

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Executive

3 December 2024

TITLE:	Plan for Nature
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Jean Todd - Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Katie Hampton - Biodiversity Officer David Smith – Head of Communities, Culture and Climate Change
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

Appendices Attached – High Peak Plan for Nature

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The report recommends the adoption of the High Peak Plan for Nature, and set out next steps for delivering the Plan for Nature. This includes:
- an outline of the proposed governance structure;
 - a broad action plan; and
 - proposals for reporting.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive approves to adopt the High Peak Plan for Nature.
- 2.2 That the Executive approves the proposed governance structure responsible for delivering the Plan.
- 2.3 That the Executive notes the content of the report by way of an update on the Plan for Nature.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The serious decline in nature has been highlighted in recent years, with many habitats lost and remaining habitats in increasingly poor condition, threatening various species with extinction.
- 3.2 The requirement to take action to reverse this decline is critical and is reflected in the statutory duty imposed on the Council by the Natural Environment and

Rural Communities Act 2006 (and subsequently enhanced by the Environment Act 2021) to take appropriate action to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

- 3.3 Many areas of the Council's work have an impact on nature and the co-benefits, ecosystem services and support that nature provides us with are invaluable. These include (but are not limited to) enhanced mental and physical health, climate change adaptation including urban cooling and flood management, better air quality, and improved access to green spaces.
- 3.4 The Council adopted a Nature Recovery Declaration on 18 April 2024 which recognised the nature crisis and made a commitment to work with partners to support the recovery of nature across the High Peak. Similarly, back in October 2019, the Council adopted a Climate Change Emergency Declaration which recognised the threat posed by climate change and made a commitment to work with partners to tackle climate change. The climate and nature emergencies are intrinsically linked – we cannot solve one without tackling the other. Nature recovery is key in tackling climate change, and climate is increasingly impacting wildlife.
- 3.5 The Council has developed a Plan for Nature with support from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. The Plan provides a review of the existing state of nature within the High Peak and recommends how and where the Council should prioritise nature recovery efforts.
- 3.6 Through development of the Plan for Nature, it has been identified that a robust governance structure needs to be established to facilitate delivery of the Plan, and enable transparent and comprehensive reporting against targets in the Plan. Cross-departmental working will be key to ensure that nature is considered across all the Council's operations.
- 3.7 The Plan for Nature initiatives will ensure alignment with climate adaptation, nutrient neutrality, biodiversity net gain, and the Council's other strategies including the Green Spaces Strategy. There may also be consideration in the future to offsetting emissions.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Aim 4 of the Borough Plan for 2023-27 seeks to "*Protect and improve the environment including responding to the climate emergency*" and contains the following objective: "*complete the development of a High Peak Biodiversity Plan*". The Plan for Nature has been produced in accordance with Aim 4.
- 4.2 Nature fundamentally underpins a thriving and sustainable economy and healthy society . Therefore, committing resources to nature's recovery helps to deliver priorities under Aim 1 of the Borough Plan: "*Supporting our communities to create a healthier and safer High Peak*".

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 To not approve to adopt the Plan for Nature.

- 5.2 To not approve the proposed governance structure responsible for delivering the Plan.

6. Implications

6.1	<p><u>Community safety, including safeguarding and prevention of terrorism</u></p> <p>None</p>
6.2	<p><u>Workforce</u></p> <p>Cross-departmental officer groups, working with our communities where possible, will facilitate delivery of the Plan, headed by the Biodiversity Officer.</p> <p>Delivery of the Plan for Nature will be overseen at officer level by the existing Climate and Biodiversity Delivery Group (CBDG), and at member-level by the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG).</p> <p>Heads of Service will be responsible for highlighting workforce issues in response to the development of project strands from the Plan for Nature.</p>
6.3	<p><u>Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>No impacts identified at this stage but the potential impacts of any projects emerging from the delivery plan will be revised at that stage.</p>
6.4	<p><u>Financial Considerations</u></p> <p>Council activity is funded through individual service budgets.</p> <p>Funding for community groups is available through the Council's Climate Change and Nature Fund.</p> <p>The Council has an earmarked reserve for Climate Change which currently stands at £360,000.</p>
6.5	<p><u>Legal</u></p> <p>Local Authorities have a strengthened duty under the Environment Act 2021 to conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>The duty requires the authority from time to time consider what action it can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity ("general biodiversity objective").</p> <p>Establishing robust mechanisms for delivering the Plan for Nature</p>

	(including reviewing funding, resources and governance for its delivery), will help the Council to meet its duty.
6.6	<p><u>Climate Change and Sustainability</u></p> <p>Delivery of the Plan for Nature supports the Council's commitment to address climate change.</p>
6.7	<p><u>Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity</u></p> <p>The delivery of the Plan for Nature is fully in line with the Council's commitment to conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p>
6.8	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Discussions to inform the delivery of the Plan for Nature have taken place at the Climate Change Working Group, in meetings with partners including the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and local community groups, and with relevant Officers.</p> <p>A public consultation was held on the Plan during July/August 2024, following which the Plan was updated to take into consideration the feedback received.</p>
6.9	<p><u>Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>An adaptation risk assessment is to be carried out with Defra's reporting programme. This may highlight some nature based solutions to adapt to climate change.</p>

