

To: **Executive**
Date of Meeting: 17 September 2024

Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2029 – Approval
Director of Place

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present the Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2024-2029, which is a partnership plan with the aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity within Bracknell Forest Borough.
- 1.2. To provide an overview of work completed to produce the plan, including amendments made to the previously approved draft plan following public consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Executive is asked to approve the Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2024-2029 and supporting summary document.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The BAP forms part of the statutory duty for all public authorities to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- 3.2. The recent Bracknell Forest Council declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency reinforces the importance of action for biodiversity across the borough. The motion includes an item to “Revise the Biodiversity Action Plan to include audits of the state of nature in the borough and to highlight local biodiversity threats due to climate change” which has been taken into consideration in the revised plan.
- 3.3. The Bracknell Forest BAP demonstrates the commitment of the Council and local people to protecting and enhancing nature in the borough.
- 3.4. The plan for 2024-2029 builds upon the previous Biodiversity Action Plans. It is a partnership plan, having been co-produced with input from key stakeholders, including the Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership.
- 3.5. A draft plan was approved for consultation by Executive on 23 April 2024. A 4-week public consultation on the draft plan was undertaken to allow the council to gather feedback more widely from anyone who lives in, works in or visits the borough. Feedback has been used to refine and develop the final plan and a more detailed delivery plan.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1. The alternative option is to rely entirely on external policies and strategies to help guide and shape the future support for our local biodiversity. This approach would not focus specifically on the needs of Bracknell Forest’s wildlife and residents. It may reduce the opportunities to achieve the council’s objectives.

5. Supporting Information

BAP background information

- 5.1. The first Biodiversity Action Plan for Bracknell Forest was published in 1997. There has been a BAP in place since then, and the plan is currently reviewed on a 6-yearly cycle. The previous BAP ran from 2018-2023.
- 5.2. The Bracknell Forest BAP is a partnership plan. It demonstrates the commitment of the Council and local people to protecting and enhancing nature in the borough. The Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership oversees the implementation of the plan. The partnership is made up of local people and organisations with an interest in nature conservation.
- 5.3. Bracknell Forest Council acts as a coordinator for the Biodiversity Action Plan. The council hosts and chairs the Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership. The council gathers updates and reports on progress against the BAP targets.
- 5.4. The aim of the BAP is to conserve and enhance biodiversity within Bracknell Forest Borough. The plan consists of 11 overarching objectives. These objectives guide the plan and link through to each of the measurable targets. The targets are categorised according to the following:
 - General Themes – targets based on factors that influence the conservation of all species and habitats
 - Habitat Action Plans – targets are based on the 6 key habitat types that can be found in Bracknell Forest (grassland, woodland, rivers and wetlands, heathland, farmland and urban)

Development and consultation

- 5.5. The BAP 2024-2029 builds upon the previous BAP 2018-2023.
- 5.6. A draft plan was co-produced with key internal and external stakeholders via workshops and one-to-one discussions. The draft was approved for public consultation by Executive in April 2024.
- 5.7. A 4-week consultation took place between 16 May and 13 June 2024 through the online portal. There were 45 responses to the online consultation, with 2 additional sets of feedback received directly by email. Hard copies were also available at Bracknell, Crowthorne and Sandhurst libraries. No responses were received through the paper copies.
- 5.8. Of the 45 responses received via the consultation portal, 13 were from members of an organisation such as a wildlife conservation group and 4 of these are members of the Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership. Responses were received from people living in every town/parish within Bracknell Forest, with the majority living in Bracknell. 5 responses were received from people who live outside Bracknell Forest.
- 5.9. Appendix 1 includes the quantitative responses received through the portal. The quantitative questions showed:
 - Objectives: 89% respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives support the aim to conserve and enhance nature conservation in Bracknell Forest.
 - Targets: 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the targets support the aim to conserve and enhance nature conservation in Bracknell Forest.

- Structure: 69% of respondents agreed that the plan was easy to follow, with 16% disagreeing and 13% responding don't know/no opinion.
- Length: 71% of respondents agreed that the plan contained the appropriate amount of information, with 16% disagreeing and 13% responding don't know/no opinion.
- Technical terms: 78% of respondents agreed that the plan uses technical terms only where required and provides an explanation for these, with 7% disagreeing and 13% responding don't know/no opinion.

5.10. Appendix 1 also includes the more detailed written feedback, with the response or action taken for each comment or group of comments.

Proposed changes following consultation

5.11. Reflecting upon the responses and comments received, a number of changes have been made to plan, including:

- Adding an executive summary
- Adding a new objective to the list of overarching objectives to “Encourage access to nature while protecting sensitive habitats and wildlife”
- Targets are shown in tables with the linked objectives, rather than a list
- Strengthening the existing target around invasive species Himalayan Balsam, and adding an additional target relating to invasive species in woodlands
- Increasing the ambition on volunteer hours
- Adding a target to create 3 community orchards and a target to enhance verges for wildflowers and pollinators
- Including a more detailed Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan includes suggested areas for work, activities, timeframes and groups of partners. Specific actions suggested in consultation (online and earlier workshops) have been included where possible. Fuller details will be developed and worked on throughout the plan period by the Nature Partnership. The delivery plan will therefore evolve, with the version in the current document providing a starting point.

5.12. A number of comments related to the need for more visual elements. The document will go the internal design team to be presented in a way which balances an attractive design with the need for accessibility for all. This will take place after sign off of the wording of the document (i.e. after this decision).

5.13. Appendix 1 provides a fuller list of responses and actions taken in response to comments. A ‘tracked changes’ document is available on request.

