Water Company Action Specification Form – Biodiversity NERC_IMP

Investigation into the impacts of abstraction preventing flow from supporting WFD objectives.

Action name	Biodiversity 08TW100896
Primary driver code	**NERC_IMP**
Secondary driver code(s)	N/A
WINEP action ID(s)	08TW100896
Connected WINEP action IDs	N/A
Delivery date (as on WINEP)	2030
Option Assessment Report ID link	
Permit/licence reference(s)	
Waterbody IDs or catchment	
Action objectives	To conserve and enhance biodiversity. The actions nominated are Thames Water's contribution to increasing the quantity, quality, and connectivity of habitats across our operational sites, as required under WINEP. (1) Amp 8 Biodiversity net gain performance commitment (further details set out separately in PR24 Outcomes chapter 9 - Biodiversity). Thames Water proposes to maintain the condition of the 100 of our main operational sites created during Amp 7 which were designed to enhance the condition of habitat sites with greater connectivity. In addition to this, we aim to develop and deliver 9 new strategic, large-scale biodiversity sites created in partnership with their local nature recovery strategy group, chosen as

	they connect to existing strategically important sites for habitats and species. (2) In addition to the performance commitment, we will focus on improving management or creating new habitat on 12 of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which have been developed in collaboration with local biodiversity working groups such the Colne Valley Partnership, Lea Valley partnership and Wildlife Trusts enhancing the connectivity for species between neighbouring wildlife sites. (3) Sponsored species projects: • Otters and Water Voles – developed with stakeholders from the BBOWT Water vole recovery group • Swifts, swallows and sand martins – a large scale strategic project developed with biodiversity leads from the UK Water companies. (4) GIS platform to record and monitor biodiversity net gain habitats and opportunities for greater connectivity with strategic biodiversity sites, and opportunities to connect protected species communities. (5) Biodiversity grounds maintenance team as we recognise, from 5 years of working on biodiversity net gain projects, that ground maintenance teams currently under contract are not equipped to deal with managing sensitive biodiversity habitats thus higher chance of failure. This team will support the management of additional sites, from those nominated in the PC, and give multiple opportunities to create new habitat or improve the condition habitat of existing habitat with greater connectivity. This gives us the freedom to add new sites each year, but also supporting mandatory net gain management and maintenance, as well as our Water industry tree planting commitment.

Action details	(1) Building on the success of the Biodiversity Net Gain Performance commitment for Amp 7, we are committed to maintaining the 100 sites that have been created and enhanced out of the 253 Sites of Biodiversity Interest. We have also committed to enhance and create new habitat on 9 strategic sites across the 18 Counties on sites such as Beddington, Speen and Godalming in year 1, Bishop Stortford and Bracknell and Grimsbury in year 2, and Fiddlers Hamlet, Aylesbury and Tring in year 3. These sites have been chosen for greater connectivity between existing protected or locally important neighbouring wildlife sites, creating opportunity for species, such as overwinter/nesting birds, dormice, great crested newts and water vole/otter to connect. (2) Creation of new habitats and improvement in management of 12 of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest. • **Knight & Bessborough Reservoirs SSSI** • **Rye Meads SSSI** • **Chingford Reservoirs SSSI (KG5 & William Girling)** • **Walthamstow Reservoirs SSSI** • **Staines Moor SSSI (King George VI RES & Staines N&S RES)** • **Wraysbury Reservoir SSSI** • **Kempton Park Reservoirs SSSI (Kempton NR & Red House (Hampton) RES)** • **Boxford Water Meadows (Boxford STW (SBI) – within SSSI boundary)** • **Brassey Reserve and Windrush Valley SSSI (Seven Springs WTW – leased to GWT)** • **Glyme Valley SSSI (Glyme Farm NR – leased to BBOWT)** • **Aston Rowant SSSI (Hill Farm Reservoir – leased NCC)** • **Dancersend SSSI (leased to BBOWT)** **Scrub management on the following sites:** • **Staines Moor SSSI (King George VI RES & Staines N&S RES)** Maintain support for conservation grazing & Public access – manage & monitor bonehead ditch & continue scrub removal • **Glyme Valley SSSI (Glyme Farm NR – leased to BBOWT)** scrub removal to restore g2a calcareous grassland • **Dancersend SSSI (leased to BBOWT)**

	manage & monitor orchid rich grasslands – removal of scrub / hedgerow management **Walthamstow Wetlands** • Support management and maintenance of the floating islands and tern rafts placed during Amp 6 WINEP project. • Habitat on the wooded islands should be assessed and a restoration plan drawn up where required. This may include additional scrub or tree planting, or the protection of certain areas to allow regeneration of low cover. Rye Meads (hydrological issues addressed in separate project - 08TW101459a Rye Meads improve Units 1 and 2) • Reduction of trees and scrub. In the south lagoons the cross-banks should be cleared to maintain flight-lines and selected banks cleared to grassland to provide loafing and breeding areas. Similar actions are required in the north lagoons, particularly around lagoons 1 and 2, and the Draper scrape/reedbed, maintaining open links to the meadows. (3) Sponsored species projects: • Otters - sponsorship of the Mammal Society's Otter survey of England, which occurs every 5 years. • Water vole - Thames will sponsor strategic working groups throughout the catchment, such as BBOWT and the new London Water Vole group, who use their resources will be to train citizen scientists to survey water ways across the south of England. • Swifts, Swallows and Sand Martins; this is a project covering a number of Water companies' boundaries. Other partnering companies include Northumbrian Water, Anglian Water and Severn Trent.

