wildflower meadows and wildlife corridors detailed in **Chapter 4 – Integrated Action**) support the national ambition of wildlife rich habitat restoration, while the species-specific actions such as the installation of bat boxes at Mansfield Crematorium contribute to halting species decline. With 13% of the district (990 ha) under a form of designation (international, national and local) MDC contributes to underpinning the national 30 by 30 target (see **Chapter 2 – State of Nature**). Sustained tree planting (see **Chapter 4 - Trees**) has contributed to a tree canopy cover to 18%, exceeding the national target of 16.5% by 2050 (see **Appendix B**).

<sup>39</sup> Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (2022). Creating a Wilder Nottinghamshire by 2030. Available online: <https://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/Wilder%20Nottinghamshire%202030%20public%20version.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> BNG Working Group for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. (2024). Biodiversity Net gain Framework for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. Available online: <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/cu0ijrr/final-nottingham-and-nottinghamshire-bng-framework-october-2024.pdf>

## Chapter 4

### Integrated Action

This chapter sets out what actions Mansfield District Council has taken for nature, across all departments, through the delivery of its functions and duties since 2020. While the previous chapter outlined the statutory targets and strategic commitments at national, regional, and local level, this chapter focuses on delivery, highlighting how those ambitions are being translated into concrete projects, policies, and partnerships on the ground.

**4.1** This chapter is based on data collated for the purposes of the report via:

- Researching key strategies, policies and plans,
- An online officer workshop,
- Targeted engagement with council officers, and;
- Analysis of data made available by open source.

**4.2** It intends to present an efficient and effective process of data collation, analysis and reporting through bringing together the disparate work streams of MDC to identify how it is delivering for nature and climate resilience across its many functions.

#### Managing Land to Improve Biodiversity

**4.3** MDC delivered numerous projects and altered land management techniques across the district to integrate ecological gains with public realm improvements and maintenance. Actions included:

- £1 million from the MoHCLG was used to support the Urban Greening Project. The project included urban tree and shrub planting, and the creation of pocket parks across Mansfield town centre<sup>41</sup>.
- Over 15.7ha of biodiverse flower meadows and wildlife corridors were created within the Council's parks and open spaces<sup>33</sup>.
- As part of the Council's Bee Kind scheme, 39 new street planters were planted with wildflower seeds to attract pollinators<sup>42</sup>.
- MDC maintain their parks and open spaces to the Green Flag standard.
- Japanese knotweed was eradicated at multiple council-owned sites across the district, allowing native flora to thrive.
- Grass cutting was reduced at four council-owned sites, covering 8ha, to allow a longer sward length to establish which favours flora and provides opportunities for pollinators.
- Five bat boxes were installed at the council-owned Mansfield Crematorium.
- 70 half plots at the Councils' allotments were cleared to encourage an uptake of food growing and a diverse range of flora within the district<sup>33</sup> (see **Figure 4.1**).



*Figure 4.1 Before and after photos at Sandy Lane allotments*

Source: *Mansfield District Council*

## Trees

**4.4** MDC supported extensive tree planting in the district creating new woodlands, community orchards and increasing the provision of street trees. Tree planting in the district included:

- 10 council-owned sites benefitted from the Trees for Climate project involving the planting of over 7,000 trees since 2023. Significant biodiversity enhancements resulted from the transformation of the former landfill site at Mansfield Woodhouse into a woodland, the creation of a new community orchard habitat at Peafield Lane and the improvement of Carr Lane Park behind Warsop's Health Hub<sup>43</sup> (see **Figure 4.2**).

<sup>41</sup> Mansfield District Council (2020). Acceptance of £1m accelerator funding. Available online: [https://portal.mansfield.gov.uk/CMADAttachments/2020/Council/Attachments/2020\\_10\\_13\\_00019066\\_REPORT~1.pdf](https://portal.mansfield.gov.uk/CMADAttachments/2020/Council/Attachments/2020_10_13_00019066_REPORT~1.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> Mansfield, Ashfield & Sherwood News Journal (2025). Bee Kind Campaign to nurture nature in Mansfield. Available online:

<https://www.news-journal.co.uk/bee-kind-campaign-to-nurture-nature-in-mansfield/>

<sup>43</sup> Mansfield District Council (2025). 3,500 trees planted to create a new woodland in Mansfield Woodhouse Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/news/article/12946/3-500-trees-planted-to-create-a-new-woodland-in-mansfield-woodhouse>



**Figure 4.1 Tree planting at Mansfield Woodhouse**

Source: Mansfield District Council

- 100 fruit trees were planted in early 2021 at Berry Hill Park Community Orchard<sup>33</sup>.
- In general, within Council-led housing development projects, existing trees and green corridors are retained where practical and there is an aim to plant two trees for every dwelling. If trees are removed, MDC replaces them in recognition of their ecological and environmental benefits.

## Climate Change Resilience – including Natural Flood Management

**4.5** In recognition of the risks associated with climate change such as surface water flooding, MDC have employed nature-based solutions within their capital projects and housing developments, which simultaneously increase climate change resilience and improve biodiversity. In general, MDC seeks to avoid introducing hard landscaping and favours adoption of softer solutions where feasible. Examples of works undertaken to improve climate resilience in the district include:

- 343 SuDs were installed across the district between 2022 and 2025. The project was delivered by Severn Trent Water (local water company), Mansfield District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council<sup>44</sup>.



**Figure 4.2 Mansfield Sustainable Flood Resilience Project**

Source: Green Estate

- Bioswales and rainwater verge gardens were incorporated into 77 properties within the Council's Centenary Road development project. The bioswales, detention basins and rain gardens are comprised of over 25,000m<sup>2</sup> of specialist plants, providing opportunities for pollinators and providing ecological networks within the district whilst at the same time providing 90,000 people with increased flood risk protection (see **Figure 4.3**).

## Education and Engagement

**4.6** Many projects delivered or supported by MDC sought to increase awareness and engagement with nature. Hundreds of residents, schools and local groups contributed time, skills and stewardship to support biodiversity across the district. Examples include:

- Approx. 500 volunteers, including children and young adults, were involved in the Trees for Climate planting project across the district.
- The Green Heroes exhibition at Mansfield Museum celebrated people who protect and enhance the environment across the district, such as Maun Conservation Group, with the aim of inspiring further local community action to enhance biodiversity<sup>45</sup>.
- Workshops and education programmes were delivered at the five community allotments across the district to engage different groups in sustainable food production and biodiversity enhancements.
- Under the Council's Bee Kind scheme, activities including a fun education trail were organised to

<sup>44</sup> Severn Trent Water (2025). Mansfield Sustainable Flood Resilience project. Available online: <https://www.stwater.co.uk/wonderful-on-tap/green-recovery/mansfield-sustainable-flood-resilience/>

<sup>45</sup> Mansfield Council (2025). Mansfield's Green Heroes. Available online:

<https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum/homepage/1062/mansfields-green-heroes>

encourage people to carry out their own bee-friendly initiatives.

- Our Favourite Tree project at the Mansfield Museum delivered workshops to schools and community groups, aiming to highlight the ecological and cultural importance of trees.
- A World of Birds exhibition<sup>46</sup> at the Mansfield Museum nurtured an appreciation of bird species and local wildlife, whilst providing a space for MDC to highlight practical conservation activities in the district.
- MDC worked with community organisations to carry out litter picking activities to reduce litter pollution and protect local wildlife<sup>47</sup> (see **Figure 4.4**).



*Figure 4.3 Litter picking in the Mansfield District in 2025*

Source: *Mansfield District Council*

<sup>46</sup> Mansfield District Council (n.d.) A World of Birds, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum/homepage/1046/a-world-of-birds>

<sup>47</sup> Mansfield District Council (2025). The Great British Spring Clean. Available online:

<https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/news/article/12950/mansfield-joins-forces-for-the-great-british-spring-clean>

## Chapter 5

# Biodiversity Net Gain – a Tool for Action

This chapter draws out information specifically relating to BNG. It provides a complete overview of the actions taken and the gains achieved and anticipated resulting from BNG.

