

South Derbyshire District Council's Action Plan for Nature

1.1 Introduction

- 1.2 This document supplements the Council's Action Plan for Nature. The Action Plan for Nature (APN) was drafted by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, with technical support from FPCR (An Environmental Consultancy) to provide information to South Derbyshire District Council on policy guidance objectives relating to biodiversity, to review the location and extent of natural habitats in South Derbyshire and identify those areas where new habitat creation should be prioritised in order to maximise the opportunities the Council has for supporting local nature recovery. A primary purpose of the APN is to provide a key piece of evidence to support the delivery of a new Local Plan. However, the information the APN includes is also a critical first step in helping the Council understand the condition of biodiversity in the District and the opportunities that exist to improve it. The information in the APN can be used to underpin a strategic approach, target how and where we prioritise our resources and actions to achieve maximum biodiversity delivery prior to the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which will be a central requirement of the Environment Bill currently going through Parliament.
- 1.3 In order to help guide the Council's strategic approach to enhancing biodiversity the Biodiversity Working Group has identified a vision, towards which the Council and its partners will work. This is then supplemented by a mission which builds on the priorities outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan. These are outlined below.

Our Strategic Approach

2.1 Vision

- 2.1.1 "South Derbyshire will be a District where the natural habitats and biodiversity of its open spaces, outdoor environment green spaces, are fully valued, properly managed and protected so that they can make their optimum contribution to the natural capital and ecosystem services of the District, the health and well-being of the community, whilst providing pleasure to today's residents and visitors and future generations."

2.2 Mission

- 2.2.1 To protect, improve, increase and sustain the District's biodiversity of habitats and species, on Council land; to provide connectivity through the National Forest and beyond; to improve the Council's skills and knowledge of the natural environment; contribute towards climate change adaptation and resilience; improve biodiversity and the intrinsic value and the services that habitats and species provides within and around South Derbyshire; enhance the health and wellbeing of local residents; and support economic prosperity of the District through continued environmental enhancement for the benefit of current and future generations.

2.3 Core Aims

The aims of the Action Plan for Nature and associated work programme are to:

1. Ensure the Council complies with all its duties to protect and enhance biodiversity and secure nature recovery
2. Value and improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of the District's habitats and biodiversity
3. Ensure that the District's natural capital, tree canopy, ecological network, ecosystem services, habitats and biodiversity contribute to a healthier and more attractive local environment
4. Effectively manage the impact of invasive/ undesirable species, pests and diseases on the natural environment, the Council's land and residents, businesses and organisations
5. Raise the profile, value and understanding of the importance, of habitats and biodiversity (and related matters) for the benefit of the District
6. Maximise all available financial and human resources to deliver agreed objectives and action plans for nature.

To achieve the vision, mission and aims, the Biodiversity Working Group has identified the following objectives:

- 1 To support climate change adaptation and the provisioning of natural capital and ecosystem services.
- 2 To support biodiversity enhancements to Council owned and managed sites.
- 3 To work proactively with the community and other stakeholders to protect existing ecologically important sites and areas and deliver biodiversity projects within and adjoining South Derbyshire
- 4 To improve skills and development capability in the Council, to put biodiversity at the heart of decision making and project implementation
- 5 To provide greater access to nature without compromising protection; to support the health and wellbeing of communities
- 6 To think creatively about how the delivery of biodiversity outcomes can be boosted in South Derbyshire

Following the preparation of the APN the Council, the Council's Biodiversity Working Group has now drafted a work programme highlighting how the delivery of programmes and projects will be prioritised in light of the objectives that have been identified. By necessity, it is essential that any programme or project plan retains flexibility to allow change as new opportunities arise, as funding or grants become available, or new partnerships are formed. But that does not mean that projects cannot be planned or prioritised. For this reason, an Action Plan for Nature Work Programme is included below to outline the strategic, or site-based projects the Council will seek to prioritise ahead of the preparation of a mandatory Local Nature Recovery Strategy as prescribed in the emerging Environment Bill. This work programme will seek to outline the timeframe over which priority projects are likely to come forward. This document will also outline the expected outcomes, the organisations the Council expects, or may need to work with and the proposals for monitoring success. Just as importantly it will consider what wider lessons officers expect to learn from individual projects in order to support longer term corporate

decision making about how sites are managed, deliver biodiversity net gain, assess opportunities to commercialise services or work with communities who may want to take a more active role in managing sites for biodiversity.

