



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CLIMATE CHANGE,  
BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION**

**MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2024**

**Report of the Executive Director - Place**

**Preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To inform the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction of the work being led by the Council in its role as responsible authority for the preparation of Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**2. Information and Analysis**

- 2.1 Biodiversity loss in England is accelerating. There is recognition from the Government, public authorities and the environmental sector that prompt action at both landscape and local scales is required to address society's neglect of nature. Planning for nature recovery must take place in a strategic, collaborative and evidenced based manner. Furthermore, a more biodiverse environment will allow important new net zero, climate change resilience, social, health, regeneration and economic growth benefits to be realised.
- 2.2 The Environment Act 2021 brings into law the Government's intention to create a Nature Recovery Network across England. The Nature Recovery Network will comprise of 48 County-based Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) which will cover the whole of England. In accordance with the Act, each strategy will be designed to ensure locally targeted, more co-ordinated, practical and focused action, and investment in nature. The collective and complementary outputs from

48 strategies will be the delivery of the strategic national objectives of the Nature Recovery Network which are as follows:

- Creating and restoring wildlife-rich habitats.
- Improving the landscape's resilience to climate change.
- Reinforcing the natural, geological, and cultural diversity of England's landscapes.
- Enabling people to enjoy and connect with nature - benefiting society's health and wellbeing.

2.3 The Council has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as the responsible authority for preparing, approving and publishing the LNRS for Derbyshire (including Derby City) by 31 March 2025. The Government has set a framework within which the Council must formulate the LNRS which comprises of:

- Ensuring the LNRS is prepared in a collaborative manner.
- Using evidence to identify opportunities and then the priorities for enhancing biodiversity.
- Establishing an action plan to deliver the priorities, with an initial time-horizon to 2033.
- Undertaking a public consultation on the draft LNRS.
- Seeking approval to the LNRS from Derbyshire's district and borough councils and the Peak District National Park Authority.
- The Council's Cabinet approving the LNRS.
- Publishing the LNRS (and then leading on its subsequent reviews).

2.4 The LNRS for Derbyshire will provide the route map for nature recovery in Derbyshire; setting a long-term vision and action plan that is formulated and delivered in a collaborate manner with everyone who wishes to participate. It will be founded on existing good practice and expertise whilst creating new opportunities to apply the advantages of partnerships to enabling nature to thrive. The LNRS will be reviewed every three to ten years to assess progress and update priorities and actions.

2.5 The benefits that the LNRS for Derbyshire will provide include:

- A strategic guide for a locally led transformation of the way in which biodiversity is protected, restored and enhanced.
- The use of research and evidence to inform priorities for nature recovery, e.g. the baseline information on habitats, and the

ecosystem services they provide, as identified in the Natural Capital Strategy for Derbyshire.

- Enable funding and resources to be used more efficiently and effectively in the support of nature recovery.
- Encourage all organisations and individuals interested in nature recovery to work effectively together to achieve agreed outcomes for nature.
- Enable landowners and land managers to understand how their land can contribute to nature's recovery.
- Offer opportunities to increase public connections to nature whilst supporting its recovery.
- Support the application of the National Planning Policy Framework (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) in Derbyshire.
- Maximise and quantify the value of biodiversity net gain as a condition of planning permission to Derbyshire.
- Tangible and significant contributions to the delivery of the Government's national "apex goal" of "thriving plants and wildlife" as set-out in the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023.

2.6 As the responsible authority for preparing, publishing and subsequently reviewing a LNRS for Derbyshire, the Council's initial overarching responsibility is to prepare and publish the LNRS for Derbyshire by 31 March 2025. In summary, this involves fulfilling the requirements outlined below.

- **Establishing the baseline of the quantity, quality and diversity of habitats across Derbyshire**

The LNRS will map the location and condition of Derbyshire's habitats – existing areas, places and sites that already exhibit good natural habitats and which form the basis for nature recovery. This will include local nature reserves and areas of irreplaceable habitats. Furthermore, the LNRS will identify where biodiversity is in decline or limited in ecosystem value.

- **Setting Derbyshire's ambition for nature recovery through a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and a Local Habitat Map**

The LNRS preparation will identify opportunities, priorities, outcomes and measures for nature recovery and the wider environmental, economic and social benefits this will realise. It will also assess where and how such benefits can be secured by considering the different parts of Derbyshire's natural environment, its geography and ecology, and the potential for improvement. The results will be written in the LNRS's statement of biodiversity priorities and plotted on a local habitat map.

- **Preparing a Delivery Plan for Nature Recovery in Derbyshire**  
The LNRS will provide a tangible set of measures/actions through which Derbyshire's nature recovery will be delivered, with an initial time horizon of up to April 2033.
- **Publish the LNRS for Derbyshire**  
The LNRS must be published, i.e. publicly available, with the evidence base against which it has been formulated, in accordance with a format prescribed by Government.
- **Review and republishing of the LNRS for Derbyshire**  
The LNRS must be reviewed and republished as part of an ongoing cycle of appraising what the strategy has achieved and identifying what further work is needed for nature to recover.