	(4) GIS platform for biodiversity, Biodiversity Net Gain and protected species The development of a GIS tool for database mapping platform to record results, project risk, track project & potential opportunities for biodiversity gains with greater connectivity to existing strategically important wildlife sites. The GIS tool to be developed with Thames Water Engineering Team either with internal resource from digital or an external consultant. It will also be used to develop the programme of works to track newly created habitats and monitor habitat creation condition as part of mandatory biodiversity net gain for planning as well as performance commitment BNG. (5) Biodiversity grounds maintenance team – Their role would be to carry out specialist and technical biodiversity management, outside of those nominated by the PC, on sites where the management schedule is too technically difficult for regular grounds maintenance teams and not included in regular GM contract payments. This will mostly include the management of operational sites where mandatory biodiversity net gain needs to be managed under planning permission for 30 years, as well as supporting the tree planting commitment and the freedom to have smaller projects on land outside of the operational boundaries where there are currently no grounds maintenance management at all, therefore enabling us the capability to achieve successful biodiversity projects. Our 5 years experience in this field concludes that the management and maintenance element is where the project delivery falls short and can only be successful by having a separate biodiversity maintenance team.
Milestone requirements	(1) The milestones are detailed in the Outcome 9 chapter on biodiversity.

	A site survey schedule will be set up ready for 2025 on a 4-year rotational programme, to visit the 100 sites, check on management and report back on condition via annual audit with use of survey information (using UK Habs), time-stamped photographs and drone imagery to inform current condition. Sites to be audited will be 10 randomly selected sites per year, agreed the week before audit, based on survey schedule. The 9 strategic sites will be set up into a 4-year programme. Sites 1,2 and 3 delivered on the ground prior to Spring 2026; Sites 4, 5 and 6 delivered on the ground prior to Spring 2027, and Sites 7, 8 and 9 to be delivered on the ground prior to Spring 2028. Condition assessments will take place on these sites every 4 years after their delivery. Details on this information and breakdown of costs can be found in the Outcome chapter 9 biodiversity along with corresponding documents on type of habitat to be created and management over time. The projects will be developed in conjunction with the relevant Local Nature Recovery strategy forum, who meet every 3-4 months. Survey information (using UK Habs), time-stamped photographs and drone imagery to inform current condition and biodiversity net gain performance commitment which will have 3rd party assurance; presented in the annual audit. Updates to stakeholders via the relevant Local Nature Recovery Forums, every 3-4 months. (2) Installation of species monitors and records at 12 key sites. Locations chosen by summer 2025 and installed on site by 2026. Contractors paid to carry out scrub management plan – drone imagery, time stamped photographs, annual reports and final report written up per site by 2030. Walthamstow wetlands maintenance plan drawn up 2025 and actioned with annual reports.

	Habitat on the wooded islands should be assessed by Spring 2026, restoration plan drawn up 2026 and work schedule complete by 2029. (3) Otters - sponsorship of the Mammal Society's Otter survey of England, update meetings and end of project report by 2030, or when project finishes Water vole – sponsorship of project, update meetings and annual report by 2030, or when project finishes Swifts, Swallows and Sand Martins - sponsorship of project, update meetings and annual report by 2030, or when project finishes (4) GIS platform for biodiversity, Biodiversity Net Gain and protected species By 2026 the GIS platform should be under development and fully functional by 2029. (5) Biodiversity grounds maintenance team commissioned to undertake the management of works by Autumn 2025 and monthly reporting on success.
Measures of success	Audits complete with all documentation signed off; drone images, time stamped photographs, reports, biodiversity net gain calculators (3rd party assured) and final report. Projects delivered and site visits with stakeholders. Funding to charities provided and final report written GIS tool produced and working to support biodiversity net gain, protected species mapping and project delivery. Biodiversity grounds maintenance team working to provide specialist care for biodiversity sites – management schedule, time stamped photos and drone imagery.
Other details	

Signatures		
Environment Agency	Signed:	Date:
By giving approval, the Environment Agency does not accept responsibility for the engineering design or construction of the scheme. The Environment Agency gives approval without prejudice to its statutory powers to take any necessary enforcement action.		
Water company	Signed:	Date:
Water company sign-off indicates agreement of the ASF submission with any partnerships involved		