

Derbyshire County Council

Motion to lodge a Nature Recovery Declaration

1. This Council acknowledges:

- 1.1. Nature provides us with vital support systems, allowing life on our planet to continue;
- 1.2. The climate crisis is intimately linked to the damage to nature which is happening around the world; that nutrient cycles, such as the carbon, nitrogen, phosphate and water cycles are all regulated by nature and are linked together;
- 1.3. That we have responsibilities across the county of Derbyshire which have an impact on nature and that we will make decisions that protect and enhance it wherever possible;
- 1.4. The requirement to take action is urgent, as climate change is rapidly disrupting natural cycles and habitats in Derbyshire. Steps to address the climate crisis must be in tandem with action to help ecosystems recover and become more resilient;
- 1.5. The principles we need to adopt and the steps to help nature recover are detailed in the attached briefing paper, and these will be enacted by the Council.

Briefing paper

2. The Council acknowledges:

The value of nature

- 2.1. The findings of the Dasgupta Review which highlights that nature is an asset on which all aspects of our society depend.¹ There has been underinvestment in our natural assets which must be reversed.
- 2.2. Our current demands on natural resources are unsustainable, requiring the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to maintain the world's current living standards.
- 2.3. Biodiversity is declining faster than at any time in human history. Such declines are undermining nature's productivity and adaptability, which poses excessive uncertainty for our economies and wellbeing.
- 2.4. Access to green space is a key factor in improving health and wellbeing and connection to it increases pro-environmental behaviour change.²

Interconnection to the climate crisis -

- 2.5 That the climate and ecological crises are interlinked and that nature can provide one-third of the most cost-effective solutions to fighting climate change.³
- 2.6 That climate change is displacing nature from its historic habitat ranges as average temperatures increase. To help nature adapt, we need to make habitats more resilient and create and enhance wildlife corridors to allow nature to move to more suitable locations.

The path to rebuilding nature - The Lawton Review

- 2.7 In order to reverse this decline, four principles must be followed:⁴
 - 2.7.1 There must be more space given to wildlife;
 - 2.7.2 That existing wild spaces must be expanded;
 - 2.7.3 That the quality of existing wild spaces should be improved;

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962785/The_Economics_of_Biodiversity_The_Dasgupta_Review_Full_Report.pdf

² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6005041314136064?category=6143124934492160>

³ <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/44/11645>

⁴<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402170324/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

2.7.4 That the connectivity between wild spaces must be increased.

3. The Council commits to:

This section serves to outline the targets and objectives that the Council will adopt in light of the scientific evidence provided, and supporting actions to achieve them.

Nature and Climate

3.1 The creation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy that sits within the national Nature Recovery Network and underpins all planning, development and land management decisions.⁵ As part of this, we will:

3.1.2 Improve the landscape's resilience to climate change, providing natural solutions to reduce carbon and manage flood risk, and sustaining vital ecosystems;

3.1.3 Prioritise Nature Based Solutions to flooding and extreme weather mitigation including use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), woodlands and wetlands to create nature rich habitat and connections;

3.1.4 Adopt a peat-free policy for all council contracts and supplies and support the restoration and protection of Derbyshire's peatlands, including taking measures to reduce the likelihood and severity of wildfires;

3.1.5 Support the restoration of tree cover in Derbyshire to 20% by 2040 across suitable locations, particularly the planting of street trees within our towns, cities and villages;

3.1.6 Manage at least 30% of council-owned land for the benefit of wildlife by 2030 (in line with Government commitments), including where we work with others (such as in and around care homes and on road verges);

3.1.7 Introduce a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) commitment across all council-owned land;

3.1.8 Map and gather data on ecological networks and habitat opportunities within the region and prioritise sites within the ecological network for Biodiversity Net Gain projects (sometimes known as Nature Recovery Network mapping);

3.1.9 Bring forward a commitment for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on all new developments now, rather than waiting for 2023, with the selection of sites for offsite mitigation based on the priorities identified by Nature Recovery Network mapping;

3.1.10 Support the restoration of 75% of sites managed for nature to favourable condition by 2030;

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network>

People, health and wellbeing

3.2 Improve access to nature by following the Natural England 'Nature Nearby' guidance. Particular regard will be given to:

3.2.1 Areas with high levels of physical health problems;

3.2.2 Areas with high levels of mental health problems;⁶

3.2.3 Areas where the amount and quality of accessible natural greenspace is below Natural England's targets.⁷

3. Demonstrate leadership by educating and supporting businesses, communities and the wider public to take action.

4. Recognise the role of education in engendering pro-environmental behaviour change, by supporting schools and adult education programmes which value nature.

5. Acknowledge the impact of food production and food waste on the current nature and climate crisis:

5.1. By assessing the environmental impact of the food that is purchased for schools and care homes, including ensuring the provision of plant-based foods;

5.2. Supporting the production of food locally, including promoting the provision of allotments across the county;

5.3. Encouraging residents of our community to minimise food waste and ensuring that no food waste goes to landfill.

4. The Council resolves to:

This section serves to outline the mechanisms by which the Council will deliver the above targets and objectives.

Leadership

4.1 Appoint a member of the Cabinet as the designated lead for tackling nature's recovery.

4.2 Appoint a council employee as the designated lead for coordinating council operations in relation to nature's recovery.

⁶ https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/r1_literature_review_wellbeing_benefits_of_wild_places_lres_0.pdf

⁷ http://www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk/document/other/nature_nearby.pdf

Strategic planning and development

4.3 Integrate the targets, objectives and outcomes of this declaration with those outlined in the existing Carbon Reduction Manifesto to ensure measures to tackle climate issues do not contravene the principles of enhancing biodiversity

4.3. Develop an evidence-based action plan including short and long-term targets for putting nature into recovery by 2030, and look to embed nature's recovery into all strategic plans and policy areas, not just those directly related to the environment. Areas of focus will include:

- Land management;
- Biodiversity;
- Roads and highways;
- Planning and development;
- Air quality;
- Transforming urban spaces;
- Health and wellbeing;
- People and communities;
- Education and awareness.

4.4. Provide training and resources for councillors and council employees about the nature emergency.

Collaboration, monitoring and accountability

4.5. Form a steering and monitoring group to focus on achieving the targets and objectives outlined in this declaration. This group will be comprised of: cross-party representatives, council staff and relevant experts from external organisations. This group will monitor progress, identify opportunities for improvement and report back to the Council.

4.6. Reinvigorate the Local Nature Partnerships to ensure the Nature Recovery Strategy is well understood and complements other relevant plans and strategies.

4.7. Publish interim reports on the progress made with regards to the above-mentioned action-plan.

4.8. Issue a declaration of compatibility alongside all future council motions and policy to ensure that any conflicts with nature's recovery are made apparent.