



Scottish Parliament Biodiversity Statement 2026–2028

**Aithris Bith-iomadachd
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba 2026–2028**



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Foreword

The Scottish Parliament recognises the vital role that nature plays in supporting our wellbeing, our environment and the resilience of our public services.

As a public body, we have a clear responsibility to contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, both through the way we manage our own estate and through the wider influence we can exert through our decisions and activities.

This Biodiversity Statement 2026–2028 sets out our refreshed approach, informed by updated ecological evidence and a clearer understanding of where we can make the most meaningful impact. It provides a practical and proportionate route map for action over the next three years, focusing on strengthening ecological resilience, supporting priority species and habitats, and ensuring biodiversity considerations are embedded into how we plan, procure and deliver services.

We are fortunate to be located within a nationally significant landscape, and this brings both opportunity and responsibility. While we will continue to enhance biodiversity across the parliamentary estate, this statement also recognises that some of our greatest influence lies beyond our boundaries, particularly through the services we commission and the partners we work with.

By taking a more systematic and joined-up approach, we aim to ensure that biodiversity is considered alongside climate change, sustainable development and good public governance. This includes supporting consideration of biodiversity and nature recovery through the Parliament's wider decision-making, engagement and sustainable development activities.

This statement will guide delivery, monitoring and reporting over the coming period, and will be reviewed annually as part of our wider environmental governance arrangements.

In doing so, we seek to play our part in addressing biodiversity loss and to demonstrate leadership as a responsible public organisation.

Lynsey Hamill
Director of Operations and Digital,
The Scottish Parliament



1. Purpose

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all public sector bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity.

Delivery of this statement also supports the Parliament's responsibilities under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and wider sustainable development duties.

This Biodiversity Statement refreshes and replaces the Scottish Parliament Biodiversity Statement 2021. It reflects updated ecological evidence gathered in 2026 and sets out a clear, phased route map for enhancing biodiversity across the parliamentary estate, in line with statutory duties, good practice and the Parliament's wider sustainable development commitments.

This update has been informed by an independent ecological assessment commissioned in December 2025 and undertaken during winter 2026, including a desk study, UK Habitat Classification survey and targeted review of species and habitat management. The statement also integrates a prioritised set of biodiversity actions identified through recent ecological advice and operational opportunities.



2. Context



The Parliament's landscape sits within a nationally significant ecological context, adjacent to Arthur's Seat Volcano Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Holyrood Park.

The biodiversity approach therefore seeks not only to enhance the site itself, but to contribute positively to the wider ecological network and to avoid adverse impacts on neighbouring sensitive habitats.

The Parliament will seek opportunities to align biodiversity improvements with wider Edinburgh Nature Network and Local Biodiversity Action Plan objectives where appropriate.

3. Updated ecological baseline and key findings (2026)

An updated desk study and UK Habitat Classification survey were undertaken in January 2026. These confirmed that the site supports a diverse mosaic of habitats, but that ecological quality has become uneven over time as a result of changing management practices, competing operational pressures and public use.



The assessment confirms **significant opportunity to improve biodiversity outcomes** by refocusing management on habitat suitability, soil conditions and alignment with the surrounding Holyrood Park landscape.

Key findings include:

- A range of habitats are present including lowland meadow, neutral grassland, modified amenity grassland, green roofs, ornamental ponds, formal gardens, ruderal habitats and scattered mature trees.
- Ninety one plant species were recorded across the site, including species indicative of low nutrient grasslands such as devil's bit scabious, lady's bedstraw and waxcap fungi.
- Several invasive non-native species were recorded, notably rhododendron, green alkanet and butterfly bush, which pose a risk of outcompeting native flora if unmanaged.
- Ornamental ponds currently provide limited biodiversity value due to absence of marginal vegetation, limited connectivity and reliance on artificial water management.
- Common rock rose, the primary larval food plant for the Northern brown argus butterfly, was not recorded during the winter survey, although it may be present in low abundance or dormant. The wider landscape supports suitable conditions for this species.
- At the time of the survey the parliament estate currently supports fifteen beehives. In an urban environment, high densities of managed honeybees can place pressure on native pollinators through competition, disease and parasite transfer if not carefully managed.
- Future pollinator management will prioritise habitat enhancement, nesting opportunities and ecological resilience for wild pollinators alongside the ongoing review of managed honeybee provision.