2.7 The Council is working closely with relevant public, private and voluntary sector organisations to draw on their collective expertise in the production of the LNRS for Derbyshire. Hence, the strategy will reflect collective local knowledge of relevant planned or ongoing nature recovery activity, enabling it to enhance integration between existing efforts to improve the environment in Derbyshire. Furthermore, the Council will ensure that the strategy is understandable and promote its value to local stakeholders, therefore encouraging their involvement in its preparation. Such stakeholders include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local planning authorities, businesses, landowners and managers, community interest groups, and the public.

2.8 The Council, as the responsible authority, must take certain 'reasonable steps' to involve Natural England and the LNRS supporting authorities, as defined in the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, in the preparation of the LNRS for Derbyshire. The supporting authorities are the local authorities whose areas are in the strategy area or partly in the strategy area. For Derbyshire, the supporting authorities are:

- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- High Peak Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- South Derbyshire District Council
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Natural England

- 2.9 These reasonable steps required of the Council include ensuring that the Council has regard to any opinions expressed by these authorities in relation to the strategy. It is important for these steps to be underpinned by effective collaboration, as a supporting authority can lodge a formal objection to a LNRS consultation draft and give notice to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if it considers that the final LNRS proposed for approval is materially deficient. The procedure for managing such circumstances involve the Secretary of State.
- 2.10 To assist the Council to fulfil the responsible authority duties, the Council has established governance arrangements for stakeholder (including supporting authority) engagement that reflect the legislative significance of the LNRS; the need for the Council to facilitate an inclusive and evidence-based approach to its preparation; and for the Council to be able to make a well-informed decision to approve a final version of the LNRS for Derbyshire in Quarter 4 2024-25.

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 Not required.

### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Option 1: Do Nothing - The proposed approach to preparing Derbyshire's LNRS is designed to ensure compliance with the Council's statutory duties as the responsible authority for the LNRS. Failure to meet the Council's statutory duties is not an option. This option is not recommended.
- 4.2 Option 2: Alternative Engagement Models - The proposed approach for governance of stakeholder engagement has been established following the assessment of other models which have not offered the extent of opportunities for the collaborative production of the LNRS through the engagement of stakeholder organisations. Such options have been rejected given the strong desire of the Council to seek informed debate, sharing of perspectives, consensus building, agreed priorities, and thereby a deliverable county-wide improvement strategy for nature. This option is not recommended.

### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

## **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction (22 May 2023): Identifying the Council’s role in Nature Recovery.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.
- 7.2 Appendix 2 - Derbyshire’s National (landscape) Character Areas.

## **8. Recommendation**

That the Committee:

- a) Notes, understands and supports the work that is being led by the Council in its role as responsible authority for the preparation of Derbyshire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

## **9. Reason for Recommendation**

- 9.1 To ensure the Committee understands and supports the work being undertaken to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duties and Place leadership responsibilities in respect to nature recovery.

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**Implications****Financial**

- 1.1 The Government has allocated New Burdens LNRS Funding to the Council to enable the preparation of the LNRS and ensure it is cost neutral to the Council's revenue budget.
- 1.2 The Council's LNRS New Burdens Funding budget is expected to be £0.423m. This is made up as follows;

<b>Year Allocated</b>	<b>Amount £ (m)</b>
2021-22	0.016
2022-23	0.032
2023-24	0.200
2024-25 (expected)	0.175
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.423</b>

**Legal**

- 2.1 Under Section 105 of the Environment Act 2021, LNRSs are to be prepared, published, and reviewed by responsible authorities designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Council was identified by the Government in March 2022 as being a provisional responsible authority. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 make provision in relation to the preparation, publication, review and republication of the LNRS, particularly the procedures to be followed. The Council, for carrying out this work, will also have to have regard to the relevant Government guidance (currently the LNRS Statutory Guidance published by DEFRA in March 2023).

**Human Resources**

- 3.1 The Council has ensured that appropriate Officer resources are allocated to the preparation of the LNRS. This has included recruiting to a new fixed term post of LNRS Officer.

## **Information Technology**

- 4.1 There are no direct information technology implications arising from this report.

## **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 The preparation of the LNRS will be undertaken in an inclusive manner in accordance with the principles shown below.
- Inclusivity – priority will be placed on ensuring that everyone with an interest will have the opportunity to be involved.
  - Clear communication – it is important that everyone can understand and contribute from a non-technical perspective.
  - Transparency – the contributions of partners will be recorded and considered and how these inputs have been used, or not, in decisions will be explained and recorded.
  - Evidence based decisions – using the research, data and expertise available from local partnerships.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 6.1 The preparation of the LNRS will contribute to the following Council Plan objectives
- Resilient, healthy, and safe communities
  - High performing, value for money and resident focused services
  - Effective early help for individuals and communities
  - A prosperous and green Derbyshire

## **Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)**

- 7.1 None.



Natural England's National Character Areas in Derbyshire



National Character Areas

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Dark Peak                                 |  Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands |
|  White Peak                                |  Trent Valley Washlands                |
|  Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent               |  Melbourne Parklands                   |
|  S Yorkshire, Notts & Derbyshire Coalfield |  Leics & South Derbyshire Coalfield    |
|  Southern Magnesian Limestone              |  Mease/Sence Lowlands                  |

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