Policy & legislation

5.14. The BAP forms part of the statutory duty for all public authorities to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Section 40 of the NERC 2006 Act has been updated by the Environment Act 2021 to bring in an ‘enhanced biodiversity duty’.

Section 40A brings in associated reporting for public authorities. An extract of Section 40 is:

“40 Duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity

(A1) For the purposes of this section “the general biodiversity objective” is the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England through the exercise of functions in relation to England.

(1) A public authority which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

(1A) After that consideration the authority must (unless it concludes there is no new action it can properly take)—

(a) determine such policies and specific objectives as it considers appropriate for taking action to further the general biodiversity objective, and

(b) take such action as it considers appropriate, in the light of those policies and objectives, to further that objective.

...”

- 5.15. The BAP contributes to the priority within the Council Plan 2023-2027 for a “Green and sustainable environment”.
- 5.16. The Council recently declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. One of the items within the declaration is to “Revise the Biodiversity Action Plan to include audits of the state of nature in the borough and to highlight local biodiversity threats due to climate change. Reports of these will be presented annually.”
- 5.17. Section 4 of the Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2029 further describes key areas of legislation and policy which relate to the Biodiversity Action Plan. The plans and objectives of partner organisations have also been incorporated into the plan where possible. A list of relevant legislation, plans and policies are in Appendix 6 of the plan.

6. Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1. A Biodiversity Action Plan is not a statutory requirement. A Biodiversity Action Plan is used to deliver policy and statutory requirements for biodiversity at a local level. The Bracknell Forest BAP is a partnership plan delivered by a range of stakeholders, coordinated by Bracknell Forest Council.

Financial Advice

- 6.2. There will be no direct financial implications as the BAP is a strategy for guiding work for biodiversity across the borough
- 6.3. There may however be financial implications of delivering the targets. This will be explored over the plan period as projects are worked up and agreed. Where possible the Council will look to use existing revenue budgets or try to secure external funding to support larger projects. Where this is not possible the BAP will ensure the timely identification of budget requirements to be included within future years budget cycles.

- 6.4. Though not explored in detail in the BAP, there are wider economic benefits of biodiversity. A diversity of healthy habitats and species supports the delivery of ecosystem services such as pollination, flood risk reduction, carbon sequestration and recreation. The costs of not tackling the biodiversity crisis are likely to be greater than the costs of measures identified in the BAP.

Other Consultation Responses

Consultees involved with the co-production of the draft:

- 6.5. Workshop attendees: Crowthorne Village Action Group, Binfield Environment Group, Binfield Parish Council, Warfield Environment Group, Easthampstead Living Churchyard Group, Bracknell Forest Natural History Society, Priestwood Environment Group, Crowthorne Parish Council, Bracknell Forest Council - Rangers, Bracknell Conservation Volunteers, Wildlife in Ascot, Sandhurst Town Council, Involve, Moor Green Lakes, Crown Estate, Thames21 (Maidenhead to Teddington Catchment Partnership host), TVERC, Bracknell Forest Council – Climate Change Officer, Natural England
- 6.6. Feedback received outside of workshop from: Warfield Environment Group, Environment Agency, Hedge and Woodland Conservationists, Natural England (Thames Basin Heath Partnership)
- 6.7. Internal feedback on initial draft received from: Rangers, Climate Change Officers, Planning Policy, Tree Officers

Public consultation:

- 6.8. A 4-week consultation was undertaken on the draft plan, with 47 responses received, as detailed above.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.9. An Equalities Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken (see Appendix 2).

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.10. There are no strategic risk management issues to address currently.

Climate Change and Ecological Impacts

- 6.11. The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have positive impacts to biodiversity and climate change by allowing an action plan to be in place which will guide activity to improve biodiversity. Some of the targets will also help with mitigation and adaptation to climate change, as indicated within the plan.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.12. The Biodiversity Action Plan includes objectives and targets to improve biodiversity across the Borough. Examples of how delivery of the targets may benefit health and wellbeing include:
- More wildlife attracted to the habitats, allowing residents to get close to nature. Access to nature has been proven to promote health and wellbeing.
 - Getting volunteers involved with nature conservation and surveying, improving physical and mental health and community cohesion.

- Some of the targets will also help with mitigation and adaptation to climate change, as indicated within the plan.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: Consultation responses and actions

Appendix 2: Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Attached separately:

- BAP 2024-2029 Full Plan
- BAP 2024-2029 Summary

Contact for further information

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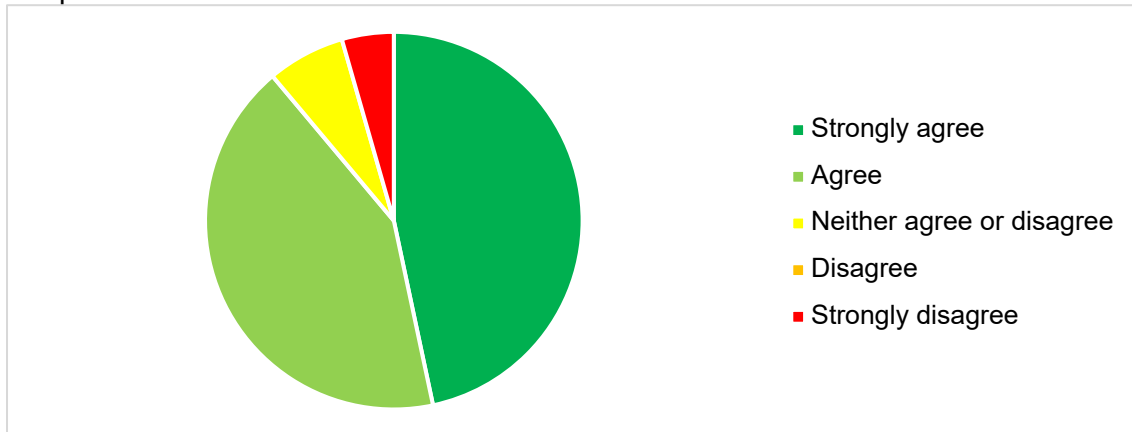
Tel: 01344 354441 (general enquiries line for parks & countryside service).