3. Biodiversity vision and principles

The Parliament's biodiversity vision is to manage its estate as a coherent, resilient landscape that supports native species, contributes to local ecological networks and demonstrates leadership in sustainable land management within an urban public sector setting.

The following principles guide delivery:

- Prioritising ecological function alongside visual quality.
- Aiming to align habitats with local soil conditions and landscape character.
- Supporting priority species and pollinators through provision of diverse forage, nesting habitat, shelter, basking opportunities and water resources.
- Preventing spread of invasive non-native species where possible.
- Integrating biodiversity with climate adaptation and surface water management.
- Improving public understanding of naturalistic landscape management.
- Using procurement and contractor management as a primary lever to influence biodiversity outcomes beyond the parliamentary estate.
- Avoiding biodiversity loss and ecological harm through procurement, supply chains and operational activities before seeking opportunities for enhancement.



3. Biodiversity vision and principles



The Scottish Parliament recognises that its greatest potential to influence biodiversity outcomes lies not only in the direct management of its estate, but through the goods, services and works it procures.

Through its procurement activity, the Parliament can influence land management practices, supply chains and contractor behaviour well beyond the parliamentary site. This includes estates and facilities management, construction and maintenance works, landscaping and grounds services, catering and other relevant contracts.

The Parliament will seek, where proportionate and relevant, to ensure procured goods, services and materials do not contribute to biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, pollution, unsustainable resource extraction or deforestation, while also identifying opportunities for enhancement.

4. Strategic objectives

The refreshed strategy is structured around six objectives:

- Establish a robust ecological baseline and monitoring framework.
- Prevent and reduce adverse impacts on biodiversity arising from the Parliament's activities, procurement and supply chains, while improving habitat quality and ecological connectivity.
- Enhance conditions for priority species and pollinators through habitat creation, nesting provision and improved ecological connectivity.
- Manage invasive species and land use pressures.
- Ensure a balanced and responsible approach to beekeeping.
- Increase engagement, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity among staff, contractors and suppliers.
- Recognise and address links between biodiversity, climate change, resource use, waste reduction and circular economy principles.



5. Biodiversity enhancement route map

Phase 1: Evidence, controls, foundations and bee keeping

Year 1 – 2026

Surveys and evidence

- Undertake soil sampling within defined biodiversity zones to inform habitat creation and seed selection
- Complete a summer botanical and habitat survey to establish a full floristic baseline
- Develop a site specific biodiversity metric to measure change over time

Pollinators and beekeeping

- Undertake soil sampling within defined biodiversity zones to inform habitat creation and seed selection
- Complete a summer botanical and habitat survey to establish a full floristic baseline
- Review management of native pollinator-friendly species to ensure beneficial species are not unintentionally removed
- Develop a site specific biodiversity metric to measure change over time
- Install pilot bee hotels for cavity-nesting bees
- Identify suitable locations for solitary bee nesting habitat
- Retain selected dead stems and seed heads over winter to support pollinating insects

5. Biodiversity enhancement route map

Phase 1: Evidence, controls, foundations and bee keeping (cont.)

Year 1 – 2026

Procurement foundations

- Review existing estates, facilities management and landscaping contracts to understand where biodiversity outcomes are already influenced
- Review progress against recommendations from the 2023 supplier and contract biodiversity review and prioritise implementation in identified high-impact contracts
- Work with Procurement colleagues to agree proportionate biodiversity expectations for future contracts

Immediate management actions

- Review mowing regimes and reduce mowing intensity in areas suitable for species rich grassland
- Begin systematic control of invasive species, prioritising rhododendron, green alkanet and butterfly bush
- Undertake selective tree felling or canopy reduction where overshading limits habitat quality or where required for health and safety
- Review new beekeeping contract for alignment with overall goals
- Identify areas where longer grass, reduced cultivation and limited disturbance can be maintained to support pollinator nesting and overwintering