Anna Eastgate
Director (Community Services)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

www.highpeak.gov.uk/Nature-Biodiversity
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/40>
[Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)

Contact details

Katie Hampton
Biodiversity Officer
katie.hampton@highpeak.gov.uk

David Smith
Head of Communities and Climate Change
david.smith@highpeak.gov.uk

7. Background

- 7.1 Nature is in long term decline. The number and abundance of species has declined significantly and continues to do so. The 2023 State of Nature Report¹ revealed that UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth which is a shocking fact: for example, the abundance of terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by 19% across the UK since 1970, with 2% extinct in Great Britain and a further 16% threatened with extinction.
- 7.2 The Lawton Review² highlighted that wildlife sites in England did not comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network that is also capable of coping with the challenge of climate change and other pressures. In order to reverse this decline, there must be more space given to wildlife, existing wild spaces must be expanded, the quality of existing wild spaces should be improved and the connectivity between wild spaces must be increased.

8. Legislation

- 8.1 The publication of the Environment Act 2021 was a key step for the Government in committing to nature's recovery, and essentially serves to operate as the UK's new framework of environmental protection.
- 8.2 The Act also introduced a 'Biodiversity Net Gain' requirement, which among other things (including imposing a minimum 10% net gain requirement for developers in the planning process) included a new statutory duty for local authorities to 'conserve and enhance' biodiversity. It is therefore key that local authorities have robust plans and strategies for improving biodiversity across their areas to help meet this duty. The enhanced duty also includes new statutory biodiversity reporting requirements for local authorities.
- 8.3 The Environment Act also introduced a requirement for responsible authorities (Derbyshire County Council) to develop mandatory spatial strategies for nature: Local Nature Recovery Strategies or 'LNRS', with support from stakeholders including High Peak Borough Council. The Council has been involved in the development of the LNRS from an early stage and has ensured that information from the Plan for Nature has fed into the process.

9. Other strategic context

High Peak Local Plan (2016 – 2031)

- 9.1 Local plans provide a framework for delivering development over a set period. They should reflect the views of local communities and aim to contribute towards wider social, economic, and environmental objectives.
- 9.2 The High Peak Local Plan was adopted in 2016 and sets out the Council's vision and strategy for the borough until 2031. The Local Plan identifies the main priorities which the Council will focus its resources on.

¹ <https://stateofnature.org.uk/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today>

- 9.3 The Plan for Nature will contribute towards a number of strategic objectives in the Local Plan:

SO1: *“To protect create and enhance the Green Infrastructure Network”*.

SO2: *“: To maintain, enhance and conserve the Borough’s distinct landscape characteristics, biodiversity, and cultural and historic environment”*.

SO3: *“To ensure new development is well designed, promotes local distinctiveness and integrates effectively with its setting”*.

SO4: *“To protect and enhance the character, appearance and setting of the towns and villages”*.

SO5: *“To address, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on people, wildlife and places; promoting the safeguarding and prudent sustainable use of natural resources”*.

- 9.4 A review of the Local Plan has recently commenced to update policies deemed out of date and consider the scope for wider amendments, including a key focus on improving biodiversity across the Borough.

Parks Strategy (2021 – 2031)

- 9.5 The Parks Strategy was developed to enhance parks and green spaces, and deliver projects detailed in individual parks management plans.
- 9.6 Parks and green spaces provide an important opportunity for improving biodiversity across the Borough. The potential for updating individual management plans to strengthen biodiversity enhancements has been discussed, in addition to wider, more general changes in mowing regimes and greater cross-departmental working.

Climate Change

- 9.7 The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and published subsequent action plans in 2021 which set out the Council’s proposed actions to combat climate change. Within the action plan there are 7 pillars, including ‘look after our environment’, which contained the following actions:
- Increase tree cover and improve nature.
 - Protect and extend the existing green infrastructure.
 - Reduce the risk from flooding.
 - Work in partnership with our communities, including the most vulnerable.

Other relevant strategies

- 9.8 High Peak Borough Council’s Tree Strategy was published in 2016. Although described as a strategy, it is an operational guide for the management of trees and woodlands in the High Peak, which the Council has duties and

responsibilities for. An opportunity has been identified to create a new Tree Strategy to include targets for increasing canopy cover, linking with climate change adaptation and the woodland habitat opportunity mapping within the Plan for Nature.

- 9.9 The Move More Strategy is a partner strategy which has been adopted by the Council. The core value of the strategy is “*Together, our aim is for everyone across the High Pak to move more every day and to provide greater support to those that need it most*”. In alignment with this value, work on nature walks has been developed throughout 2024, with a number of events run by the Council.