**5.1** BNG has created a world-first regulatory nature market with ground-breaking policy and legislation. Launched in 2024, the regime is still bedding in; many development types entered scope at different times, and LPAs are only now (mid-late 2025) approving some of the first biodiversity gain plans.

**5.2** In terms of BNG monitoring for EBD reporting, Defra has only recently published the high-resolution inputs required for EBD reporting. Therefore, timing and data availability currently limit the BNG impacts that can be reported.

**5.3** A short overview of the state of BNG within MDC is provided in **Table 5.1** below:

**Table 5.1 Overview of BNG in the Mansfield District between 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 and 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2026**

Criteria	Number
Number of planning permissions granted that require BNG	21
Number of planning permissions granted where an exemption to BNG applies	544
Number of BNG plans approved	2
Number of BNG plans approved securing BNG through on-site units only	1
Number of BNG plans approved securing BNG through a combination of on-site, off-site units and statutory credits	1
Total net unit change in biodiversity units, on-site	Habitat area: 0.09 Hedgerow habitat: 0.04

Criteria	Number
	Watercourse: 0
Total number of post-intervention biodiversity units approved off-site	Habitat area: 0.36 Hedgerow area: 0 Watercourse: 0
Net change in biodiversity units broken down by habitat area (onsite and offsite combined):	Cropland (-0.08) Grassland (-0.05) Heathland and shrub (0.43) Urban (-0.01) Individual trees (0.07)
Number and % of off-site biodiversity units located outside of LPA or NCA of impact site and neighbouring LPA or NCA	Habitat area: 0.36 (100%) Hedgerow area: 0 Watercourse: 0

## Actions Taken to Meet BNG Obligations

**5.4** BNG is predominantly a planning matter with the assessment, processing and approval of planning applications requiring BNG a responsibility of the planning team and the ecologists embedded within that function. As a result, the majority of actions relate to how these applications are processed and assessed within that function.

**5.5** MDC uses the Mycelia software solution to log and monitor BNG data. This provides officers with an easy interface to assess BNG applications, ultimately saving time and provides a robust database of reports that can be used for validation and long-term monitoring.

**5.6** MDC has produced a BNG Supplementary Planning Document to assist prospective developers and applicants by providing guidance on how to best meet the requirements of planning policy related to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the Mansfield District (**see Chapter 3 – Biodiversity Net Gain SPD**).

**5.7** MDC contributed to the creation of the Biodiversity Net Gain Framework for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. The framework aims to ensure that all the LPAs in Nottinghamshire

are working towards a shared vision to effectively deliver BNG within the County (**see Chapter 3 – Biodiversity Net Gain Framework for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham**).

**5.8** MDC have introduced a fee to cover the costs associated with monitoring BNG within developments (**see Chapter 6**).

### Highlights & Challenges

- BNG is now a formal requirement. MDC's strategic planning tools (Local Plan and the Biodiversity Net Gain SPD) embed BNG requirements and guidance.
- Training, internal guidance documents and software are being deployed to equip Council officers with BNG knowledge and skills, strengthening the Council's BNG review capacity.
- Remaining challenges include ensuring consistent monitoring and enforcement of BNG compliance over the long-term.

## Legal Agreements

**5.9** MDC secures biodiversity delivery through legal frameworks, primarily Section 106 (S106) agreements, which embed long-term obligations into development projects.

**5.10** S106 agreements can be set up between developers and MDC to ensure that works related to BNG are undertaken and those habitats are secured for 30 years using a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

**5.11** In the 2024/25 monitoring period, MDC received £0 for ecology / biodiversity net gain and 76,489.82 for green space<sup>48</sup>.

**5.12** In the 2023/24 monitoring period, MDC received £9,210.51 for ecology / biodiversity net gain and £115,144.79 for green space<sup>49</sup>.

**5.13** In the 2022/23 monitoring period, MDC received £315,241.90 for green space<sup>50</sup>.

**5.14** In the 2021/22 monitoring period, MDC received £59,398.98 for green space<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Mansfield District Council (2025) Mansfield District Council Infrastructure Funding Statement 24/25, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/7042/mansfield-district-council-fixed-ifs-2024-25>

<sup>49</sup> Mansfield District Council (2024) Mansfield District Council Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6774/mansfield-district-council-infrastructure-funding-statement-2023-2024>

<sup>50</sup> Mansfield District Council (2023) Mansfield District Council Infrastructure funding statement, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/6473/finalised-ifs-2022-23>

<sup>51</sup> Mansfield District Council (2022) Mansfield District Council Infrastructure Funding Statement, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/5245/mansfield-district-council-infrastructure-funding-statement-2021-2022-document-link->

**5.15** In the 2020/2021 monitoring period, MDC received £193,000.00 for green space<sup>52</sup>.

## BNG Banking

**5.16** The National Biodiversity Gain Site Register lists all legally secured off-site biodiversity gain sites in England. As of February 2026, no sites have been registered within the Mansfield District.

**5.17** However, there are several sites registered within the wider Nottinghamshire County. The closest is in Blidworth, in the neighbouring district of Newark and Sherwood. This site is currently subject to a legal agreement but once in place would cover 3 ha of neutral grassland, providing 13.27 habitat units and 5.87 hedgerow units.

**5.18** The lack of BNG sites within the Mansfield District highlights a challenge for developers who want to acquire lower-cost units within the same local authority as their developments to fulfil their BNG requirements. It is also a missed opportunity for MDC to ensure biodiversity gains remain within the district as currently developers are having to explore options outside of the Mansfield District in neighbouring LPAs, as shown in **Table 5.1**.

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<sup>52</sup> Mansfield District Council (2021) Mansfield District Council Infrastructure Funding Statement 2020/21, Available at:

<https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/3016/mansfield-district-council-infrastructure-funding-statement-2020-2021>

## Chapter 6

### Investment in Nature

This chapter describes funding for nature-related activities in the district. Delivery examples are signposted in Chapter 4. The structure of governance for nature is also outlined.

#### Council Resourcing

**6.1** MDC has no in-house ecologist. MDC engages a consultant ecologist to work one day a week. Working within the planning team they provide ecological input to planning applications and guide BNG.

**6.2** There are no posts exclusively dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. However, several roles from across different Council functions contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity including:

- Parks,
- Planning Policy,
- Neighbourhood Services; and
- Cultural Services.

#### Council Led Grant Funding

**6.3** MDC currently offers no dedicated funding to enable community and organisational projects to deliver biodiversity, climate resilience, and environmental enhancements.

#### Funding Secured

**6.4** MDC has been successful in securing external funding to deliver biodiversity enhancements across the district. These include:

- £1 million of accelerator funding from the MHCLG as part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund which was used by MDC to deliver the Urban Greening Project involving tree and shrub planting and the creation of pocket parks across Mansfield town centre.
- £61,000 of funding from Defra's Nature for Climate Fund which was used by MDC to deliver the Trees for Climate

project, ultimately delivering over 7,000 trees across the district and creating new woodlands.

## Service Level Agreements

**6.5** MDC holds a service level agreement (SLA) with Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Record Centre (NBGRC) for the maintenance of environmental data.

**6.6** MDC holds an SLA with the Sherwood Forest Trust to assist with the management and maintenance of Oak Tree Heath SSSI.

## Planning Related Mechanisms

### Section 106 Agreements

**6.7** MDC leverages statutory planning tools to secure funding for nature, principally through Section 106 Agreements.

**6.8** Section 106 Agreements take the form of financial payments from developers to be used by the Council to deliver infrastructure to support residential developments.