Appendix 1: Consultation results

Section 1 – Quantitative questions

Objectives: The objectives support the aim to conserve and enhance nature conservation in Bracknell Forest. (one answer)

Responses: 45

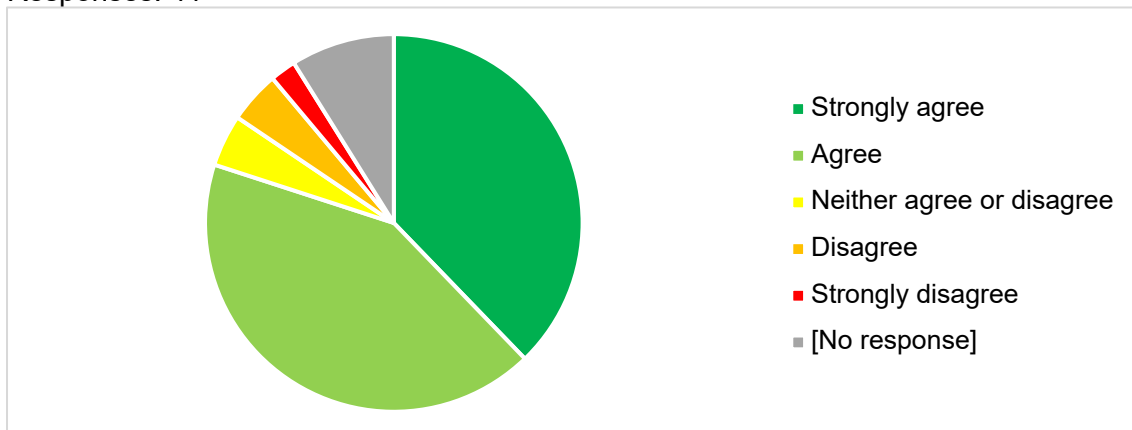


Response	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	46.67%	21
Agree	42.22%	19
Neither agree or disagree	6.67%	3
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	4.44%	2

Respondents then had the option to provide further written feedback on the objectives.

Targets: The targets support the aim to conserve and enhance nature conservation in Bracknell Forest. (one answer)

Responses: 41

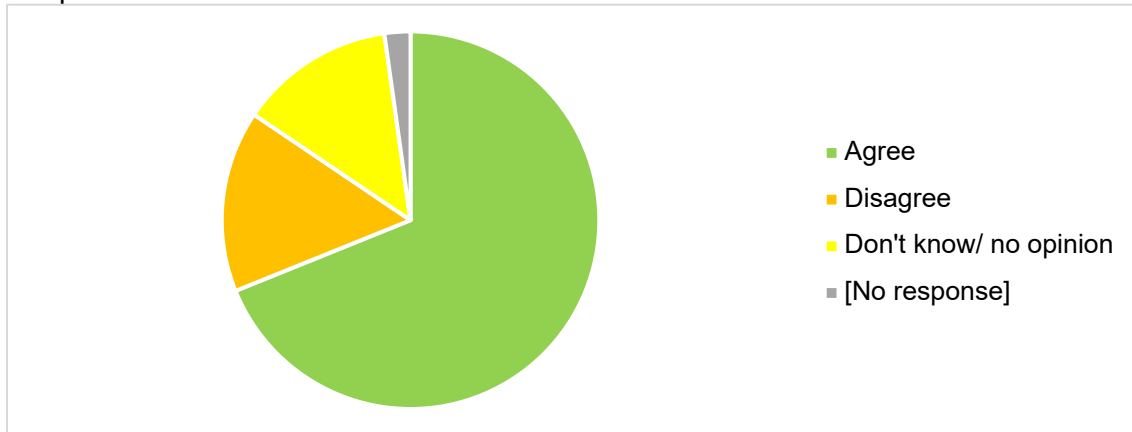


Response	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	37.78%	17
Agree	42.22%	19
Neither agree or disagree	4.44%	2
Disagree	4.44%	2
Strongly disagree	2.22%	1
[No response]	8.89%	4

Respondents then had the option to provide further written feedback on the targets, grouped by chapter theme.

Structure: The plan is easy to follow. (one answer)

