

Nature Recovery Declaration

This Council acknowledges that we are experiencing a nature crisis. Nature is in long-term decline: the abundance of terrestrial and freshwater species has declined significantly since 1970, with 2% extinct in Great Britain and a further 16% threatened with extinction¹.

The requirement to take action to reverse this is urgent.

Nature provides us with many vital support systems and co-benefits, with the nature crisis and the climate emergency intrinsically linked. Many areas of our work have an impact on nature, and we have responsibilities to make decisions to protect and enhance it.

¹ State of Nature Report 2023

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.





This Council declares a Nature Emergency.

In order to support the recovery of nature across the Staffordshire Moorlands, this Council will undertake to:

1. Work with the County Council to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), ensuring it underpins planning, development and land management decisions.
2. Develop an action plan to deliver the targets and recommendations in the Council's Plan for Nature, including managing at least 30% of land for nature by 2030. The action plan will complement the LNRS and interim reports on progress will be published. Areas of focus will include (but not be limited to):
 - Support, educate and raise awareness amongst businesses, communities and the wider public to take action for nature, through Council communications channels and involvement with community projects.
 - Review management practices for Council green spaces to improve biodiversity, including reviewing the feasibility of adopting a peat-free policy for all Council contracts and supplies. Realise the proposals outlined Green Spaces Strategy, including developing specific site management plans / action plans to improve local green spaces with nature in mind.
 - Taking measures to reduce the likelihood and severity of wildfires.
 - Review/update the existing Tree Strategy against Nature Recovery Network mapping across the local authority area, pursuing a "right tree, right place" approach.
 - Investigate opportunities including funding for project delivery.
3. Deliver our statutory biodiversity duty requirements through:
 - Signing up as a partner to the Net Gain Staffordshire portal to ensure that the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) aligns with the Nature Recovery Network and delivers the best outcomes for nature.
4. Review the existing Climate Change Action Plan against this motion and work to ensure that nature-based solutions to tackle and adapt to the impacts of climate change are promoted wherever possible.
5. Form a biodiversity steering and monitoring mechanism to focus on achieving the targets and objectives outlined within the Plan for Nature and in this motion, alongside monitoring progress, identifying opportunities for funding and improvement and reporting back to the Council.
6. Issue a declaration of compatibility alongside all future Council motions and policy to ensure that any conflicts and contributions with nature's recovery are made apparent.
7. Appoint a member of the Cabinet as the designated lead for tackling the nature crisis.
8. Appoint a senior Council employee as the designated lead for coordinating Council operations in relation to the nature emergency.
9. Ensure elected members and employees receive training about the nature crisis and their role in supporting nature's recovery.

