

Derbyshire Dales District Council Nature Recovery Declaration

This council acknowledges that:

1. We are experiencing a nature crisis and the UK Government has recently committed to the COP15 requirements to address this¹. We recognise that with 41 per cent of wild species in decline nationally, and 15 per cent facing extinction:

- a) Nature is in long term decline, and the requirement to take action to reverse this is urgent.
- b) Nature provides us with vital support systems ('ecosystem services'), and severe declines in biodiversity are undermining nature's productivity and adaptability, posing excessive uncertainty for our economies and wellbeing.
- c) A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, happy, prosperous society.
- d) The nature crisis and the climate emergency are intrinsically linked. The impacts of the climate crisis are driving nature's decline, while restoring nature provides a wide variety of cost-effective benefits to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, such as through reducing the risk of flooding in our towns and villages.
- e) Many of our areas of work across the district have an impact on nature, and we have responsibilities to make decisions to protect and enhance it.

To support the recovery of nature across the Derbyshire Dales, this council commits to:

Nature and climate

1. Develop and implement a Derbyshire Dales Nature Recovery Strategy and ensure it underpins all planning, development, and land management decisions, including the Local Plan.

As part of this, the council will:

- a) Develop a Nature Recovery Network map to prioritise sites within the ecological network to provide a strategic base for the creation of a Nature Recovery Network.
- b) Increase space for wildlife and commit to the long-term maintenance and expansion of the Nature Recovery Network.
- c) Use the Nature Recovery Network map to inform the selection of Biodiversity Net Gain projects within the region.
- d) Maintain a commitment to achieve a net-gain to biodiversity across all development, meeting the Environment Act requirement of 10% biodiversity net-gain, ensuring compliance with the most up to date scheme from Defra.

e) Improve the landscape's resilience to climate change, employing nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the District, including carbon storage and sequestration, managing flood risk, improving water quality, and sustaining vital ecosystems.

f) After satisfying safety and visibility priorities, and building on the work of our Biodiversity Project, develop greenspace management regimes to maximise potential for biodiversity, carbon storage and sequestration.

g) Carry out a carbon audit of DDDC countryside and open space sites to establish how carbon storage/sequestration could be improved.

h) Adopt a peat-free policy for all council contracts and suppliers.

i) Aim to achieve favourable condition on all council-managed protected and designated nature sites (e.g., SSSIs (Site of Special Scientific Interest), LNRs (Local Nature Reserves), LWSs (Local Wildlife Sites)) by 2030.

People, health, and wellbeing

2. Improve access to nature by following the Natural England 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance¹. Regard will be given to:

- Areas with high levels of physical health problems.
- Areas with high levels of mental health problems.
- Areas where the amount and quality of accessible natural greenspace is below Natural England's targets.

Strategic planning and development

3. Embed nature's recovery into all strategic plans, including the Local Plan, and all policy areas, not just those directly related to the environment. Ensure the LNRS is well understood across the authority and complements other relevant plans and strategies.

4. Integrate the targets, objectives, and outcomes of this motion, i.e. the biodiversity strategy and action plan, with those outlined in the Derbyshire Dales Carbon Reduction Plan, to ensure measures to tackle climate issues do not contravene the principles of enhancing biodiversity. Wherever possible, the council will invest in nature-based solutions to climate change to tackle the nature crisis and climate emergency together.

5. Provide training and resources for councillors and council employees about the ecological emergency.

Collaboration, monitoring, and accountability

- 6. Identify a council employee as the designated lead for coordinating council operations in relation to the ecological emergency.**

¹ 'COP15: Nations adopt four Goals, 23 Targets for 2030 in landmark UN biodiversity agreement', UN Convention on Biological Diversity:

<https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-cbd-press-release-final-19dec2022>

² 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance, Natural England:

http://www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk/docunents/other/nature_nearby.pdf