

Lichfield District



NATURE
RECOVERY
DECLARATION



This council acknowledges that:

We are experiencing a nature crisis. We recognise that with 41 per cent of wild species in decline nationally, and 15 per cent facing extinction:

- Nature is in long term decline, and the requirement to take action to reverse this is urgent.
- 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.
- A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, happy, prosperous society.
- 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.
- Many of our areas of work across the district of Lichfield have an impact on nature, and we have responsibilities to make decisions to protect and enhance it.

To address the nature crisis and aim to achieve the multiple environmental benefits that nature can bring to people, this council acknowledges that the ‘Bigger, Better, More and Joined-up’ principles of the 2010 Lawton Report should be followed:

- There must be more space given to wildlife.
- Existing wild spaces must be expanded.
- The quality of existing wild spaces should be improved.
- The connectivity between wild spaces must be increased.

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

Nature and climate

- 1. Apply and implement the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) that will sit within the national Nature Recovery Network and ensure it underpins all planning, development, and land management decisions, including the Local Plan.**

As part of this, the council will:

- In line with the LNRS, use the council's habitat/Nature Recovery Network map to prioritise sites within the ecological network to provide a strategic base for the creation of a Nature Recovery Network.
- Use the council's habitat/Nature Recovery Network map to inform the selection of biodiversity net gain projects within the region.
- Increase space for wildlife and commit to the long-term maintenance and expansion of a Nature Recovery Network.
- Seek to manage at least 30% of council-owned land for the benefit of wildlife by 2030 (in line with UK Government's national and international commitments).
- Maintain a commitment to achieve a net-gain to biodiversity across all development, meeting the Environment Act requirement of 10% biodiversity net-gain, and 20% above the biodiversity unit value of habitats lost using the Lichfield District 'replacement percentage'.
- 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.
- Formulate a tree strategy which is underpinned by Nature Recovery Network mapping across the local authority area, pursuing a "right tree, right place" approach.
- After satisfying safety and visibility priorities, develop greenspace cutting regimes to maximise potential for biodiversity, carbon storage and sequestration.
- Carry out a carbon audit of local authority sites to establish how carbon storage/sequestration could be improved.
- Prioritise the protection of heathland habitats, focussing on restoration and increasing ecological connectivity.
- Adopting a peat-free policy for all council contracts and supplies.
- 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.
- Continue to support the Transforming the Trent Valley Landscape Partnership, seeking ways to continue its work and secure its legacy.

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.

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

Strategic planning and development

4. Develop a biodiversity evidence-based strategy and action plan, as part of the upcoming wider 2050 Lichfield District Strategy, which includes short and long-term targets to reverse the decline of nature and increase species abundance by 2030. Publish interim reports on the progress made with regards to the above-mentioned action plan. This should complement the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Areas of focus will include:

- Planning and development, including Biodiversity Net Gain
- Land management
- Biodiversity
- People and communities, access to nature
- Roads networks and highways
- Nature-based solutions
- Air quality
- Transforming urban spaces
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and awareness



- 5. 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.**
- 6. Integrate the targets, objectives, and outcomes of this motion, i.e., the biodiversity strategy and action plan, with those outlined in the upcoming wider 2050 Lichfield District Strategy and Organisational 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.**
- 7. Provide training and resources for councillors and council employees about the ecological emergency.**
- 8. Ensure monitoring occurs to focus on achieving the targets and objectives outlined in this declaration. Working and sharing results with; cross-party representatives, council staff and relevant experts from external organisations. Monitoring progress and identifying opportunities for improvement to report back to the Council, and reporting progress alongside the requirements of the Environment Act through the production of a 'Biodiversity Report' every five years.**
- 9. Issue a declaration of compatibility alongside all future council motions and policy to ensure that any conflicts with nature's recovery are made apparent.**
- 10. Appoint a member of the Cabinet as the designated lead for tackling the nature crisis.**
- 11. Appoint a council employee as the designated lead for coordinating council operations in relation to the ecological emergency.**

¹ 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance, Natural England:
http://www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk/documents/other/nature_nearby.pdf