



Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 December 2025

Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy

Report of the Director – Neighbourhoods

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor R Inglis

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report presents the updated Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2026-2030, developed by the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) on which the Council is represented.
- 1.2. A decision is required whether the new Strategy meets the needs of the Council and whether the Council should adopt this Strategy.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approve the adoption of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2026 – 2030 as a Strategy of the Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

The current adopted Nature Conservation Strategy ran to the end of 2025 and needs updating for its work to continue in line with the Council's Environment Corporate priority.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. A community developed Nature Conservation Strategy was first produced in 2003 and then updated in 2010, 2015 and 2020; these were all adopted by the Council.
- 4.2. This Strategy has been developed by a partnership organisation, the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG), led by Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, with members from nature conservation groups, community groups, parish councils and other interested bodies.
- 4.3. The Strategy aims to protect and enhance nature conservation in Rushcliffe, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready public access to wildlife rich green spaces.

- 4.4. There will be a particular emphasis on habitats traditionally found in the Borough, including species-rich grassland, wetland, trees and woodland habitats, orchards and species characteristic of the Borough such as barn owl, grizzled skipper butterflies, great crested newts, black poplar, water voles and brown hare. This will be achieved through forming effective partnerships, brought together through the RNCSIG.
- 4.5. The Strategy covers the following:
- Overview of Rushcliffe's Wildlife
 - Successes of the Strategy 2021-2025
 - Nature Recovery Network
 - Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
 - Priorities for Habitats
 - Designated Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves
 - Rushcliffe's Landscapes
 - Green-Blue Infrastructure
 - Climate Change
 - Rewilding
 - Community Involvement
 - Planning Policies and the Protection of Wildlife and Habitats
 - Nature Conservation Aims and Objectives
 - Key Target Indicators
- 4.6. The section on Priorities for Habitats sets out the importance of the main habitats found in Rushcliffe, including wildflower grasslands and woodland and trees and what policies partners should take to protect and enhance these habitats. This includes a commitment to:
- Protect enhance and expand appropriate tree and woodland cover in Rushcliffe, working towards achieving the national targets for woodland and urban tree cover and woodland access.
 - Protect and manage remaining fragments of species-rich grassland and encourage sympathetic management of other grassland and examine options to create/extend species rich grassland.
 - Promote the good management of traditional orchards.
 - Promote conservation, replanting and appropriate management of hedgerows.
 - Supporting projects that benefit our freshwater environment (rivers, ditches, ponds, lakes, canals and reservoirs), tackling water quality issues and benefiting aquatic habitats and species.
- 4.7. Achievements of the 2021-2025 Strategy are given in the Strategy Annual Reports (Nature in Rushcliffe) published by RNCSIG online at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation.
- 4.8. Targets for new management and creation of habitats in the 2026-2030 Strategy are 20 ha's woodland, 20 ha's grassland and 5 ha's wetland. The

Councils recent acquisition of land for Carbon Offsetting will be a key contributor towards meeting these targets.

- 4.9. Other targets of the 2026-2030 Strategy are listed on pages 21-23 of the Strategy (see Appendix 1 to this report).
- 4.10. The Strategy was publicly consulted on between 1 October 2025 and 18 November 2025.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. The Council could seek to produce its own inhouse Strategy; however, this is unlikely to be significantly different from that produced by the RNCSIG.
- 5.2. The Council could choose not to renew the Strategy; however, this risks nature conservation being inadequately considered within Council business and operations, major new built developments, and beneficial management not being undertaken.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. The Strategy provides an evidence-based approach to biodiversity management, which supports a balanced approach to development and natural land management throughout the Borough.
- 6.2. The Strategy supports the legal duties of the Council towards nature conservation; the national and County strategies and policies and the Council's own policies. Failure to deliver on these could have legal and reputational impacts.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

- 7.1.1. The costs of supporting this Strategy are captured within the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy, as such no additional resource requires approval as part of this report.
- 7.1.2. A budget of £127,400 has been allocated for the five-year period 2026/27 to 2030/31 to support tree protection and promotion and wildflower planting in Rushcliffe. This will enable the continued delivery of the Rushcliffe Free Tree Scheme, Community Tree Scheme and Wildflower Seed Scheme.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. The Strategy supports the duty of the Council in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, imposed by section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021.

7.2.2. The Strategy supports the duty of the Council to the requirement as a Supporting Authority for the LNRS under Section 105(5)(a) to (e) of the Environment Act 2021 and The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, Chapter 55, 15C(7).

7.3. Equalities Implications

There are no known equality implications.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no known Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications.

7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

This Strategy supports and provides advice on the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain within the Borough.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	Identifies key nature conservation options in Rushcliffe to direct policy and project development and future investment
Quality of Life	Identifies places of importance for nature and future places of importance for nature supporting access to nature and its health and ecosystem service benefits
Efficient Services	There are no specific implications
Sustainable Growth	Identifies areas of strategic significance for inclusion in planning policy documents and used to direct Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approve the adoption of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2026 – 2030 as a Strategy of the Council.

For more information contact:	Paul Phillips Senior Ecology and Sustainability Officer 0115 914 8595 pphillips@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Nature in Rushcliffe annual reports published by RNC SIG online at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2026-2030