**6.9** MDC spent £91,446.84 derived from S106 agreements on green space provision in 2024/2025. This allowed projects to be carried out a number of open spaces including maintenance at New Mill Lane and Holly Road, access improvements at Quarry Lane LNR and the creation of footpaths at Millenium Green<sup>53</sup>.

### Monitoring fees related to BNG

**6.10** MDC have introduced a fee to cover the costs associated with monitoring BNG within developments. For residential developments under 150 units, the fee per agreement is a minimum of £275 or 2% of the total financial contribution, whichever is greater. Monies secured for BNG monitoring purposes cannot however be used for infrastructure provision.

## Partnerships

**6.11** MDC works with numerous partners to deliver specific biodiversity projects. Often, these projects are community-led, allowing nature recovery to be delivered efficiently and

equitably. Organisations who directly partnered with MDC to enhance biodiversity include:

- **Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)** who were a key partner in designating seven out of the nine LNRs within the Mansfield District through the Natural Connections project. NWT now manage these on behalf of MDC in ways which promote biodiversity.
- Approximately **12 Friends groups** maintain and improve parks and open spaces within the Mansfield District<sup>54</sup>. The Parks Development Officer regularly attends meetings of each group, which enables feedback from local representatives to feed into plans for the park and information and advice around funding opportunities to be fed into the groups. MDC help with recruitment drives for existing 'Friend of' groups and supports the creation of new groups, mostly recently at Mansfield Cemetery and Crematorium and Carr Lane.
- **The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG)** is a partnership of voluntary, statutory and community groups working together to conserve and enhance the wildlife of Nottinghamshire to the benefit of people. MDC work with NottsBAG including attending NottsBAG meetings alongside other LPAs in Nottinghamshire.
- **Maun Conservation Group** carry out conservation projects at Quarry Lane and Oakham LNRs including removal of Japanese knotweed, monthly bird and butterfly surveys and engaging people in path clearing<sup>55</sup>.
- **Mansfield Community and Voluntary Service (MCVS)** are an infrastructure organisation that has been supporting the community and voluntary sector in the Mansfield District for over 40 years. MDC work closely with MCVS to identify, support and engage with the diverse communities across the Mansfield District.
- **More Leisure Community Trust** and **Serco Leisure** facilitated the planting of more than 1,500 trees by ~120 school children in Carr Lane Park to enhance the green space of Warsop Health Hub. These organisations are also delivering vegetable growing workshops to look to engage more of the community in beneficial nature activities<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Mansfield District Council (2026). Mansfield District Council Infrastructure Funding Statement. Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/7042/mansfield-district-council-fixed-ifs-2024-25>

<sup>54</sup> Mansfield District Council (n.d). Friends groups. Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/parks-open-spaces/friends-groups-1>

<sup>55</sup> Maun Conservation Group (n.d.). Homepage. Available online: <https://www.maunconservationgroup.co.uk/index.html>

<sup>56</sup> Mansfield District Council (2025). Warsop Health Hub celebrates one year of improving community wellbeing. Available online: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/news/article/12980/warsop-health-hub-celebrates-one-year-of-improving-community-wellbeing>

- **Severn Trent Water** delivered 343 SuDS within the Mansfield District between 2022 and 2025, creating new habitats whilst reducing flooding risk<sup>57</sup>.
- **Sherwood Forest Trust** who engage with local people, farmers and landowners in the Mansfield District to deliver heathland restoration, tree-planting and woodland creation.

conservation and enhancement projects which are carried out within the Mansfield District.

#### Other stakeholders in the Mansfield District

**6.12** Many organisations are working to enhance biodiversity across the Mansfield District, although a formal partnership with MDC is not yet established. Their contributions are recognised below.

- **Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)** who own and manage Spa Ponds Nature Reserve. Projects to enhance biodiversity have included creating reptile and amphibian hibernacula, carrying out veteranisation of trees, and removing the non-native and invasive Himalayan balsam<sup>58</sup>.
- **Warsop Footpaths and Countryside Group** who are involved in invasive species control, undertake conservation projects and monitor local wildlife.
- **Mansfield Woodhouse Millenium Green Trust** who have created a wildflower meadow, a community orchard and re-homed hedgehogs on Millenium Green which is a 1.4 ha site of permanent grassland<sup>59</sup>.
- **River Idle Catchment Partnership**<sup>60</sup> has a vision to conserve and enhance the Rivers Idle, Ryton, Poulter, Meden, Maun, their tributaries and surrounding land, to create a healthy and wildlife-rich water environment for the benefit of both people and biodiversity.

#### Highlights & Challenges

- MDC partners with a broad range of organisations spanning community groups, charities, public bodies, and private companies, enabling biodiversity enhancement projects to be delivered effectively and equitably within the Mansfield District.
- Reduced funding and volunteer participation within these external organisations has been identified as a future challenge which could reduce the number of

<sup>57</sup> Severn Trent Water (2025). Mansfield Sustainable Flood Resilience project. Available online: <https://www.stwater.co.uk/wonderful-on-tap/green-recovery/mansfield-sustainable-flood-resilience/>

<sup>58</sup> FTNCG (n.d). Introduction. Available online: <https://foresttown.net/>

<sup>59</sup> Mansfield Woodhouse Millenium Green (n.d). Available online: <https://mwmgreen.weebly.com/>

<sup>60</sup> Catchment Based Approach (n.d.) River Idle Catchment Partnership, Available at: <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/get-involved/idle/>

## Chapter 7

### Looking Ahead for Nature

**This chapter sets out how Mansfield District Council will fulfil the biodiversity duty over the coming reporting period to 2030. It first considers the challenges facing Mansfield and how these will be overcome to deliver on the vision and targets of Mansfield District Council.**

**7.1** As evidenced in the previous chapters, MDC have taken great steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district, fulfilling the requirements of their EBD. Looking to the future, continuing to meet the EBD has implications for strategic planning and delivery across all Council functions.

#### Context and Challenges

**7.2** MDC could experience several different challenges over the next five years. These include but are not limited to:

- Reduction in government funding for council-provided services, including the management of green spaces. A funding shortfall of up to £3 million is expected by the 2027/2028 financial year due to the cost and demand for services having increased in recent years<sup>61</sup>. This impacts upon the revenue available to create and maintain nature rich habitats and staff resource to manage these spaces.
- Increased pressure from housing and transport development. Under the Central Government's national housing target, MDC plan to deliver approximately 3,000 additional new homes by 2043. This could have implications for the provision of greenspace.
- Population growth in the Mansfield District. The districts population size has increased by 5.8%, from ~104,500 in 2011 to 110,500 in 2021. In 2021, Mansfield is the seventh most densely populated of the East Midlands'

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<sup>61</sup> Mansfield District Council (2024). Mansfield's budget consultation results to be considered by committee. Available online:

<https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/news/article/12898/mansfield-s-budget-consultation-results-to-be-considered-by-committee>

35 local authority areas, with around 10 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land. This increase and potential future increases in population will create additional land use pressure.

- MDC has no full-time ecologist or post solely dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity across the district. This reduces the amount of focussed work that MDC can put into biodiversity enhancements and results in a lack coordination across teams who can all contribute to biodiversity.
- Changes in BNG legalisation in relation to the exemption of smaller sites (<0.2ha) and a restriction on Council's to require over 10% wholesale BNG in the National Planning Policy Framework could limit how much MDC is able to deliver for nature.
- MDC has no habitat bank in the district so off-site BNG enhancements may be delivered out of the district.
- New, or exacerbation of already present, INNS and diseases affecting native species and impacting the health of natural habitats. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam have been recorded within the River Maun and smaller waterways. American mink have been recorded within River Meden and pose a direct threat to water voles<sup>62</sup>.
- Climate change is leading to more extreme weather events such as droughts and flooding, which affect ecosystem function and tree survival rates.
- Volunteer numbers for 'friends of' and other community groups are decreasing. Volunteer groups struggle to recruit younger members.