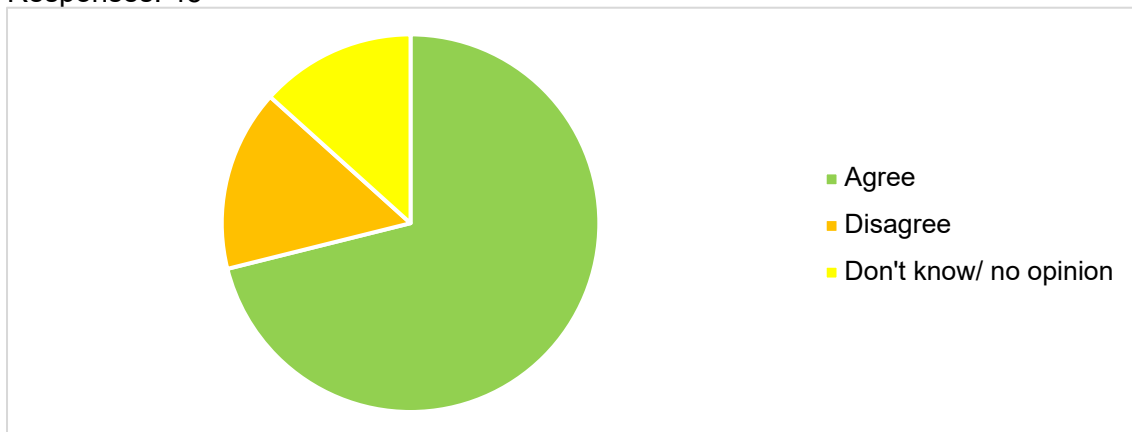
Responses: 44



Response	% Answer	Count
Agree	68.68%	31
Disagree	15.56%	7
Don't know/no opinion	13.33%	6
[No response]	2.22%	1

Length: The plan contains the appropriate amount of information. (one answer)

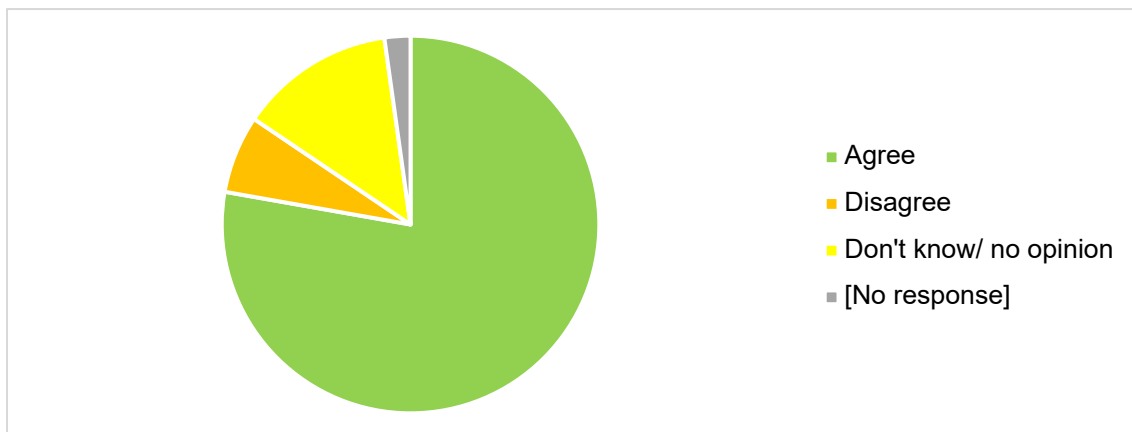
Responses: 45



Response	% Answer	Count
Agree	71.11%	32
Disagree	15.56%	7
Don't know/no opinion	13.33%	6

Technical terms: The plan uses technical terms only where required and provides an explanation for these. (one answer)

Responses: 44



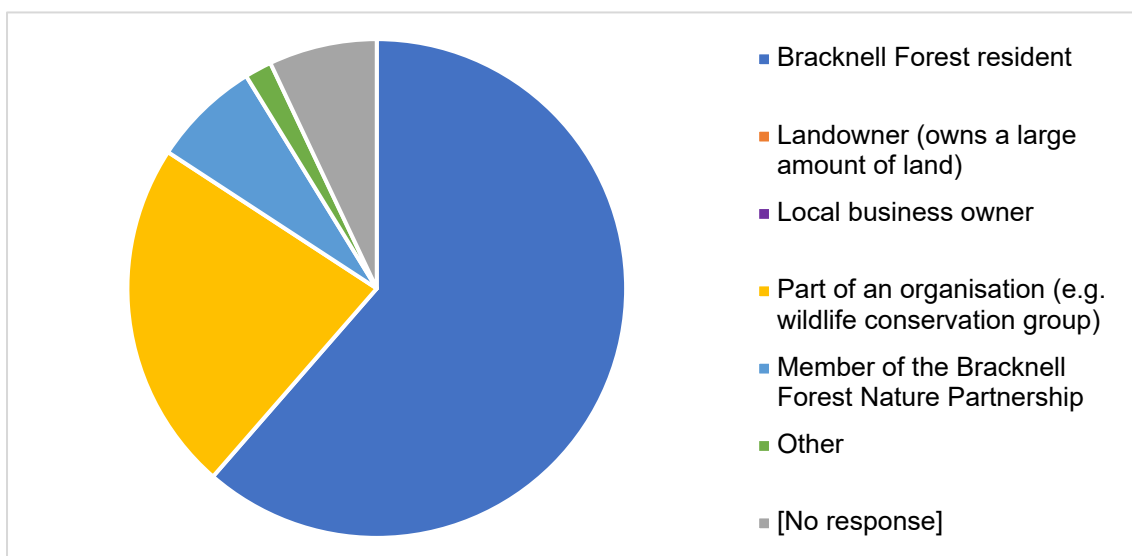
Response	% Answer	Count
Agree	77.78%	35
Disagree	6.67%	3
Don't know/no opinion	13.33%	6
[No response]	2.2%	1

Respondents then had the option to provide written feedback on improving the accessibility of the plan.

Respondents then had the option to provide any other feedback.