5. Biodiversity enhancement route map

Phase 2: Habitat enhancement and species support

Year 2 – 2027

Habitat creation and enhancement

- Create small, steep south facing mounds within sunny areas of the public frontage and plant with common rock rose to support Northern brown argus butterfly
- Establish native wildflower meadows tailored to confirmed soil conditions, including potential acid grassland or heathland where appropriate
- Plant native hedgerows and trees to improve shelter, structural diversity and wildlife corridors
- Create south-facing sandy banks and areas of undisturbed bare ground to support ground-nesting solitary bee species
- Review opportunities to enhance water features for pollinators through shallow water sources, marginal planting and habitat suitable for hoverflies and other insects

Species specific measures

- Install additional bird boxes, bat boxes, swift boxes, bee hotels, bug hotels, log piles, hibernacula and retain selected dead stems and overwintering habitat features
- Implement targeted management plans for Reid's Close Garden and the Members' Garden to balance cultural value and biodiversity enhancement

Procurement and supplier requirements

- Begin embedding biodiversity considerations within relevant specifications and contract renewal processes, where appropriate
- Encourage contractors to demonstrate how they avoid harm to biodiversity and support nature positive outcomes
- Strengthen contractor management arrangements to ensure biodiversity objectives are understood and delivered on site

5. Biodiversity enhancement route map

Phase 3: Pollinators, engagement and adaptation

Year 3 – 2028

Engagement and interpretation

- Install interpretation boards explaining biodiversity features, habitat management and species supported
- Include information on dog fouling and nutrient impacts on low nutrient grasslands
- Run community and staff engagement activities such as bioblitz surveys, species recording and guided walks
- Use mown winding paths through naturalised areas to improve access while signalling active management
- Explore opportunities for staff volunteering and team participation in biodiversity projects on and beyond the parliamentary estate in partnership with local biodiversity organisations

Monitoring and review

- Repeat botanical surveys in Year 3 and at 3 year intervals thereafter
- Review progress annually through sustainable development annual report
- Monitor impacts of climate change on pollinator habitats and incorporate pollinator needs into climate adaptation measures

Procurement maturity and influence

- Review the effectiveness of biodiversity related procurement requirements
- Share learning with suppliers and across the organisation to support continuous improvement
- Consider opportunities to influence wider supply chains where biodiversity risks or opportunities are highest

6. Governance and delivery



Delivery of this Biodiversity Statement will be overseen through existing environmental governance arrangements supported by the Parliament's ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management System.

Biodiversity actions will be embedded into facilities management, contractor requirements and procurement processes to ensure a consistent, whole site approach.

The Parliament will continue to minimise pesticide use and prioritise non-chemical solutions wherever practicable.

7. Looking ahead

This refreshed Biodiversity Statement provides a clear, evidence led route map for enhancing biodiversity at the Scottish Parliament over the next 3 years.

It recognises the constraints of a high profile public site while setting out practical actions to improve ecological resilience, support priority species and contribute positively to Scotland's wider nature restoration ambitions.

Progress will be reviewed annually and reported on in the Sustainable Development Annual Report, and the statement updated as ecological understanding, organisational capability and national policy continue to develop.



Key Actions and Deliverables for 2026–2028



Survey of soil conditions and plant communities, establishing a comprehensive ecological baseline



Development of a biodiversity metric to support monitoring and reporting



Review and enhancement of beekeeping arrangements, supporting native pollinators



Exploration of additional pollinator measures beyond managed honeybees



Review of the Parliament’s contracts and suppliers to establish impact on biodiversity



Integration of proportionate biodiversity requirements within priority contracts



Landscape management review, including mowing regimes and habitat maintenance



Invasive species control and habitat improvement across the estate



Creation of wildflower meadows and habitat features to support priority species



Planting of native hedgerows and trees to improve ecological connectivity

Key Actions and Deliverables for 2026–2028

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Installation of bird, bat and invertebrate habitat structures
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Targeted biodiversity management within key landscape areas
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Embedding biodiversity requirements within contract specifications and management
- 