10. Plan for Nature

- 10.1 The Plan for Nature was developed in conjunction with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. It is essentially a review of the existing state of nature within the High Peak and recommends how and where nature recovery efforts should be prioritised by the Council.
- 10.2 There are several targets and suggested actions within the Plan for Nature which can be delivered through projects with community groups, changes to Council management practices, projects on council-owned land, and other means.
- 10.3 One of the key targets in the Plan for Nature is to “*ensure 30% of the borough is managed for wildlife*” with a list of key prioritised actions for the Council themselves to implement by 2030. Reviewing the management and maintenance of council-owned green spaces and assets for habitat improvement potential will be key to meeting this target.
- 10.4 Habitat mapping and modelling within the Plan for Nature displays key locations that are strategically significant for the creation and enhancement of different habitats; to guide the creation and strengthening of nature recovery networks.
- 10.5 Fundamentally, the vision within the Plan for Nature is for a borough rich in wildlife, with connected corridors of sites in good condition, and the Council leading the way in sustainable planning, collaborative working, community projects and good quality green infrastructure. The purpose of the Vision is to provide the Council with something to work towards when delivering actions.

11. Governance Structure

- 11.1 The following section sets out further detail on the proposed governance structure responsible for delivering the Plan. The structure covers work across the Alliance, as some groups cover work across both councils.

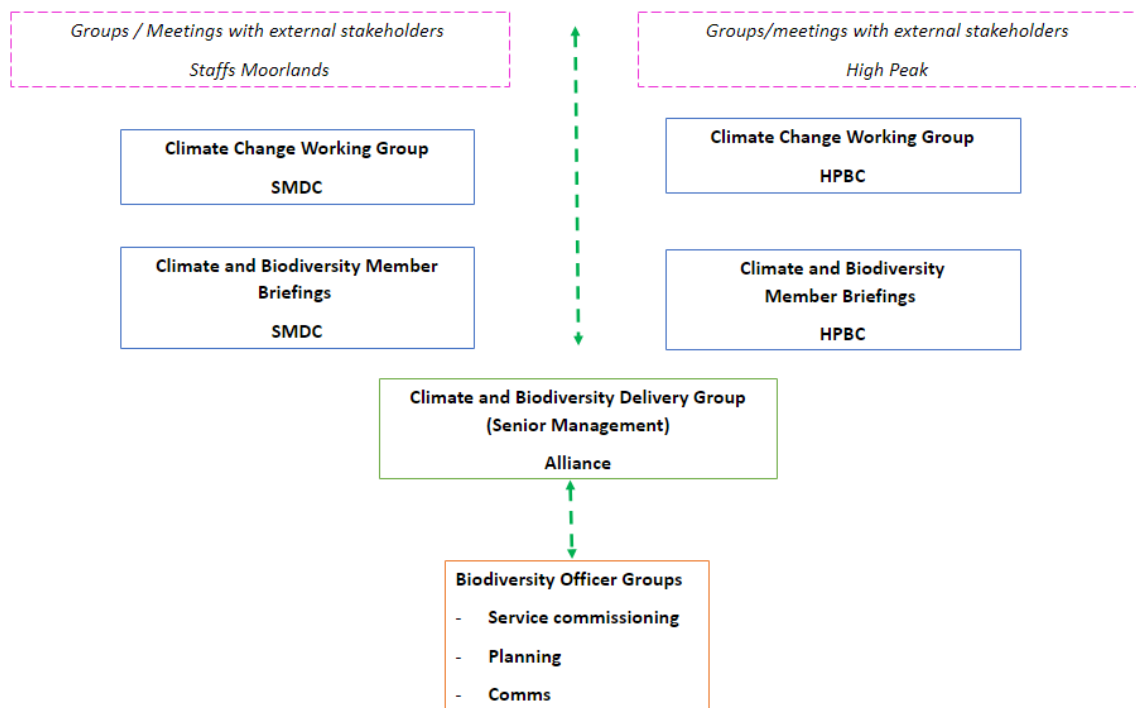


Figure 1: Simplified Governance Structure - Plan for Nature

- 11.2 Officer groups have already been established and meet regularly to progress biodiversity work across the Alliance.
- 11.3 There is an existing ‘Climate and Biodiversity Delivery Group’ which includes Heads of Service and senior management. This group meets regularly to discuss overall strategy, actions, key projects, approve workstreams, etc.
- 11.4 Member briefings have also been set up to inform portfolio holders on work completed to date, and to guide long term strategy and vision.
- 11.5 The Plan for Nature and biodiversity agenda is regularly discussed at the Climate Change Working Group to give all members an opportunity to input and provide oversight on delivery. The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed by the Executive Director for Communities..
- 11.6 A review of relevant external stakeholders has been undertaken and is presented within Appendix 1. As can be seen, most external stakeholders are represented on existing groups, networks and meetings – including the County Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) , and the Moorlands Green Network. Furthermore, it is intended to engage with Towns and Parish Councils through the Parish Assembly.
- 11.7 Consideration has been given to establishing an external stakeholder group for the Moorlands; however, the stakeholder mapping exercise at Appendix 1 suggests that such a group is not needed at this stage. If required, this can be reviewed further down the line into delivering on the Plan for Nature.