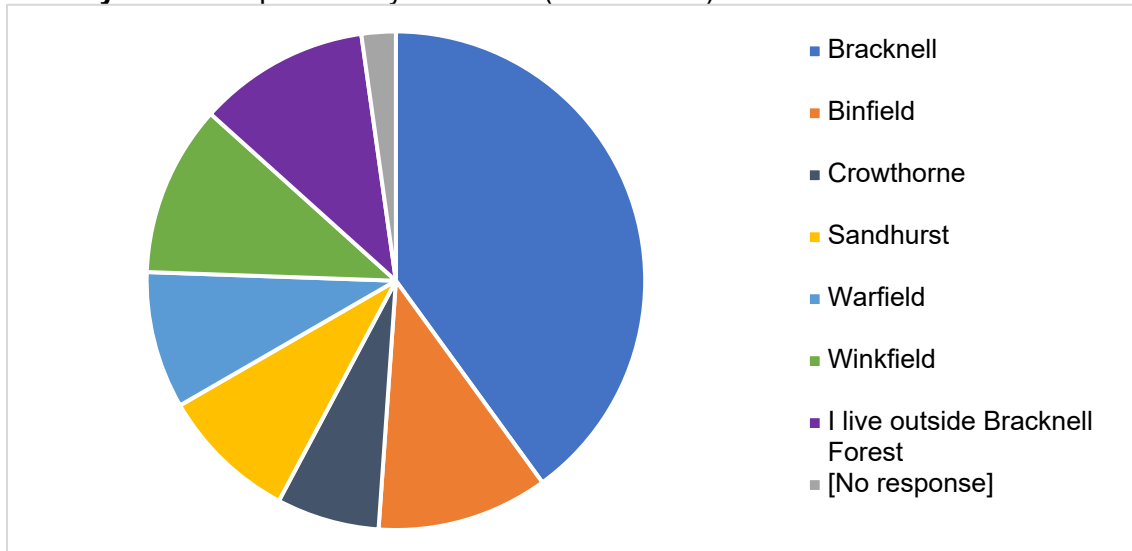
About you: I am a... (select all that apply)

Responses: 41



Response	% Answer	Count
Bracknell Forest resident	61.40%	35
Landowner (owns a large amount of land)	0.00%	0
Local business owner	0.00%	0
Part of an organisation (e.g. wildlife conservation group)	22.81%	13
Member of the Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership	7.02%	4
Other	1.75%	1
[No response]	7.02%	4

About you: Which parish do you live in? (one answer)



Response	% Answer	Count
Bracknell	40.00%	18
Binfield	11.11%	5
Crowthorne	6.67%	3
Sandhurst	8.89%	4
Warfield	8.89%	4
Winkfield	11.11%	5
I live outside Bracknell Forest	11.11%	5
[No response]	2.22%	1

Section 2 – Written feedback

Comments were reviewed and grouped by issue where possible. The table below shows the comment/issue (paraphrased), the number of times the issue came up in the comments, and the action taken and/or response as appropriate.

Consultees were able to give written comments on the overarching objectives, each habitat theme and its targets, the usability and accessibility of the plan, and any further comments. These sections are used below. Some comments have been moved to a different section to where they were originally submitted. This was to help with grouping or if they were considered more relevant to that area.

Please note that some target numbers have changed between the draft and updated final version. Where target numbers are referred to within the action/response column below these relate to the final plan.

Objectives		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Facilitating access to nature while protecting wildlife (including maintaining public rights of way to prevent trampling)	6	Action: Added a new objective "Encourage access to nature while protecting sensitive habitats and wildlife" and linked this objective to targets 4 (designate Local Nature Reserves), 10 (green infrastructure plans review), 40 (wetland site access), 47 (promote SANGs), 48 (heathland site access) and 68 (promote Local Access to Nature). Response: In addition, it should be noted that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is the key plan for actions relating to Public Rights of Way. To highlight that the plans are linked and complementary, the RoWIP is referenced in the BAP under Section 4.5 and Appendix 6 Bracknell Forest Council Plans and Strategies.
Comments regarding reducing/preventing development, protecting the green belt	4	Response: The Bracknell Forest Local Plan and Town/Parish Neighbourhood Plans provide policies relating to planning and development including green belt policies and policies for developments to protect and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure. To highlight that the plans are linked and complementary, the plans are referred to in the BAP under Section 4.4 and Appendix 6 Planning Policy. The BAP aims to complement planning policy to allow the council to take optimal decisions for biodiversity while meeting needs for built development.
Biodiversity actions are not a good use of money when people are struggling financially, and nature can look after itself	1	Response: It is recognised that cost-of-living is an issue. Green spaces are free to visit and important for health and wellbeing and so it is very important to maintain these spaces. There is evidence that nature is in decline and does need help.

Objective D should be reworded to be clearer	1	Action: Reworded to "Achieve nature conservation designations for high-quality sites"
Include/strengthen objectives/targets for control of invasive species (comments included 3 references to woodland habitats and 2 suggesting a need to strengthen the target relating to Himalayan Balsam in rivers/wetlands)	7	Response: This is broadly covered by the objective to enhance/restore habitats. A specific invasive species target has been added under woodland action plan, and the target under the wetland theme has been strengthened. Action: Added/amended invasive species targets Woodland new target: "Create an action plan of prioritised sites for woodland invasive species removal and take action across at least 10 sites" Wetlands strengthened target: "Create an action plan of prioritised sites for Himalayan Balsam removal and take action across at least 10 sites"
Stop cutting down trees and bushes during nesting bird season (referencing Nine Mile Ride project)	1	Response: The Council is careful to avoid working in nesting bird season. Further details on Nine Mile Ride project and precautions taken is available at: https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parks-and-countryside/wildlife-and-biodiversity/biodiversity-net-gain/nine-mile-ride-woodland-improvements
Need to take a holistic view	1	Response: Noted. The plan aims to cover the range of habitats and wildlife across the borough. The plan also highlights the links to other related plans and strategies.
General themes		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
10 years between surveys of Local Wildlife Sites is not frequent enough	3	Response: Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) undertake formal surveys of Local Wildlife Sites on a 10-year cycle as per a Service Level Agreement. However, it is recognised that this could be supplemented by additional surveys, particularly at council-owned sites. Therefore, this ambition has been added to the target. This will also be addressed under the survey targets within each habitat theme. Action: Amended target 2 to "Formally survey each Local Wildlife Site every 10 years, and supplement with additional more frequent surveys where possible".
Comments regarding SMART targets - one querying if the targets are all SMART, one saying that some targets are too vague/flexible, and one positive comment that most targets are SMART	3	Response: It is recognised that not all targets are fully SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound). Measurable elements have been included in many targets. Progress will be tracked against all targets though some may be qualitative. Additional detail on timescales, key delivery partners and proposed delivery actions are now included in Delivery Plan. Action: Added Delivery Plan