## Visibility and Resourcing

**7.3** Currently MDC has one sub-contracted ecologist one day a week in planning to provide ecological input to planning applications or to guide BNG. The Council could explore options to recruit further ecologists, especially to advise on BNG.

**7.4** MDC has ambitions to hire a woodlands officer.

**7.5** At present, there is no overall lead officer corporately for biodiversity, as there is with climate change. This leads to reduced attention and focus on biodiversity related issues. This is something that could be explored over the next five-year period.

## Policies and Strategies

**7.6** At present, MDC does not have a dedicated biodiversity or nature strategy but does have a biodiversity supplementary planning document to guide biodiversity enhancements with new developments.

**7.7** The Climate Change Strategy and Parks and Open Space Strategy are core nature related strategy documents for MDC. '*The Natural Environment*' and '*Ecology and Environment*' are included as themes within both strategies respectively. Both strategies include an ambition to enhance and protect the natural environment, local biodiversity and open spaces.

**7.8** Both strategies include committed actions which will lead to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity across the district (see **Chapter 7 - Delivery Actions**).

**7.9** MDC is set to review and update several plans, policies and strategies spanning the next reporting period that incorporate elements of biodiversity delivery, including:

**7.10** The corporate plan for MDC, known as '**Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield**' will renew in 2030. The strategy currently has a core theme of '*Our Environment*' and a priority to '*support and encourage sustainable development with biodiversity*'. This could be strengthened in later revisions of the plan to more directly refer to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity across the district.

**7.11 The Mansfield Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan** has no externally published expiry date. However, when the strategy is due to be refreshed, options could be explored to refocus the strategy as a climate and nature strategy, given that climate and nature are inextricably linked and that MDC has no dedicated biodiversity or nature plan.

**7.12 Toward 2030: A Plan for Wellbeing** has a priority theme of place and an ambition to create healthy environments for residents. Given the building evidence of the positive impacts of spending time in nature for both physical and mental being, stronger links to conserving and enhancing biodiversity and access to it, could be made in revised versions of this plan.

**7.13** It is worth noting that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is currently subject to a period of consultation, which could have implications for strategies, policies and plans within the Mansfield District. Any changes to the NPPF will be reflected in the next EBD reporting cycle.

<sup>62</sup> INNS Mapper (2026). Available online: <https://innsmapper.org/map>

## Taking Account of the LNRS

**7.14** MDC will take account of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS over the next five years by integrating the priorities and measures proposed in the LNRS into the delivery of their policies and plans, and how the Council plans to meet their EBD duty. MDC are undertaking a Local Plan Review<sup>63</sup> to ensure that it reflects changes to the district's housing requirements along with new legislation and guidance introduced by the government. The updated plan will include a policy relating to the LNRS and BNG.

## Delivery Actions

**7.15** MDC intends to deliver the following actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity over the next five years:

- Increase biodiversity within parks and open spaces with a greater appreciation for developing appropriate habitats for plants, birds, and other wildlife.
- Increase the sustainability of parks and open spaces by encouraging environmental practices.
- Work with Friends Of groups and charitable organisations to support environmental projects such as tree planting, wetland recovery and repairing fire damage.
- Ensure regular inspections and maintenance is carried out on the extensive number of trees within our parks and open spaces to ensure they are healthy and continue to enhance the environment.
- Develop strong links with Mansfield District's schools and academies to work together to support environmental learning.
- Encourage participation in environmental activities of all abilities.

## Priorities

**7.16** Actions MDC could prioritise for nature derived from the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS include:

- Deliver nature restoration and enhancement projects at the SSSIs which are in unfavourable condition to support the national Environmental Improvement Plan<sup>9</sup> target of '50% of SSSIs with actions on track to reach favourable condition by December 2030'. Currently, only Lord Stubbins Wood SSSI is in favourable condition, which equates to 15.89% of SSSIs within the Mansfield District, well below the national average of 35%.

- Increase the percentage of deciduous woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland (priority habitats) which sit within a statutory designated site such as an LNR. Only 22% of deciduous woodland and 2% of good quality semi-improved grassland currently sit under the statutory designated site network which is less than other priority habitats such as lowland heathland and lowland calcareous grassland which have 83% and 94% covered.
- Declare more LNRs to improve access to nature, generate community ownership and get the Mansfield District to achieve NEGIF's target of one hectare of LNR per 1,000 people. The district currently has a small shortfall of 3 ha of LNR.
- Concentrate on delivering nature recovery projects within Areas that Could Become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIBs) as identified by the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS to maximise biodiversity improvements. For specific habitats such as the River Meden and Maun, this could involve re-naturalising them where appropriate by de-channelising and reinstating meanders. For grasslands, this could involve bringing back neglected grasslands, including along roads and amenity spaces, back into favourable condition to increase species diversity.
- Target habitat enhancement and creation in areas where this will reduce fragmentation and increase ecological connectivity, through the creation of linkages, corridors and stepping stones. Within the Mansfield District, the northwestern boundary from Pleasley to Warsop Wood has been mapped as the most important area for this measure to take place, as highlighted by the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS.
- Deliver on the mapped measure of safeguarding the long-term future of the White-clawed crayfish in the Cauldwell Brook at the Oakham LNR, as highlighted by the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS.

## Climate Change Resilience

**7.17** Though not among the requirements identified by Defra, consideration of the effects of climate change over the next five years and identification of actions to be taken to build climate resilience are essential. The climate and biodiversity crises are inextricably linked, and the rapidly changing climate will affect biodiversity in the UK.

**7.18** MDC have declared a climate emergency and has a Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan in place to build

<sup>63</sup> Mansfield District Council (n.d.) Local Plan Review, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-review/1>

climate resilience across the district. The ongoing monitoring and reporting of these strategies will enable efficiencies moving forward for capturing relevant data for EBD reporting.

**7.19** Possible options that MDC could continue to explore to build climate resilience include:

- Focussing on tree planting and the installation of green infrastructure in urban areas where communities are disproportionately affected by the effects of the urban heat island effect and climate change. In particular, the wards of Penniment, Newgate and Hornby which have 3.4%, 4.3% and 4.9% of tree canopy cover, respectively.
- Continue to use SuDS in urban areas across the district to enhance biodiversity and reduce localised flood risk. Particularly in the neighbourhoods of, and upstream of, Warsop Vale, Mansfield Woodhouse and Mansfield which have the highest flood risk vulnerabilities in the district.
- Work to improve MDC's Climate Action Scorecard to be in line with the national average of 36%.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

**7.20** A variety of metrics can be used to support the monitoring and evaluation of associated targets and objectives. Metrics associated with other reporting, such as the '*Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield*' and the '*Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038*', are preferred to avoid duplication.

**7.21** **Table 7.1** provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation of the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity across the Mansfield District. The table is based on national targets and existing commitment actions within MDC strategies.

**7.22** Appendix 9 of the Mansfield District Local Plan 2013 – 2033<sup>64</sup> also includes a monitoring framework for policies related to biodiversity.