12. Action Plan

- 12.1 The Plan for Nature contains a high level of detail and numerous suggestions for the Council to explore to support nature's recovery across the High Peak, up to 2050.
- 12.2 The Council has the potential to have substantial positive impacts on the environment, through land that is owned or influenced by the council, changes to planning policy, and relationships with key stakeholders and community groups, by means of some examples.
- 12.3 Any actions should sit behind the wider context of a 'nature recovery network' which is represented in mapping presented within the Plan for Nature and which will form a key part of the LNRS. Actions taken by the Council will help to achieve the wider Vision in the Plan.
- 12.4 A high-level outline action plan is provided below which builds upon the recommendations provided within the Plan. The purpose of this is to provide members with a high-level overview of what is required, before any detailed action plan / strategy is developed.
- 12.5 A more detailed action plan / strategy will be needed to support the delivery of the Plan. This will be developed and presented to the Climate Change Working Group for consideration in Q3 2025 before final sign-off by the Executive. The detailed action plan will build upon the high-level action plan presented below, and will take into consideration the following points:
 1. Set out objectives clearly and concisely.
 2. Provide detail of the tasks for the Council to deliver to meet those objectives.
 3. Establish a clear, finite timeline. (For work which is ongoing, this will be embedded into wider Council operations by a set deadline).
 4. Assign resources to actions.
 5. Assign responsibilities for actions.
 6. How we report performance against actions.

Focus	Lead Service Area	Actions	Challenges / Considerations
Key – HPBC influence	<p><i>Direct Influence (likely to lead to direct action by the Council, e.g. improving biodiversity on our parks and green spaces)</i></p> <p><i>Moderate Influence (Council likely to influence others to take action, e.g. citizen science projects)</i></p> <p><i>Lower Influence (Council less likely to influence action, e.g. external landowners, government farm schemes)</i></p>		
Council-owned land / green spaces	Leisure and Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity improvements (through habitat enhancement, restoration and creation) on council-owned land and green spaces (including parks, residential verges, etc). • Survey work to ensure ‘right habitat, right place’, or capital works such as planting and wildlife boxes. • Initially, ecological survey and bespoke, ambitious management plans for two flagship open spaces. 	Existing equipment from traditional management may no longer be suitable and staff may need to be upskilled in certain areas. Lack of community engagement on land changes can result in complaints so good communication and relationships with residents are key.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buxton and High Peak Golf Club in Fairfield is identified as having high potential for habitat restoration. Support the club in commissioning an ecological survey and renewed management plan, identifying areas that can be improved for nature, without negatively impacting the course’s revenue. 	Receptiveness of the golf club to habitat restoration (in appropriate areas) is not yet confirmed. Balance to be struck between retaining the courses functionality and improving parts for nature.

Contracts	Leisure & Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of management and maintenance regimes and contracts. • Changes to mowing regimes for improved biodiversity. • Review of pesticides with aim of reducing overall usage. • Review of bedding suppliers to reduce peat usage and increase benefits for pollinators. 	<p>Potentially long timescales / lead times for discussions before a position is reached to amend contracts.</p> <p>Contracts with external organisations (such as Derbyshire County Council) – limited influence to amend these?</p> <p>Other solutions to pesticides are emerging and effectiveness is not fully confirmed yet.</p> <p>Using peat free suppliers only may not necessarily be local suppliers.</p>
Surveying and designation	Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) designated across the High Peak by contracting professional survey and assessment work. • Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to identify priority preliminary LWS (pLWS) sites for survey. • Review potential for creating funding schemes or projects to support LWS or pLWS owners (such as expanding scope of existing Community Climate and Nature fund, or creating a new fund). 	<p>Relatively new approach so some risks and opportunities are unknown. DWT are developing a project focused on funding for LWS, with possible collaboration opportunities in future.</p> <p>Lack of engagement with and responses from landowners will affect how quickly sites can be progressed.</p> <p>Potentially long lead times between surveying and designation due to the analysis/research/due diligence that is required.</p>
Communications	OD & Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness via the council's website and social media channels to encourage the wider public to take action for nature, including a 'Team Wilder' seasonal activity calendar. • Priority species campaigns – 	<p>Communications should be targeted and serve a purpose, without 'clogging up' the message through information overload.</p> <p>Wider website development to be completed before interactive Plan for Nature webpages can be progressed.</p>