List designated sites as they are difficult to see on map	1	Action: A link to an online map with zoom function has been added alongside the Designated Sites map. Local Nature Reserves and SSSIs have been listed under Appendix 4. There are many Local Wildlife Sites, so these have not all been listed.
Target for volunteer hours should be more ambitious	3	Response: The existing target (8,000 hours per year) was not consistently achieved in each year of the previous plan. However, it is noted that some years were affected by Covid-related restrictions. The target was met in 2019 and 2023. The wording of the target has also been broadened to not just include habitat management work but volunteering for nature more generally, which could include actions like surveying or data analysis. Therefore, agree that a more ambitious target is appropriate. Action: Changed target 9 to 10,000 volunteer hours per year
Previous plan target for green corridors/map of green corridors not included	2	Response: These elements will be reviewed under target 10 "Bring together, review and enhance the plans and strategies for green infrastructure in Bracknell Forest"
Grassland		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Suggested target relating to horse paddocks, specifically reducing horse numbers and/or restricting them to poor condition grassland	1	Response: Though not an exact match to this comment, there is a target relating to management advice for horse owners under the farmland action plan. Advice is likely to be more achievable within the remit of the BAP than restricting numbers or location.
Wording unclear on figures for grassland coverage in supporting text (Section 7.3)	1	Action: Wording amended
Woodland		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Target for 5km hedgerow creation/enhancement not ambitious enough	1	Response: The previous plan had a target to plant 2km of hedgerow which was slightly exceeded. The target has been broadened to include both creation and enhancement. Therefore, 5km is considered an appropriate ambition. However, the target is not a limit and can be exceeded.
Suggested target for creation of dead hedges	1	Action: Dead hedges have been added to target 30 focusing on increasing deadwood habitat. In the delivery plan, dead-hedges are also referred to under targets relating to access management as they can help protect areas while providing other benefits such as deadwood habitat.

Suggestions to include a target around orchards (with 3 comments particularly mentioning creating community orchards)	4	Response: Orchards would be included under target 21 to enhance and create woodland habitats. However, it is noted that there is a particular demand for community orchards. An additional more specific target has been added. Action: Target added "Create 3 new community orchards"
Note regarding supporting text section 8.4 about traditional orchards that there are also community orchards at Warfield Chase and Edmunds Green	1	Action: Text amended to include these two sites.
Suggested target to halt tree cover loss or increase canopy cover	1	Response: This will be considered within the Tree Strategy review (target 33)
Comments around deadwood habitat - one suggesting the target for loggeries and bat roost may no longer be needed as many have created over previous years, in contrast, another suggesting there should be a deadwood-related target	2	Response: Target 30 to create bat roosts and loggeries aims to replicate deadwood habitats. Reference to dead-hedges has also been added to this target. An opportunity has also been highlighted to potentially trial ways to create new noctule roosting opportunities which fits well with BAP species and would bring new a focus to the target. Therefore, the target will be retained within the plan.
Suggested target to support wild service trees - existing or propagation of new ones	1	Action: Target added "Include wild-service trees in re-stocking and planting plans for sites in the north of the borough"
Offer to help with tree surveys under target 20	1	Response: Offer welcomed Action: Added Delivery Plan with additional detail on timescales, key delivery partners and proposed delivery actions
Rivers and Wetlands		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Target for 2km of river enhancements not ambitious enough	2	Response: The previous plan (2018-2023) had a target to enhance 2km river and it was not fully achieved (approx. 1.5km was enhanced). Therefore, a further 2km target is considered to be an appropriate ambition. However, the target is not a limit and can be exceeded.
Suggested target to support a Bracknell River Action Group	1	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 42 (raise awareness and involve communities)