Action Plan for Nature: Work Programme

Objective 1. To support climate change adaptation and the provisioning of natural capital and ecosystem services.						
Number	Action	Council lead	Potential Partners	Measure	Time Frame	Priority
1.1	Develop and deliver a ten-year tree planting programme for Council owned sites with relevant partners and support tree planting on private land.	HoCCS & (EEP)	National Forest Company Forestry England Woodland Trust National Trust	No of trees planted by the Council proportion of Tree planted by the Council surviving. Number of trees provided through Free Tree Scheme	Start autumn/ winter 2021	High
1.2	Develop and deliver a ten-year grassland/ meadow planting and improvement programme for Council owned or managed sites with relevant partners, following policy review	HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Forestry England Parish Councils Derbyshire County Council	Square metreage of new meadow created on Council Open Space Square metreage of existing meadow improved Percentage of floral species improvement for Core Sites over 5 years	Start spring 2022	High
1.3	Develop and deliver a programme of hedgerow planting and improvement projects with relevant partners, to improve connectivity	HOCCS	National Forest Company Forestry England Woodland Trust Highways Parish Councils	Linear meterage new hedgerow Linear meterage of gapping-up Linear metreage hedge base improvement	Start autumn/ winter 2022	High
1.4	Work with partners to deliver Natural Flood Management projects to reduce flood risk and reconnect watercourses to their floodplain.	HoP&SH	Trent Rivers Trust Environment Agency Severn Trent Water Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Lead Local Flood Authority	Hectares of NFM interventions delivered	ongoing	High

Objective 2. To support biodiversity protection and enhancements to Council owned and managed sites.

Number	Action	Who	Potential Partners	Measure	Time Frame	Priority
2.1	Deliver Swadlincote Woodlands Management Plan and gain Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status	HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	Gain LNR status and deliver the appropriate elements of the Swadlincote Woodlands Action Plan.	2021	High
2.2	Identify all potential nature sites managed by the Council which have potential for biodiversity enhancement	HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Derbyshire County Council	All potential sites included in list and updated as appropriate	April 2022 and ongoing	High
2.3	Develop and deliver a programme of habitat/species surveys for all identified Core ¹ nature sites	HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	Programme of surveys on 5-yearly basis for core sites Less frequent programme of surveys for non-core sites to be agreed.	April 2022 and ongoing	High
2.4	Use strategic significance maps to prioritise land for habitat creation or enhancement.	HoCCS HoP&SH	--	Review maps and their relevance to nature sites	April 2022 and ongoing	High
2.5	Develop and deliver proportionate management plans and/or prescriptions as appropriate for each site with focus on Core sites	HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	Prescriptions delivered as agreed	April 2022 and ongoing	High

¹ Sites actively managed for biodiversity

2.6	Develop management/ action plans to deal with invasive/ undesirable species, pests and diseases etc.	HoCCS HoH	--	Develop management plans/ prescriptions for priority sites on rolling programme	Sept 2021 and ongoing	High
2.7	Continue to implement and monitor road verge trials to inform long-term changes to the management of appropriate verges in the interests of biodiversity.	HoOS HoCCS	Derbyshire County Council Highways	Review complete and actions implemented	April 2023 and ongoing	High
2.8	Review Council owned sites that can be put forward for the creation of new ponds to accommodate great crested newts as part of Natural England's (NE) District Level Licencing (DLL) Scheme and support NE with the future management of the scheme	HoP&SH	Natural England Wildscapes	Review completed Attendance of District Level Licencing Steering group meeting.	September 2021	High
2.9	Review management policies, specifications and methods for parks, green spaces (including local green spaces) and recreational/ amenity areas (and other non-core nature sites) and identify opportunities for the optimal rewilding of sites to improve biodiversity and increase ecological features on recreational or amenity sites.	HoCCS	--	Review completed and actions implemented	April 2023 and ongoing	Medium

Objective 3: To work proactively with the community and other stakeholders to protect existing ecologically important sites and areas and deliver biodiversity projects within and adjoining South Derbyshire

Number	Action	Who	Potential Partners	Measure	Time Frame	Priority
3.1	Use biodiversity opportunity mapping included in the APN to inform Local Plan preparation.	HoP&SH	--	Site allocations and policies to reflect BOM and other evidence included in the APN	TBC	High
3.2	Use recently prepared Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping to inform the preparation of any master-planning of existing large development sites allocated in the Adopted Plan	HoP&SH	--	Site masterplanning reflects BOM and other evidence	TBC	High
3.3	Continue to play an active role in the River Mease Partnership to deliver water quality and habitat improvements within the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and its catchment	HoP&SH	North West Leicestershire DC Lichfield DC Environment Agency Natural England Severn Trent Water Trent Rivers Trust	Preparation and implementation of an updated Developer Contribution Scheme (DCS) to be adopted by the Council	Feb 23	High
3.4	Deliver Education programme for local schools (including raising awareness of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation).	HoCCS (EEP)	Mease Partnership (As above)		Autumn 23	High
3.5	Work constructively with Derbyshire County Council to deliver its Natural Capital Study and any future Local Nature Recovery Strategy or other requirements of the emerging Environment Act.	HoP&SH HoCCS HoES	Derbyshire County Council Other Derbyshire Districts/ Boroughs	Completion of NCS Completion of LNRS	Spring 23 TBC	High
3.6	Continue to develop the role of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in providing guidance and support in delivering projects	HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	SLA performance measures	Ongoing	High