		<p>comms, potential to link to specific projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR codes (e.g. on lampposts) for species like swifts. • Interactive Plan for Nature webpages. • Promoting community group events and works on Council media where appropriate. 	
Planning and development	Development Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the potential for setting up a council owned habitat bank. • Encourage and facilitate external habitat bank providers to deliver BNG locally in the High Peak. 	<p>As a new market, there are unknowns in relation to long term viability. Successful evaluation of risks and opportunities may require external sources of advice and insight.</p> <p>A 30 year commitment introduces management and maintenance costs.</p> <p>Future development pressures must be considered when setting aside sites for nature.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use section 106 money for strategic biodiversity improvements. 	<p>Multiple parties required in discussions – cross departmental working is key.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective delivery of biodiversity net gain through robust internal systems and processes. 	<p>Potential costs of additional software.</p> <p>Effective communication between officers is key.</p> <p>Data management and storage – applications will build up over time, so this needs to be well thought out and organised.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore nutrient neutrality schemes with a focus on nature based solutions. 	<p>New market with associated uncertainties.</p> <p>Ensure schemes deliver multiple benefits where possible.</p> <p>Clarity on officer resources and responsibilities is required.</p>
Planning policy	Development Services	Making biodiversity a key focus of the Local Plan review, including:	Robust evidence needed for justifying any policies to the planning inspector.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporating features such as bird/bat/swift boxes on new development, insect hotels, pollinator friendly planting, nature based solutions. More emphasis on green and blue infrastructure. Potential to adopt further supplementary planning guidance on biodiversity. Exploring site designations and giving communities the opportunity to put forwards local nature sites. 	<p>Long term financial viability and development pressures will need to be considered when setting aside sites for nature. This is especially relevant given new government housing targets.</p> <p>Potential pushbacks from developers resulting in ineffective delivery of biodiversity policy.</p> <p>‘Bigger picture’ to be considered in relation to green infrastructure and connecting up areas.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Tree Strategy to include a target for tree cover and woodland creation, and how this can be achieved. 	<p>Any target must be realistic and achievable.</p> <p>Although the Council has direct influence over its own land, other considerations like amenity usage and future development allocation must be taken into account.</p> <p>The Council may have limited influence over large areas of privately owned land which are suitable for woodland creation.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the County Council to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, ensuring it underpins planning, development and land management decisions. 	<p>Multiple stakeholders involved in discussions.</p> <p>Short timescales imposed by Government for developing the strategy.</p> <p>Uncertainty surrounding how the LNRS can be incorporated into e.g. the HPBC Local Plan.</p>
Assets	Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Council assets for biodiversity improvement. Assessment of buildings owned by the council regarding the suitability of implementing green infrastructure 	<p>Officer resource and capacity is limited to undertake an assessment.</p> <p>Capital costs would need to be appropriately funded.</p> <p>It may not be suitable to progress green infrastructure changes e.g. on listed buildings.</p>

		<p>such as green roofs or walls, rain gardens, bird, bat and bug boxes, community orchards, wildlife friendly planting and greening of hard surfaces especially shared spaces.</p>	
Citizens science and monitoring	Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run a citizens science project focussing on monitoring a priority species. • Work alongside the Derbyshire Biological Records centre and biodiversity groups to create clear, effective data collection methods. 	<p>Clear methodologies and data collection methods will be required. External advice may need to be sought. There will be more impact when campaigns are targeted to specific species.</p>
Strategizing and taking advantage of funding opportunities	Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a number of shovel-ready projects for when further funding streams become available, through cross-departmental working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate change (NFM and adaptation, tree planting). ○ Planning including tree officers, links with nutrient neutrality, BNG and other green finance schemes. ○ Service commissioning (parks and open spaces). ○ Assets (green infrastructure). ○ Regeneration (large scale projects). 	<p>Funding applications often have short deadlines. Close working between departments will be required. Difficulty in deciding 'what & where' – how to prioritise?</p>
Landowner engagement	Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowner engagement, particularly targeting peatland/moorland restoration, wetland creation, river restoration. Provide additional support e.g. advice on funding, 	<p>Relationships between landowners and authorities may historically not have been great. Difficulty engaging with individual landowners – other organisations/groups could facilitate. Differing of opinions and interests when it comes to</p>

		<p>grants etc – linking with DWT's Wild Peak initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a biodiversity summit or similar event with major stakeholders and landowners. • Involvement with or creation of advisory groups for specific issues (such as river pollution/restoration). • Working and engaging with specialist conservation groups and landowners / farmers, including to pursue nature friendly policies. 	<p>habitat restoration projects – common ground to be found. Getting attendance at meetings may be challenging.</p>
Community engagement	Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person community engagement days and workshops. Aiming for local groups to take ownership of projects to increase capacity, as well as helping to facilitate training needs. • Work with schools, communities and residential areas on team wilder projects such as wildlife gardening, hedgehog conservation, building-dependent biodiversity like swifts, etc. • Creation of a skills matrix to identify where communities can support and facilitate delivery of projects. • Run a citizens science project to confirm baseline data on the ground. 	<p>Knowledge levels with different groups will vary – any major projects or decisions must primarily be informed by published evidence and guidance, professional judgment, and best practice. Potential to take up a considerable amount of officer time/resource.</p>
Partnership work	Communities & Climate Change	<p>Actions to include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close involvement and partnership working on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for 	<p>Clear aspirations, aims and outcomes should be set, to ensure that any meetings are valuable. Different organisations have different priorities and visions.</p>

		<p>Derbyshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the Wildlife Trust on the Wild Peak project. Partnership working with the High Peak Biodiversity Group and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on a potential lottery funded project. Closer working relationships with larger authorities such as the Peak District National Park authority, RSPB, etc. 	Potentially hard to engage with larger organisations and NGOs in terms of receptiveness.
Community allotments	Leisure & Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the biodiversity potential of existing allotment sites and cross-departmental working. Creation of new sites, and management of existing sites, to improve biodiversity. 	<p>Must consider primary purpose of allotments so as to not lose their functionality.</p> <p>Close community work and engagement will be necessary – getting allotment owners on board.</p> <p>Potential for new allotment creation determined by external factors, land pressures, funding, demand, etc.</p>
Cemeteries	Leisure & Environmental Services	<p>Both Buxton and Thornsett cemeteries are owned by the Council and have potential to be managed as ‘eco churches’. Other churches are mown by AES regardless of ownership. Actions to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating meetings between management teams, church representatives and ecological experts. Creation of management plans for Buxton and Thornsett cemeteries. 	<p>Representatives of other eco churches could be invited to meetings to provide valuable input and advice.</p> <p>Lead times with altering mowing regimes etc must be considered along with wider public perception.</p>
Nature education	Communities & Climate Change	Promote a wider understanding of the importance of biodiversity and connect	Officer capacity and resource to be considered in addition to who can lead wider initiatives.