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<sup>64</sup> Mansfield District Council (2013) Mansfield District Local Plan, Available at: <https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/downloads/file/1645/mdc-adopted-local-plan-2020>

Table 7.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for conserving and enhancing biodiversity across MDC

Target / Action	Source of Target	Metric	Data Source	Baseline 2025
SSSIs in favourable condition	Environmental Improvement Plan	% of units / features in favourable condition	Natural England	16% of SSSIs are favourable condition
Wildlife rich habitat created outside of protected areas	Environmental Improvement Plan	Area (ha) of wildlife rich habitat created outside of protected areas	MDC and partners	15.7ha of biodiverse flower meadows and wildlife corridors were created.  100 trees planted as part of a community orchard.
Increase provision of hedgerows	Environmental Improvement Plan	Length (km) of hedgerows planted  Units of hedgerow habitat provided via BNG	MDC and partners	0.04 units of hedgerow provided via BNG.
BNG Delivery	Local Plan	No. of BNG units delivered	MDC	0.49 units
Increase biodiversity within parks and open spaces with a greater appreciation for developing appropriate habitats for plants, birds, and other wildlife	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Area (ha) of habitat created for wildlife within parks and open spaces</li> <li>■ No. of habitats (e.g. bird and bat boxes, loggeries etc) installed in parks and open spaces.</li> <li>■ No. of ponds created</li> </ul>	MDC and partners	15.7 ha of wildflower meadow and wildlife corridors.  5 bat boxes installed  0 ponds
Increase the sustainability of parks and open spaces by encouraging environmental practices	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	Area (ha) / no. of parks or open spaces where a reduced mowing regime is in place.	MDC	8 ha
Work with Friends Of groups and charitable organisations to support environmental projects such as tree planting, wetland recovery and repairing fire damage	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	No. and type of project delivered with partners to enhance biodiversity.	MDC and partners	7 LNRS managed by NWT.  12 Friends of Groups supported.
Develop strong links with Mansfield Districts schools and academies to work together to support environmental learning	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	No. of schools and school children involved in biodiversity related projects.	MDC and partners	'Our Favourite Tree' workshops delivered to schools.
Encourage participation in environmental activities of all abilities	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	No. of events held to encourage local residents to engage in activities which benefit biodiversity.	MDC and partners	Projects held by Mansfield Museums and tree planting via trees for climate.

## Chapter 8

### Summary and Conclusion

**This chapter concisely summarises the achievements that Mansfield District Council has delivered to meet its biodiversity duty to January 2026, and concludes the actions required to deliver this to 2030.**

#### State of Nature

**8.1** MDC's natural environment is comprised of areas of deciduous woodland often associated with lowland heathland and areas of grassland and wetlands which sit adjacent to the River Meden and Maun.

**8.2** The designated site network is 990ha, covering 13% of the Mansfield District. 360 ha of MDC is classified as a priority habitat (8% of the district). 30% of this is under a statutory wildlife designation.

**8.3** Only 16% of SSSIs in the district are classified as in favourable condition, below the national average of 35%. However, 76% of SSSIs are classified as unfavourable – recovering (above the national average), suggesting that the condition of Mansfield District's SSSIs are on an upward trajectory, helping to meet the national Environmental Improvement Plan target of '50% of SSSIs with actions on track to reach favourable condition by December 2030'.

**8.4** Given the extent of deciduous woodland (largest priority habitat) within the Mansfield District and recent tree planting projects, tree canopy cover is at 18%, which is higher than the national average of 16.5%.

#### Headline Achievements

**8.5** MDC have taken many steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Council has '*Our Environment*' as one of five key themes in the corporate plan and a priority to '*support and encourage sustainable development with biodiversity*'. MDC's Local Plan, which directs development in the district, has a vision that '*natural assets in the district will have been protected and enhanced to help shape new places to live, increase biodiversity, and improve connectivity to benefit*

*wildlife and the health and wellbeing of the district's residents'.*

The plan includes strategic priorities, objectives and policies which relate to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. MDC has a climate change and parks and open spaces strategy which both include commitments and actions to deliver benefits for biodiversity.

**8.6** MDC has taken action to enhance biodiversity and green spaces across the district. Key examples include the planting of 7,000 trees as part of Trees for Climate, the Urban Greening Project leading to the creation of pocket parks across Mansfield, the installation of 343 SuDS and 39 new street planters and improved parks and open spaces management to Mansfield parks and nature reserves. Improved management has led to the eradication of Japanese Knotweed at council-owned sites and the creation of ~15ha of wildflower meadow.

**8.7** MDC supports residents and local communities to play a part in biodiversity enhancements. Highlights include support over 12 'Friends of' groups in the district and a number of nature related projects and initiatives delivered by Mansfield Museums and Galleries.

## Next Steps

**8.8** Over the next five years, MDC will continue to carry out their duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and meet local, regional and national biodiversity targets.

**8.9** Policies in the Local Plan will require developers to both conserve and enhance biodiversity. BNG will also offer further opportunities for habitat creation in the district.

**8.10** Committed actions within MDC's strategies include increasing biodiversity within parks and open spaces with a greater appreciation for developing appropriate habitats for plants, birds, and other wildlife and creating stronger links with schools and local residents to increase the number of people who access, connect and taken action for nature across the district.

**8.11** Business as usual activities that MDC will continue to deliver include eradicating invasive species (with a focus on Japanese Knotweed), implementing relaxed mowing regimes, installing SuDS in new developments are directed in the Local Plan, applying for external funding and build partnerships to booster biodiversity and engaging communities and residents with biodiversity related activities.

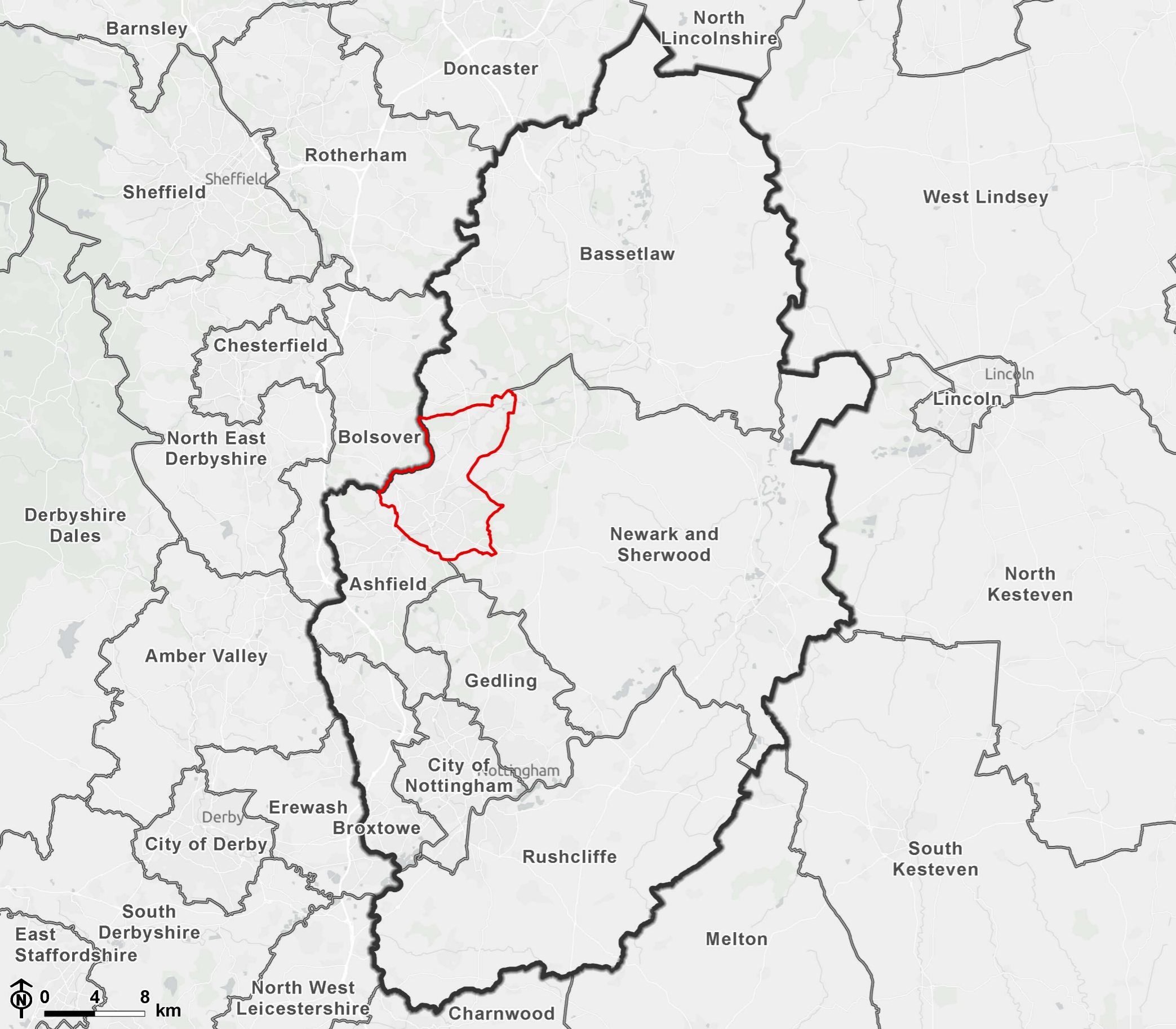
**8.12** Appendix 2 provides a table of the national, regional and local targets and actions for MDC over the next five years.