Suggested target to promote citizen science initiatives	1	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 34 (design and undertake surveys)
Suggested target to map barriers to fish migration	1	Response: This would be beneficial but would be a significant and specialist piece of work. In order to keep targets to a reasonable number, this suggestion has not been taken forwards at this time. If a suitable opportunity arose the work could be undertaken.
Education elements e.g. yellow fish, road run off, pollutants in drains	2	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 42 (raise awareness and involve communities)
Suggested target to use Road Pollution Solutions tool	1	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 37 (restore/enhance rivers)
Buffers for rivers	3	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 37 (restore/enhance rivers) Response: Please also note that the Local Plan Green Infrastructure policy specifies an 8m buffer for new developments/planning permissions.
Query regarding what the access	1	Response: This will include actions to reduce erosion around ponds and rivers associated with recreational access Action: Further detail included in Delivery Plan
Encourage biodiversity improvements to be delivered through sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs)	1	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 36 (create/enhance ponds)
Comments regarding water pollution and water quality monitoring	2	Action: Water quality monitoring has been added as an item in the delivery plan for target 34 (monitor key wetland sites and species)
Questioning value of including brown trout as Bracknell BAP species	1	Response: The BAP species are remaining consistent to previous years but with two additions. Brown trout are present in waterbodies to the south of the Borough.
Need more information about River Loddon and that it is a chalk stream, and the threat of phosphate pollution to chalk streams. List development under 'Threats' for Rivers and Wetlands.	1	Action: Text added about the Loddon being a chalk stream and the Blackwater being a tributary of this important habitat. Development added under threats in wetland section. Response: Please note however that the River Loddon itself does not fall within Bracknell Forest
Gormoor / Downmill Stream should be added to Rivers & Wetland supporting information	1	Action: Text amended as advised
Outfall monitoring every 4 years not frequent enough	3	Response: The "Outfall Safari" method was developed by ZSL and in a ZSL presentation to the Catchment Partnership in Oct 2022 it was suggested that outfall safaris are run

		every 4 years. There may be interest from local groups to do the surveys more often, and so the target can be exceeded.
Improve management of reedbeds	1	Response: It is noted that targets cover creation and enhancement of ponds and rivers, leaving a gap relating to other wetland sites. Action: Added a target to enhance 3 wetland sites, including reedbeds where appropriate. Specific reedbeds mentioned added to delivery plan as potential sites.
Heathland		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Suggested specific target relating to dog-walking impacts	1	Response: Target 48 will consider access, and this is likely to include dog-walking impacts. Encouraging use of SANGs (target 47) also aims to reduce visitor impacts to SPA heathlands.
Dartford Warbler and Woodlark missing a description	1	Response: The description for the three SPA birds was combined. However, as this has caused confusion, it has been separated out for clarity. Action: Amended text to separate descriptions for the three birds.
Farmland		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Engage with farmers and landowners about local grazing opportunities	1	Response: Some Bracknell Forest Council sites are already grazed by local graziers. Grazing arrangements are under review, but this is complex and goes somewhat beyond the scope of the BAP. Therefore, this suggestion has not been taken forwards as a target within the BAP at this time.
Query if there may be other taxa that could be used as farmland indicators e.g. plants or insects	1	Response: The farmland bird indicator is well established so is being used as a key indicator. Other indicators may be developed for the annual report under target 5.
Query if target to provide management advice to horse owners will also include polo establishments	1	Response: Yes, action under this target could include polo establishments.
Survey farmers to understand pesticide and fertiliser use	1	Response: Sharing information and advice (targets 54 and 55) is considered to be more achievable within the remit of the BAP, so this suggestion has not been taken forwards as a target within the BAP at this time.
Increase number of owl boxes and create skylark plots	1	Action: Management sensitive for skylarks included in delivery plan for target. New target added "Install 5 new owl boxes including at least 2 barn owl boxes".

Urban		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Comments in favour of improving verges, including reducing mowing and strimmer use	4	Action: New target added "Identify 20 verges or groups of verges and enhance or improvement management for wildflowers and pollinators".
Comments on tree planting, including 2 comments that target to plant or replace 50 large native urban trees is not ambitious enough, and one comment suggesting greater community involvement	3	Response: This target will be kept the same as the previous plan, with a focus on large native urban trees. Community involvement has been added as a proposal within the delivery plan. The review of the tree strategy (see target 33) may be an opportunity to increase the ambition.
Comments on need for enhancements in new developments and planning process, with particular reference to swift bricks	2	Action: Changed target 63 to refer more clearly to the opportunity of seeking features via planning process. Included reference to swift bricks within delivery plan. Swift nesting opportunities also covered by own target.
Suggested target to create ponds	1	Response: Covered by Wetlands section target 36. These could be within urban areas.
Encourage gardeners to match plants in their garden to surrounding habitat	1	Action: Included as a proposal in Delivery Plan under target 67 (raise awareness of urban/garden biodiversity)
Urban section should have more focus on invertebrates especially pollinators	1	Action: As above, new target added "Identify 20 verges or groups of verges and enhance or improvement management for wildflowers and pollinators" Response: Please also note that bumblebees are a BAP priority under the grassland section.
Include house martins as BAP species and include actions to create new nesting opportunities	1	Response: The BAP species have been chosen as a small selection of species to act as 'flagship' species, covering a range of different species and taxon groups. Therefore, at this time will keep swifts, hedgehogs and cowslip as the urban species. But the work under the BAP is not limited to these species and it is agreed that it would be beneficial to support house martins alongside swifts. Action: Added house martins to the target relating to swift nesting opportunities.
Accessibility/layout		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response