		<p>more people with nature, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature walks and trails. • Work with schools. • Interpretative nature signage in parks and open spaces. 	Costs associated with signage in parks.
Nature Based Solutions and Climate Change – adaptation and air quality	Communities & Climate Change	<p>Establish and explore projects to benefit nature and climate, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural flood management including pond and wetland creation, river restoration, etc. • Tree planting for shading (adaptation). 	<p>Project success will depend on availability of funding. No one-size-fits all solution – should be considered on a site-by-site basis.</p> <p>Limited officer resource and capacity to lead on projects.</p> <p>Influence depends on land ownership etc. Will be lower for e.g. river restoration as compared to higher for tree planting on council land.</p>
Other	Communities & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review other relevant Council policies, procedures and partnerships and integrate with the Plan for Nature where appropriate to ensure that nature is considered across all Council operations. • Provide suitable training opportunities for officers and councillors on nature / biodiversity to improve skills across the organisation. • Working with other key bodies, particularly town/parish and county councils, neighbouring borough/district councils, and key wildlife bodies such as Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to ensure joined up approach and less silo working. • Closer working with the County council in relation to verges, and also 	<p>Close working between Council departments required. All Heads of Service and Directors need to be ‘on-board’ with nature targets and aspirations.</p> <p>Both nature and climate need to be integrated into core operations.</p> <p>Encourage staff and members to get ‘on-board’ with training.</p> <p>Make use of existing links/meetings/groups with e.g. parish councils and county council.</p>

		hedgerow connectivity.	
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13. Budget / Funding Considerations

- 13.1 The Council's Community Climate and Nature Fund³ provides small scale grants to community-based organisations taking measures locally to tackle the climate and nature emergency. Therefore, the Fund could facilitate some individual project strands from the Plan for Nature moving forward. However, scope is limited by the maximum award amount of £600 per project. In addition, this could be less appropriate for making biodiversity improvements or funding surveys on council owned land.
- 13.2 Existing budgets and potential external funding options will be reviewed before deciding whether a separate budget should be requested to make larger changes and enhancements on council-owned land and assets (including surveys), to contribute towards reaching the targets committed to within both the Plan for Nature and Nature Declaration.
- 13.3 One alternative to setting an annual budget for Plan for Nature delivery could be to set up annual funding streams which focus on different areas/topics in the Plan for Nature that interested stakeholders can apply to (essentially larger, more specific grants compared to the existing Community Climate and Nature Fund). Project strands under this option could include support for pLWS owners, tree planting, wetland creation, natural flood management, peatland/moorland restoration, monitoring and citizens science, priority species conservation, etc. This option could be explored further in the medium term, depending on how successful delivery of the Plan is being met taking into account initial reporting against targets.

14. Reporting

- 14.1 The following section details the associated reporting requirements (both statutory and voluntary) for the Council in relation to nature and biodiversity.
- 14.2 Public authorities will be required to report back to the Government on how they are meeting their biodiversity duties, including details of biodiversity net gain units consented within planning. The first statutory biodiversity report to Government must be submitted by 1 January 2026. Thereafter, reports must be submitted at least once every 5 years.
- 14.3 It is proposed to publish annual reports on progress against Plan for Nature targets. These will be separate to the Climate Change Annual Reports, in which a summary of nature actions will be included. The purpose of the annual reports will be for transparent reporting on projects and actions taken by the Council to improve biodiversity and progress against targets. The annual reports are intended to satisfy (and go above and beyond) the statutory requirements described above. Every 5 years, a more detailed report will be required to fulfil statutory obligations – for example, including details of BNG delivery secured through the planning process.

3

<https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/CommunityClimateChangeFund#:~:text=The%20High%20Peak%20Community%20Climate,to%20tackle%20the%20climate%20emergency.>

30% Target

- 14.4 One of the key targets in the Plan for Nature is to “ensure 30% of the borough is managed for wildlife” with a list of key prioritised actions for the Council themselves to implement by 2030. Quantitative data will be required to report progress against this target.
- 14.5 Work to contribute towards this target will include direct interventions on Council-owned land; and more indirect working with (and influencing) external stakeholders, organisations and landowners.
- 14.6 30% was selected as the Plan for Nature target to align with wider Government commitments to protect 30% of the UK’s land by 2030⁴ (also known as ‘30by30’).
- 14.7 The Government have released guidance which defines what counts against its 30by30 target:
- Areas contributing towards 30by30 will include land within and beyond Protected Areas. These areas should be well-connected with each other and with the wider landscape. 30by30 areas should be making progress towards ‘in-situ conservation outcomes⁵’, should be effectively conserved and managed for nature with this sustained over the long-term. If the area is not a protected area, it must be recognised as an ‘Other Effective area-based conservation measure’ or ‘OECM’ – the Government is currently developing a mechanism for formal recognition of OECMs in England.
 - 30by30 areas should meet the following 3 criteria:
 1. **Purpose** – will the purposes or management objectives for the area ensure the delivery of in-situ conservation outcomes.
 2. **Protection** – is the conservation of this area secured for at least 20 years through legal or other effective means.
 3. **Management** – is there area effectively managed and monitored, and able to demonstrate overall progress towards in-situ conservation outcomes?
 - Protected areas include: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (which are in ‘favourable’ or ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition), National Nature Reserves, Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Landscapes, National Parks. The Government has also calculated initial figures which include additional areas beyond the protected areas, including public woodland under favourable management for biodiversity.