# Appendix A




## Figures

- A.1 Location of the Mansfield District
- A.2 Designated Sites within the Mansfield District.
- A.3 Priority habitats within the Mansfield District.
- A.4 Water Quality within the Mansfield District
- A.5 Access to Nature within the Mansfield District.
- A.6 Climate Vulnerability within the Mansfield District.

## **A.1 Location of Mansfield District**

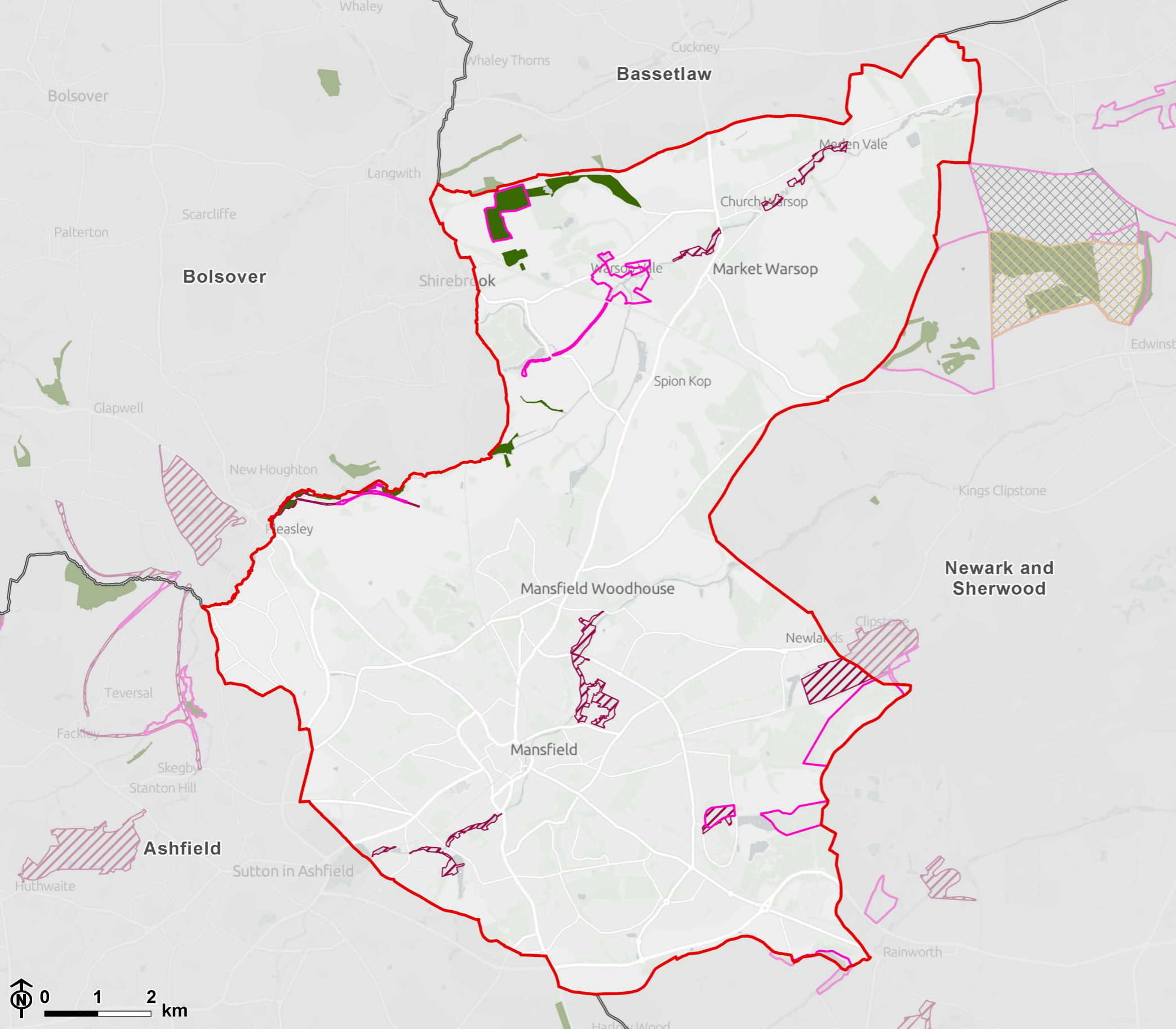


**Legend**

-  Mansfield district boundary
-  Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
-  Nottinghamshire county boundary