Need for more visual elements	4	Response: Images and visual elements will be included in the final version, however, please note this may be following the sign off of the wording of the plan.
Too long/wordy/dense	2	Response: The main text of the document is shorter than the previous plan, however it is recognised that it is a long document. As above, images will be included to break up text.
Need for shorter/executive summary	2	Action: Included a new executive summary. The aim is for this to be presented in a visually appealing way, following sign off.
BAP may not be useful to those who do not have a detailed knowledge of biodiversity issue. Challenge is to develop projects to meet the targets which are engaging to the community.	1	Response: Noted. The BAP is quite a technical document, but the delivery of targets should bring in a wider network of people.
Some long URLs could be shortened under references	1	Action: Amended as per advice
Feedback survey difficult to use	1	Response: Noted for future but no action required for BAP document itself.
Suggest including a vision at start of plan	1	Response: Though not exactly like a vision, the aim provides a short overarching summary ("The aim of the BAP is to conserve and enhance biodiversity within Bracknell Forest Borough")
Targets and objectives would be clearer in table format	1	Action: Amended so targets and summarised objectives are presented in tables
Further comments		
Comment/issue	No. times mentioned	Action/response
Need to show timeframes and delivery partners for targets (as included in previous BAP 2018-2023), need to prioritise actions	5	Action: Included a more detailed Delivery Plan Response: The Delivery Plan includes suggested areas for work, activities, timeframes and groups of partners. Specific actions suggested in consultation (online and in earlier workshops) have been included where possible. It does not contain full details of exactly what will be delivered by who and where for every target as this will be developed and worked on throughout the plan by the Nature Partnership. The delivery plan will evolve through the plan period with the version in the current document providing a starting point. Currently the targets have not been given a priority as such though some are targeted for delivery earlier in the plan.
Designates sites map should be included in main section of report	1	Action: Designated sites map has been moved to main section of report and included in same section as the BAP priority habitat map.

Greater focus needed on SPA (Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area). Currently little mention and only in the heathlands section, even though there are many habitats in the SPA. Suggestion for SPA to have own chapter.	1	Action/response: The SPA has not been placed into its own chapter, however, further details about designated sites have been added to the main part of the report, and the sites have been re-ordered to put the national designations first. The description for the SPA now states that it includes heathland, woodland and scrub habitats.
Appendix SPA text does not appear to be complete	1	Action: Amended text. Response: The draft plan included an excerpt of the Thames Basin Heath policy however, as this has been flagged as unclear, the full policy has now been included. The same will be applied to the Green Infrastructure policy. Please note also there are some other minor amendments to the Bracknell Forest Local Plan information in Section 4.4 and Appendix 6 as the Local Plan has now been adopted.
BFC should have a target for 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	1	Response: BNG is described in Section 4.1 and to provide a link it is a target under target 11. However, it should be noted that securing BNG is a planning process and the BNG target is set by legislation and the Bracknell Forest Local Plan. In both cases it is set at 10% and it is outside of the scope of the BAP to increase this target.
Climate Change Biodiversity Working Group should have prominence, it is a BFNP partner	1	Action: Further details have been added, in consultation with the chairs of the group.
Document is similar to previous BAP - questioning if enough thought has been given to new plan	1	Response: All elements of the plan have been reviewed and updates have been made. However initial feedback suggested partners found the existing plan useful. The process undertaken has therefore been a refresh rather than a more significant overhaul.
Questioning alignment of BAP with plans and strategies of neighbouring Boroughs	1	Response: It is recognised that cross-boundary work and targets have not been explored in detail for the BAP. However, this is an objective and, in particular, the developing LNRS will provide a county-wide perspective. The BAP may need to change in future to fit with the LNRS county-wide ambitions, to be considered further once the LNRS is in place.
Need to be more consistent in planning, measuring and monitoring progress within Nature Partnership	1	Response/action: Feedback noted and taken on board for future Nature Partnership meetings and planning. A pro forma is being developed to help with capturing progress.
Ask groups to review their descriptions under Local Strategies	1	Action: Groups asked to review text and text has been amended where feedback was received.
Need a definition of eutrophic water	1	Action: Added short explanation in brackets after habitat name.

Appendix 2: Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening:	Directorate: Place	Section: Parks and Countryside service
1. Activity to be assessed	Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2029 – Approval	
2. What is the activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing	
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Rosie Lear, Biodiversity Officer	
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Rosie Lear, Biodiversity Officer	
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	Approval of Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2029. The Bracknell Forest BAP is a partnership plan for protecting and enhancing nature in the borough.	
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	The Biodiversity Action Plan includes actions to improve biodiversity across the Borough. Access to nature has been proven to promote health and wellbeing, therefore everyone in the borough should benefit.	
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.	Y	N
		Tools such as the Hemingway Editor and a glossary have been used to make the document as easy to read and understand as possible. Following approval, the document will go to Bracknell Forest Council's internal design service. The document will be presented in an attractive format while ensuring it is accessible to all, including those using screen-readers. There is a potential for adverse impact where those with a sight impairment are not able to interpret drawings, figures and illustrations in the same way that someone without a visual impairment would be
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemingway Editor (hemingwayapp.com)
		What evidence do you have to support this? E.g. equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data

			able to. A written description of pictures, maps etc. are provided as Alt text but in this context may not be as detailed as needed to give a comprehensive description of the concept. A phone number/contact details of an officer who can give further verbal guidance or explanation of the content of the document will be provided on the website with the final plan.	
9. Racial equality	Y	N		
10. Gender equality	Y	N		
11. Sexual orientation equality	Y	N		
12. Gender re-assignment	Y	N		
13. Age equality	Y	N		
14. Religion and belief equality	Y	N		
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y	N		
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y	N		
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g., those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.				

18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A		
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?			
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?	Y	N	
21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?			
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	Y	N	<p>Please explain your decision. If you are not proceeding to a full equality impact assessment, make sure you have the evidence to justify this decision should you be challenged.</p> <p>If you are proceeding to a full equality impact assessment, please contact Harjit.Hunjan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</p>
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
Following approval of the content, use in house design service to ensure the document is accessible	Following decision	Rosie Lear, Biodiversity Officer and Rose Wicks, Data and Communications Officer	Attractive and accessible final document.
Publish details of suitable contact who can provide further information/explanation for those who require it.	Ongoing	Rosie Lear, Biodiversity Officer	Contact details provided with the final plan on the website.

24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	See above.
26. Assistant Director/Director signature.	Signature: _____ Date: _____