⁴ A global 30by30 target was adopted (by the UK and others) at the UN Biodiversity Summit COP15 in December 2022, as part of an ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework.

⁵ In-situ conservation outcomes are defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as: ‘the conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings and, in the case of domesticated or cultivated species, in the surroundings where they have developed their distinctive properties’.

- The Government states “New contributions towards 30by30 will be made on a voluntary basis, so encouraging and supporting buy-in from landowners and land-managers will be crucial to achieving this target. We will do this by integrating and streamlining 30by30 into existing mechanisms, such as Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes and Biodiversity Net Gain”.

14.8 Derbyshire Wildlife Trust should be able to calculate the 30by30 figures for the High Peak in accordance with the Government guidance. It is expected that if the Peak District National Park is not included in the figures, the value will reduce significantly.

14.9 It is proposed to report on the 30by30 figures in the Council’s annual biodiversity reports using the Government methodology described above. However, as the Council has limited influence over designated sites (especially those under external landownership), this cannot be the only reporting the Council does. Therefore, it is also proposed to report against progress made on improving biodiversity at other sites the Council has more influence over, including:

- Parks and green spaces owned by the Council.
- BNG sites consented through the planning process.

14.10 The nature of reporting on these sites (i.e. quantitative or qualitative) will depend on datasets the Council has access to. For example, data is available on council land ownership across the High Peak, but not the area currently ‘managed for wildlife’ (which can be considered a subjective definition). Accordingly, further analysis could be undertaken to estimate the percentage of this land that is currently managed for wildlife, the aim being to increase this with changes to management, habitat creation and enhancement over the coming years.

14.11 Other sites which are not owned by the Council and not designated, such as road verges, private land, etc, should also be considered against the wider targets in the Plan for Nature. However, it is unlikely that quantitative data could be obtained on these sites. Therefore, qualitative reporting could be more appropriate for these types of sites, such as details of collaborative working undertaken with the County Council, partnership with work community groups, etc.

15. Next steps

15.1 The next steps for the Plan for Nature, once adopted, will be as follows:

- Hold a community engagement day⁶ to raise awareness of the Plan for Nature, and facilitate kick-off of certain project strands with community groups.

⁶ This was held on 22 October 2024, and included a ‘soft launch’ of the Plan for Nature.

- Launch the Plan and issue a press release through our communications channels.
- Pull together a detailed action plan/strategy (as a public facing document) for delivering the Plan for Nature, which would set out key project strands, SMART targets, assign responsibilities, set out stakeholders, timescales, costs, etc.
- Agree site criteria for quantitative reporting against 30% target, and establish robust databases / systems for tracking progress.
- Formally establish governance structure and set up additional stakeholder group(s) if required.
- Establish a 'nature and biodiversity page on the Council's website, which will be built upon over time and will draw together relevant information to ensure the public is kept fully informed on how the Council is delivering against the Plan for Nature.

16. Conclusions

- 16.1 The Council has developed a Plan for Nature for High Peak with support from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, in response to the Council's statutory duty to 'conserve and enhance' biodiversity. The Plan provides a review of the existing state of nature within the High Peak and recommends how and where the Council should prioritise nature recovery efforts.
- 16.2 It is recommended that the Executive approves to adopt the High Peak Plan for Nature and approves the proposed governance structure for delivery.
- 16.3 It is requested that the Executive notes the content of the report by way of an update on the Plan for Nature.

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
Town and parish councils	Derbyshire Association of Local Councils	Parish assemblies Parish newsletters	HPBC could attend more parish assemblies – but this would be resource heavy for a single officer (17 town/parish councils in High Peak). Could councillors attend and be the liaison? Invite town and parish councils to dial into CCWG?
Adjacent borough and district councils	LNRS Supporting Authorities Group	HPBC regular meeting attendance.	Further working on verges is recommended, mowing, to share best practice and lessons learned.
	Derbyshire BNG officer working group	HPBC periodic meeting attendance.	
Derbyshire County Council	All LNRS groups	HPBC regular meeting attendance.	Further working on verges is recommended, mowing, to share best practice and lessons learned. Can LNRS groups in some form be continued even once strategy is published?
	Regeneration team catch-ups	HPBC regular meeting attendance.	
Local community groups	High Peak Biodiversity Network ⁷	HPBC regular meeting attendance.	Run engagement day for community groups. Develop bid project with DWT and community groups.
	LNRS workshops	HPBC attendance at workshops.	