## **A.2 Designated Sites within Mansfield District.**

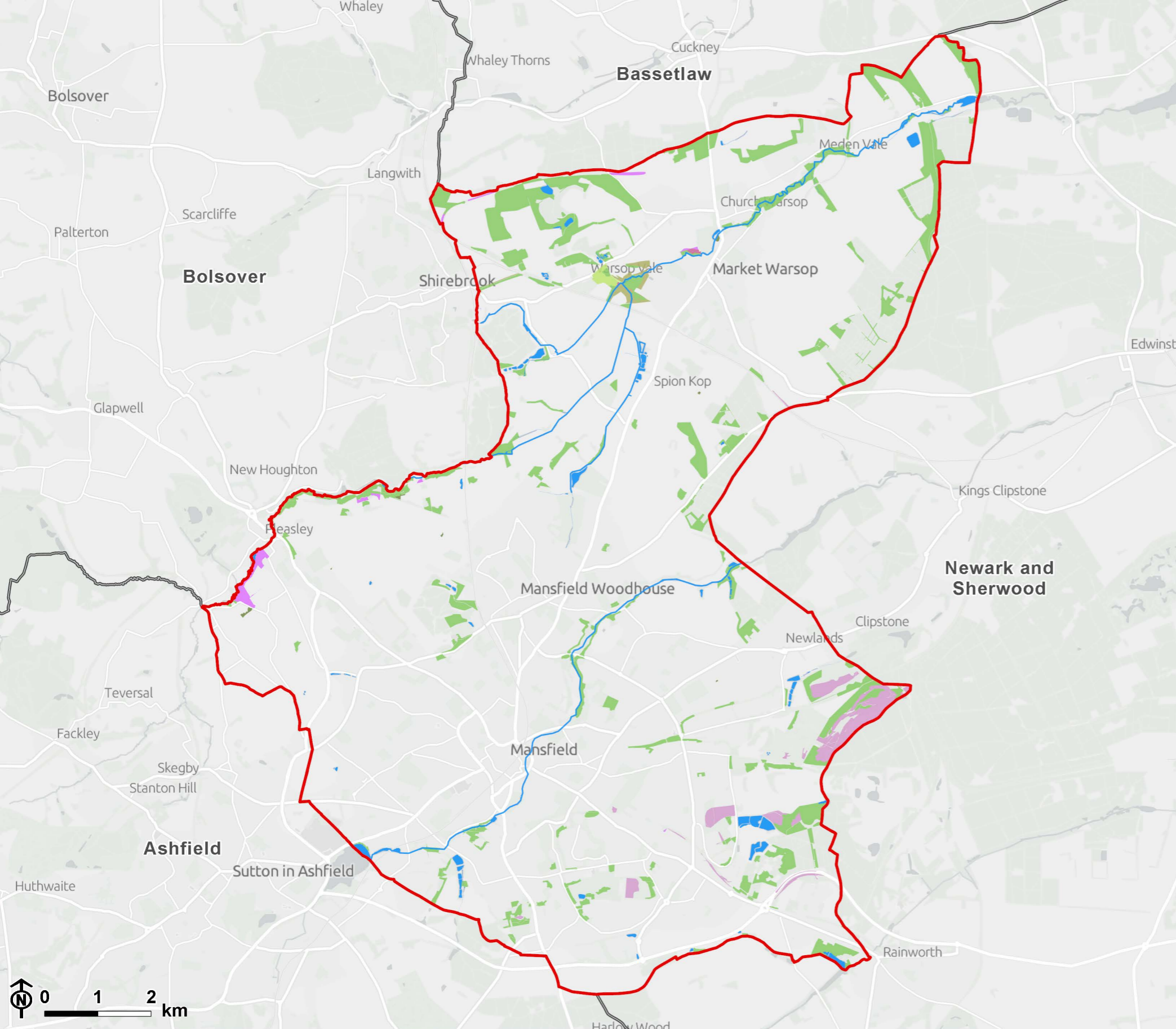


- Legend**
- Mansfield district boundary
  - Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - National Nature Reserve
  - Special Area of Conservation
  - Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
  - Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland

Designated Sites	Hectarage (ha)	% cover of Mansfield District	% within a designation
SSSI	156.21	2.04	
LNR	107.68	1.40	
Ancient Woodland	67.61	0.88	44.02



### **A.3 Priority habitats within Mansfield District.**



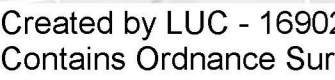
**Legend**

- Mansfield district boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
- Rivers
- Surface water

**Priority Habitats**

- 1. Deciduous woodland (82.9%)
- 2. Good quality semi improved grassland (2.5%)
- 3. Lowland calcareous grassland (1.9%)
- 4. Lowland fens (0.2%)
- 5. Lowland heathland (11.4%)
- 6. Lowland meadows (0.9%)
- 7. Traditional orchard (0.3%)

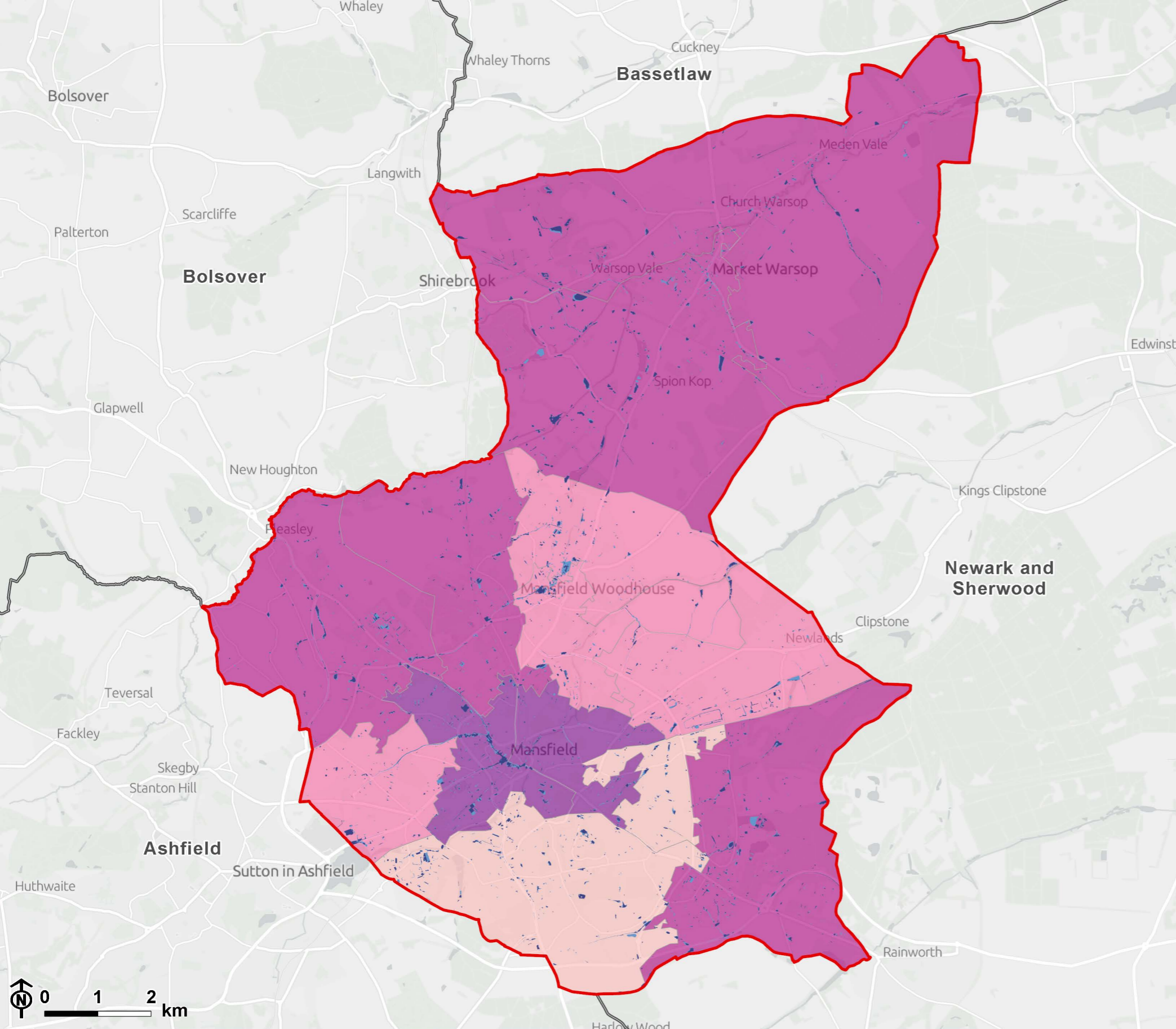
Priority habitat	Hectarage (ha)	% cover of Mansfield district	% within a statutory designation
1. DWOOD	506.93	6.61	21.54
2. GQSIG	15.00	0.20	1.83
3. LCGRA	11.37	0.15	94.09
5. LFENS	1.11	0.01	100.00
5. LHEAT	69.54	0.91	82.57
6. LMEAD	5.73	0.07	99.12
7. TORCH	1.73	0.02	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>611.40</b>	<b>7.97</b>	<b>30.16</b>