				Set up regular meeting to discuss joint or individual projects being progressed in the District		
3.7	Continue to develop partnerships and devolved management to parish councils and others in managing suitable Council sites	HoCCS	Parish Councils	Number of sites managed by partners Quality improvement of sites as monitored.	Ongoing	Medium
3.8	Continue to develop working relationships with relevant wildlife groups, local groups and organisations to support plan objectives	HoCCS	--	Number of relevant groups involved	April 2022 and ongoing	Medium
3.9	Explore the engagement of farmers and other landowner in the River Mease catchment re opportunities to deliver BNG through the Farmers' Facilitation Meeting	HoCCS	Natural England Environment Agency Trent River Trust	Attendance of FFM as recommended in APN if considered appropriate	April 2022	Medium
3.10	Encourage and support individuals and groups in identifying and submitting species records	HoCCS (EEP)	South Derbyshire Environmental Forum Network Derbyshire Biological Records Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of records submitted to DBRC No of species Identification training opportunities shared/ delivered in South Derbyshire <p>Baseline data from DBRC / SDDC webpage analytics and from the SD Env Forum network data</p>	April 2022	Medium

Objective 4. To improve skills and development capability in the Council to put biodiversity at the heart of decision making, service delivery and project implementation

Number	Action	Who	Potential Partners	Measure	Time Frame	Priority
4.1	Map and keep updated management information on Core and non- Core ² nature sites.	HoOS HoCCS	--	Initial mapping and data gathering ongoing	December 2021	High
4.2	Establish processes in planning and community services to ensure that any mandatory BNG requirements introduced as part of the Environment Act can be integrated into decision taking.	HoP&SH HoCCS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	Council processes updated and 10% biodiversity gain secured on all development sites caught by BNG requirements.	Autumn 2023	High
4.3	Develop training programmes for staff and volunteers directly involved in delivering site biodiversity improvements	HoCCS & EEP HoOS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust TCV: The Conservation Volunteers South Derbyshire Environmental Forum Network	Training modules developed and delivered	Autumn 2021	High
4.4	Develop training modules for all staff relating to Biodiversity duty etc.	HoCCS & EEP HoES	--	Training modules developed and delivered	April 2022 and ongoing	Medium

² Sites which are not currently actively managed for biodiversity (for example local parks), but could subject to changed management to provide some contribution towards biodiversity.

Objective 5: To provide greater access to nature without compromising protection; to support the health and wellbeing of communities

Number	Action	Who	Potential Partners	Measure	Time Frame	Priority
5.1	Explore opportunities and funding for social (green) prescribing/ identify exercise routes and active environmental engagement opportunities at suitable sites	HoCCS/ EEP	NHS/CCGs	Programme developed/ delivered No of site improvements delivered by volunteers on GSP programmes	April 2022 and ongoing	High
5.2	Deliver environmental volunteering opportunities for individuals, groups, schools, businesses on council owned/ managed land and community owned/ managed sites.	HoCCS/ EEP	South Derbyshire Environmental Forum Network	No of volunteer hours No of site improvements completed No of businesses engaging with sites	April 2022 and ongoing	High
5.3	Continue to develop the role of The Conservation Volunteers in maintaining and improving nature sites	HoCCS	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)	Number of volunteer hours Projects completed	Ongoing	High
5.4	Review each nature site with a view to allowing/ deterring access as appropriate with plans for required amendments	HoCCS	--	Review completed and implemented	April 2022 and ongoing	Medium
5.5	Support wildlife groups, schools and community groups etc. in developing suitable projects on appropriate Council sites	HoCCS & EEP	Schools Parish Councils	Number of groups involved/ projects completed	April 2022 and ongoing	Medium

5.6	To support improved accessibility to sites designated as local green spaces where opportunities arise	HoP&SS	Parish Councils	No of designated Local Green Spaces where improvements to accessibility have been delivered.	ongoing	Medium
5.7	Support individuals, businesses and communities to improve their own land – garden or site- for biodiversity through training, networking and provision of encouragement and information	HoCCS/EEP	South Derbyshire Environmental Forum Network	No of events which involve wildlife education No of individuals and communities taking part in Free Tree scheme (see also 1.1)	Ongoing	Medium

Objective 6: To think creatively about how the delivery of biodiversity outcomes can be boosted in South Derbyshire

Number	Action	Who	Potential Partners	Measure	Time Frame	Priority
6.1	Develop a communications plan to promote and champion biodiversity protection and improvement in the District	HoCCS Comms	--	Comms plan created and delivered	April 2022 and ongoing	High
6.2	Review potential to use green space/ nature sites in BNG schemes	HoCCS HoP&SH HoOS	--	Review completed	September 2023 and ongoing	High /Medium
6.3	Consider the potential to acquire/ adopt land for BNG enhancement or habitat creation or work with partners to deliver local schemes.	HoCCS HoP&SH HoF HoOS	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust National Forest River Mease Partnership	Local scheme implemented	September 2023 and ongoing	Medium

Notes:

HoCCS: Head of Cultural and Communities Services

HoOS: Head of Operational Service

HoP&SH: Head of Planning and Strategic Housing

EEP: Environmental Education Project

HoES: Head of Environmental Services