⁷ Includes: Buxton Field Club, Buxton Civic Association, Nature New Mills, Hope Valley Climate Action, Sustainable Hayfield, Transition Buxton, DWT High Peak Group, Glossop Gorilla Gardeners, Ashwood Park Town Team, Friends of Whitfield Rec and Green Spaces, Creeping Toad, Tintwistle Climate Change Campaign, Tintwistle Parish Council, The Bureau Glossop, Rock Mill Centre New Mills, Chapel Biodiversity Group, Glossop Parish Church, Old Glossop Residents Association.

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
Walking groups	Move More	Service Commissioning department – work with Move More.	Better cross-departmental working to ensure biodiversity officer and communities officers are involved in projects. The service commissioning team has recently appointed a Community Engagement Lead. Greater community engagement work and ‘connecting the dots’ with different walking groups.
Derbyshire specialised groups / societies (e.g. amphibian and reptile group, ornithological society, etc)	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	Explore potential to link up with groups as required. Potential to request invite to High Peak Biodiversity Group meetings as external speakers.
Farmers / landowners	Farmer clusters	Indirect links via local community groups	Use existing links with community groups to engage with farmer clusters. Attend events run by moorland conservation groups. Link in with LNRS sub-group if possible. More close involvement with Wild Peak project.
	Moors for the Future	Expected project specific	
	Peak District Moorland Group	Attended meeting	
	Nature Friendly Farming Network	None	
	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	
	Wild Peak (DWT)	HPBC has been invited to be on the funding panel for Wild Peak.	

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT)	LNRS High Peak bid project Wild Peak	HPBC is closely involved with DWT and holds a Service Level Agreement for services and advice.	Further working and collaboration on Wild Peak initiative. Linking up on community projects such as swift streets, wildlife gardening, etc.
Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA)	LNRS Peak SAC Working Group (nutrient neutrality)	HPBC is on both of these groups.	There were previous 'Peak District Nature Recovery Strategies/Plan Group' meetings which have dropped off. We should explore options for closer working with PDNPA.
National Trust and other large estates	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	Explore how we can better link up with other large estates and landowners.
RSPB	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	Explore how HPBC can better link up with other NGOs such as RSPB.
Woodland Trust	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups. HPBC has attended a nestle water quality conference where the Woodland Trust was present.	Explore how HPBC can better link up with other NGOs such as the Woodland Trust.
Canal and River Trust	LNRS sub-group Catchment groups	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	Explore how HPBC can better link up with other NGOs such as the Canal and River Trust. Join catchment groups to link with

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
			watercourse stakeholders.
Smaller NGOs (bat and butterfly conservation trusts, etc)	Some are on LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	Explore how HPBC can better link up and work with smaller NGOs.
Environment Agency	LNRS sub-group Peak SAC Working Group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups. HPBC attends the Peak SAC working groups.	Strengthen links with EA contacts
Natural England	LNRS Peak SAC Working Group	HPBC is on the same LNRS groups as representatives from NE. HPBC attends the Peak SAC working groups.	More involvement with protected site strategy work and Catchment Sensitive Farming?
Forestry Commission	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups	Explore specific projects which may require input from Forestry Commission.
NFU	LNRS	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups	HPBC to explore connections and how better to engage with farmers and landowners.

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
Dove catchment partnership Derwent catchment partnership Mersey Rivers Trust (Upper Mersey Catchment)	Peak SAC Working Group DWT Derwent Living Forest project	HPBC attends the Peak SAC working groups. HPBC has been invited to the Dove Catchment Partnership	HPBC to request attendance at other catchment meetings? HPBC to get more closely involved with DWT Derwent Living Forest project.
Trent Rivers Trust	Peak SAC Working Group	HPBC attends the Peak SAC working groups.	None.
United Utilities	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	Explore how HPBC can better link up and work with utilities companies?
Severn Trent	LNRS sub-group Peak SAC Working Group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups. HPBC attends the Peak SAC working groups. HPBC has attended a nestle water quality conference where Severn Trent was present.	Strengthen involvement with existing groups
Network Rail	High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership	HPBC has met with the community rail	Closer working with Friends Of Stations groups and Community Rail Partnership.

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
	LNRS sub-group	partnership. HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups.	
Friends of Stations	High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership Derbyshire Wildlife Trust projects	HPBC has met with Friends of Buxton Station, and Community Rail Partnership.	HPBC to meet with other Friends of Station groups.
Local schools and scouts / guides	Buxton Wild Weeks	HPBC has agreed attendance at Buxton schools conference and agreed to support Buxton Wild Weeks in 2025.	Improve relationships with schools and support with activities.
Universities	Bid project with DWT	HPBC is part of a lottery bid project where support from the University of Derby and/or Keele was discussed.	Continue to develop lottery bid project.
Large companies (nestle, tarmac)	Water conference	HPBC has attended a water quality conference at Nestle.	Explore how HPBC can better link up and work with larger companies
Tourism organisations (e.g. Visit Peak District)	LNRS sub-group	HPBC is not on the sub-group, but is on other LNRS groups. Officers in	Further cross-departmental working in relation to tourism.

Stakeholder	Presence on existing groups / meetings	HPBC involvement	Comments / potential future actions
		regeneration work closely with tourism organisations.	