## **A.4 Access to Nature within Mansfield District.**



## **A.5 Climate Vulnerability within Mansfield District.**



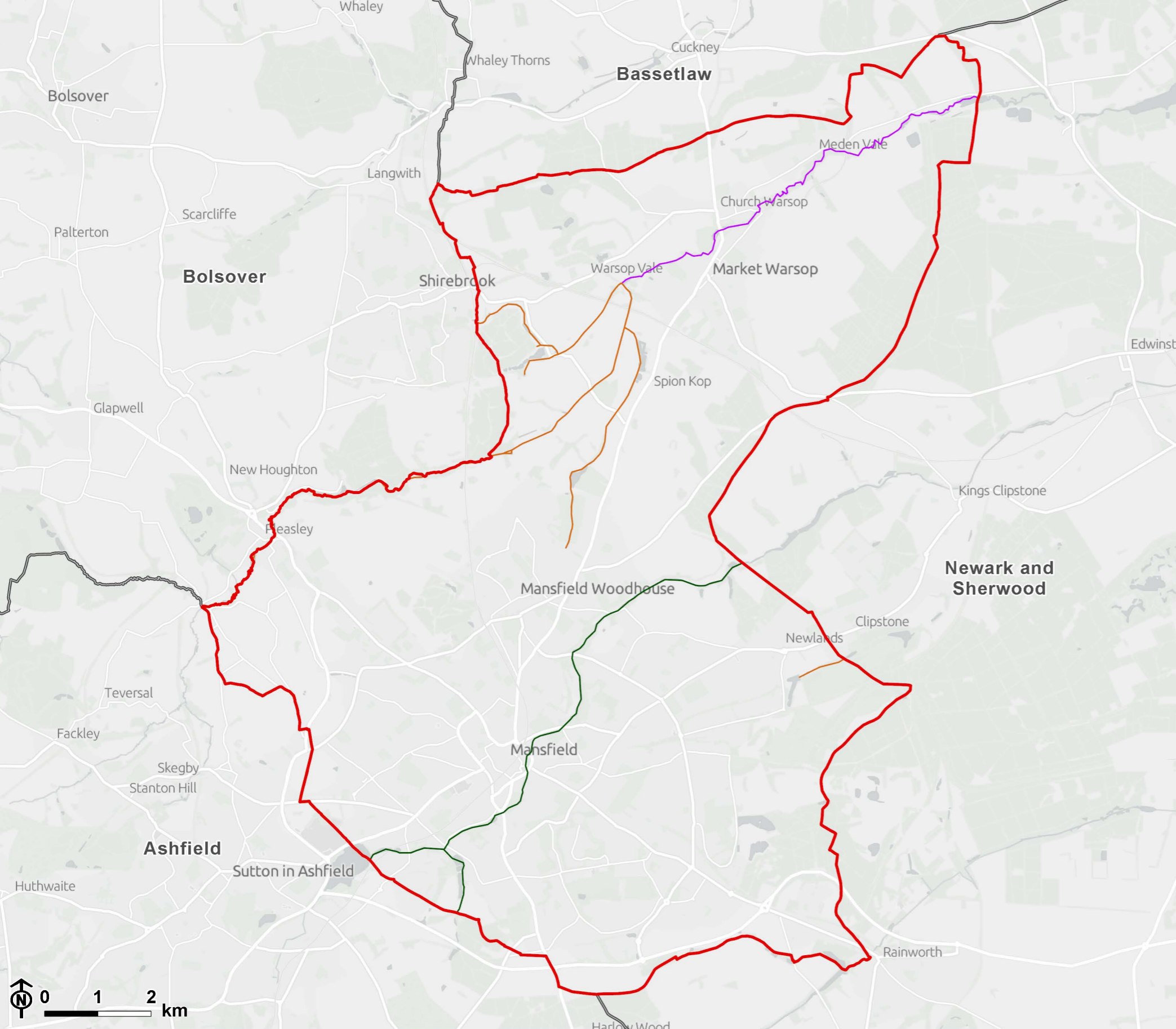
**Legend**

- Mansfield district boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
- Risk of surface water flooding (RoFSW)**
- High (1 in 30)
- Medium (1 in 100)
- Heat socio-spatial vulnerability**
- 0.5 to -1.5 (Relatively Low)
- 0.5 to -0.5 (Average)
- 0.5 to 1.5 (Relatively High)
- 1.5 to 2.5 (Extremely High)

RoFSW	Hectarage (ha)	% cover of Mansfield District
1 in 100 (Medium)	93.02	1.21
1 in 30 (High)	77.51	1.01

Heat vulnerability	Hectarage (ha)	% cover of Mansfield District
Extremely high	487.20	6.35
Relatively high	4880.88	63.63

## **A.6 Water Quality within Mansfield District.**



**Legend**

- Mansfield district boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority boundary
- WFD Ecological Classifications for waterbodies (2022)**
- Good
- Moderate
- Poor

**Note:**  
*Certain waterbodies have not yet been classified by the Environment Agency and therefore do not appear on this map*

## Appendix B

### Mansfield District Council's progress against national, regional and local targets since 2020 to date

Table B.1 National and regional targets and progress since 2020 to date

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
National					
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025	Habitat restoration / creation	Restore/create > 500,000 ha wildlife-rich habitat by 2042: 140,000 ha by 2028	Quantitative	Projects such as the Trees for Climate and creation of community orchards contribute to this target.	On-going
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025	Species protection	Halt species decline by 2030; increase abundance by ≥ 10% by 2042	Quantitative	Actions such as installing bat boxes at Mansfield Crematorium contribute to this target.	On-going
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025	Protected areas	Protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030	Quantitative	13% of the Mansfield District is currently designated as a SAC, SPA, NNR or SSSI or LoWS	On going
Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025	Tree cover	Increase woodland and canopy to 16.5% by 2050	Quantitative	Tree canopy cover is estimated at 18%.	Completed
Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework	LNR Designations	1 ha of LNR per 1,000 population.	Quantitative	The 2021 estimate of Mansfield District's population is 110,482, which means with 107.68 ha of LNR, the district is currently suffering a shortfall of only 2.80 ha of LNR.	On going
Regional					
Creating a Wilder Nottinghamshire by 2030.	Education and Engagement	One in four people in Nottinghamshire are inspired and empowered to take urgent action for nature and the	Quantitative	MDC supports 12 'Friends of' groups across the district.	On going

Creating a Wilder Nottinghamshire by 2030	Habitat restoration / creation	Growing the nature recovery network so that at least one third of land and water, which equates to 64,800ha, within Nottinghamshire is wilder.	Quantitative	MDC contributes to this target via the creation of ~15ha of wildflower meadow, reducing mowing regimes on 8ha of land in parks.	On Going
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Table B.2 Local targets and progress since 2020 to date

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield	Policies and Plans	Prepare a GI supplementary planning document.	N/A		Adopted March 2024
Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield	Policies and Plans	Prepare a biodiversity supplementary planning document.	N/A		Adopted September 2023
Towards 2030: A Strategy for Mansfield	Policies and Plans	Publish a Mansfield green space standard.	N/A		Completed
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038	Habitat restoration / creation	Increase biodiversity within parks and open spaces with a greater appreciation for developing appropriate habitats for plants, birds, and other wildlife.	Qualitative	MDC has created 15.7 ha of wildflower meadow and wildlife corridors and installed 5 bat boxes.	On going
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038	Habitat Management	Increase the sustainability of parks and open spaces by encouraging environmental practices.	Qualitative	MDC is implementing a reduced mowing regime of 8 ha of parks and open spaces.	On going
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038	Partnership Working	Work with Friends Of groups and charitable organisations to support environmental projects such as tree planting, wetland recovery and repairing fire damage.	Qualitative	MDC support 12 Friends of groups and other charitable organisations to boost biodiversity across the district (see <b>Chapter 6 - Partnerships</b> ).	On going
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038	Tree Maintenance	Ensure regular inspections and maintenance is carried out on the	Qualitative		No Data

Source	Theme	Target	Type	Notes	Progress
		extensive number of trees within our parks and open spaces to ensure they are healthy and continue to enhance the environment.			
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038	Education and Engagement	Develop strong links with Mansfield District's schools and academies to work together to support environmental learning.	Qualitative	MDC's museum's team have hosted environmental workshops with local schools (see <b>Chapter 4 – Education and Engagement</b> ).	On going
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2023 – 2038	Education and Engagement	Encourage participation in environmental activities of all abilities.	Qualitative	MDC host a number of events and initiatives to engage local communities with nature including the 'Our Favourite Tree' project (see <b>Chapter 4 – Education and Engagement</b> ).	On going