Delivery of interpretation boards and visitor information on biodiversity
- 

Installation of bee hotels and solitary bee nesting habitat
- 

Monitoring of pollinator diversity and habitat use
- 

Engagement with staff and community through biodiversity activities and events
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Repeat ecological surveys and review of biodiversity performance over time
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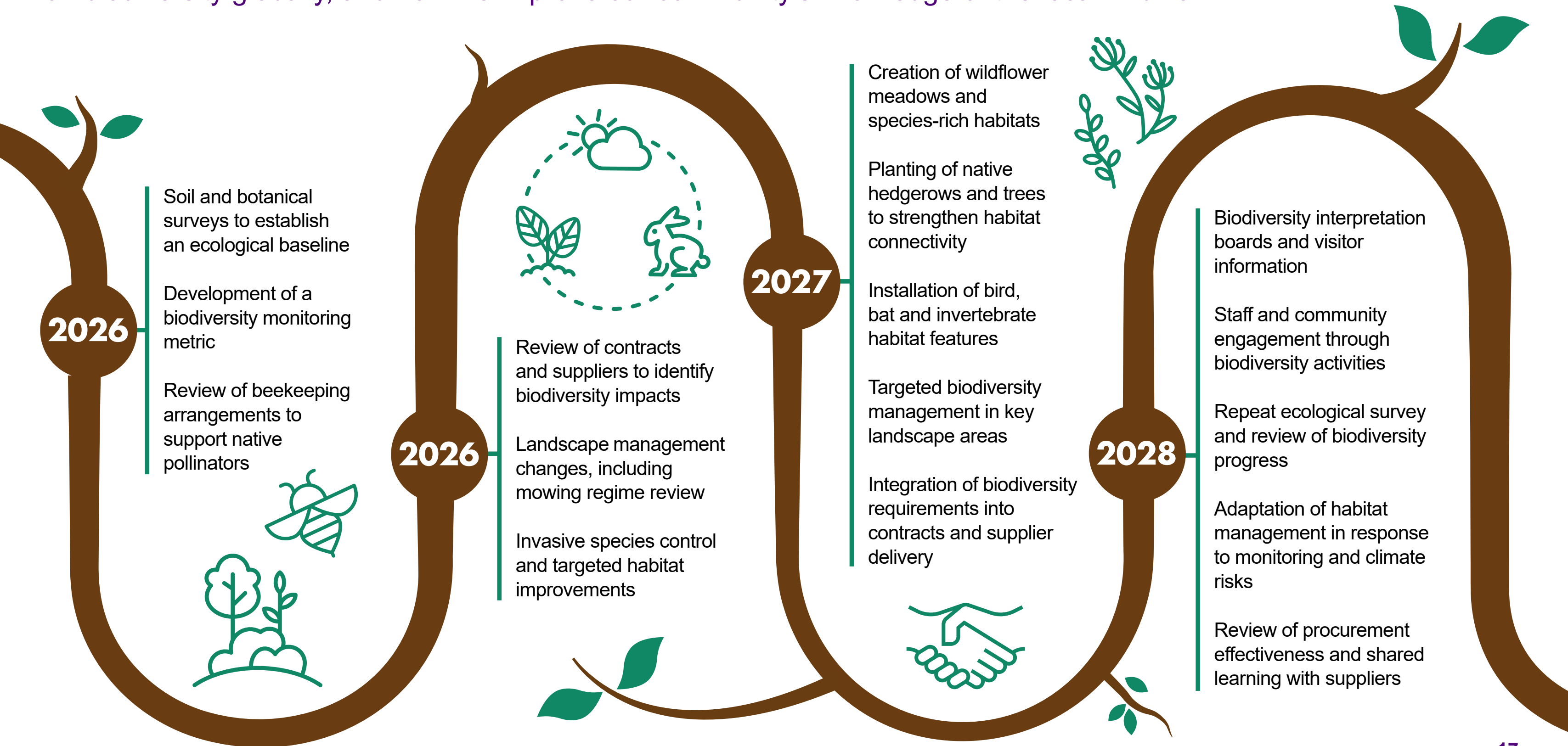
Adaptive management of habitats in response to monitoring and climate risks
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Review of procurement effectiveness and sharing of learning with suppliers
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Creation of sandy nesting banks and bare ground habitat

Biodiversity Route Map

How we enhance and support the biodiversity on our site, how we can minimise our impact on biodiversity globally, and how we improve our community’s knowledge of the local wildlife.





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