

Thriving with Nature

A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities



Contents

Foreword	4		
Section 1			
Introduction and Background to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	5		
1.1 Why do we need a plan for nature recovery?	5		
1.2 What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?	5		
1.3 Who is it for and how should it be used?	5		
1.4 What does this Local Nature Recovery Strategy contain?	5		
Section 2			
Working with Partners in Preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	6		
2.1 Introduction	7		
2.2 Who has been involved?	7		
2.3 Starting the conversation	8		
2.4 Developing our evidence base	8		
2.5 Phase 1 engagement	8		
2.6 Phase 2 engagement	9		
2.7 Approach to Species	11		
2.8 Mapping of priorities and measures	13		
Section 3			
State of Nature and Spatial Description	14		
3.1 State of Nature in Derbyshire	14		
3.2 Derbyshire's Natural Capital	15		
3.3 Climate Change Context	16		
3.4 Nature and opportunities for nature recovery within Derbyshire's National Character Areas	17		
3.5 ● Dark and South-West Peak	18		
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	18		
ii. Key Sites for Nature	19		
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	20		
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	20		
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Dark and South-West Peak	20		
3.6 ● White Peak	21		
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	21		
ii. Key Sites for Nature	22		
iii. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	23		
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature	23		
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the White Peak	21		
3.7 ● Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent	24		
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	25		
ii. Key Sites for Nature	26		
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	26		
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	26		
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent	27		
3.8 ● Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield	27		
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	27		
ii. Key Sites for Nature	28		
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	29		
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	29		
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield	30		

3.9 ● Southern Magnesian Limestone	30	3.13 ● Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield	40
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	30	i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	40
ii. Key Sites for Nature	31	ii. Key Sites for Nature	41
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	32	iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	42
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	32	iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	42
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Southern Magnesian Limestone	32	v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfield	42
3.10 ● Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands	33	3.14 ● Mease/Sence Lowlands	42
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	33	i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	42
ii. Key Sites for Nature	34	ii. Key Sites for Nature	43
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	35	iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	44
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	35	iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	44
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands	35	v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Mease/Sence Lowlands	44
3.11 ● Trent Valley Washlands	35	3.15 ● The Urban Environment	44
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	35	3.15.1 Derby City	44
ii. Key Sites for Nature	36	i. Key Sites for Nature	45
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	37	ii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	46
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	37	iii. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	46
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Trent Valley Washlands	37	iv. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in Derby City	46
3.12 ● Melbourne Parklands	38	3.15.2 Other Urban Areas	46
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species	38	i. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in other urban areas	47
ii. Key Sites for Nature	39	3.15.3 Highway and Transport Infrastructure	47
iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature	39	i. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery across the transport and highway network	48
iv. Land-use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery	39	3.16 References	48
v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Melbourne Parklands	40		

Section 4

Identification of Priorities (Outcomes) and Measures (Actions) 49

4.1 Introduction	50
4.1.1 The selection process	50
4.1.2 What are 'mapped measures'?	50
4.1.3 Important notes about 'mapped measures'	50
4.1.4 What measures are not mapped?	51
4.1.5 What does the Local Habitat Map show?	51
4.1.6 Linking the Measures to the Key Opportunities identified in the Step 3 analysis	51
4.1.7 What are National Environmental Objectives (NEOs)?	51
4.2 Upland Moorland and Lowland Heath	52
4.3 Woodlands and Trees	53
4.4 Grassland	54
4.5 Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses	55
4.6 Farmland	56
4.7 Wetlands	57
4.8 Urban Environment and Infrastructure	58
4.9 People and Wildlife	59
4.10 Species and Species Assemblages	60

Acknowledgements 64

Foreword



Cllr Carol Wood

Cabinet Member for Net Zero and Environment

Derbyshire County Council

As Derbyshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Net Zero and Environment, I am proud to introduce Derbyshire's first **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)** – a vital and ambitious blueprint that will positively shape the future of our county's natural environment.

Derbyshire's landscapes are remarkably characterful and diverse, from the rugged uplands of the Peak District, through our many woodlands and along our rivers and valleys, to the meadows and wetlands of the lowlands. Yet these landscapes and the habitats and species they sustain face increasing pressure from pollution, development, and land use changes, further exacerbating historic declines in biodiversity. Reversing this trend is not only possible, but essential to safeguard nature, to help our communities and neighbourhoods prosper, and to secure our economic growth ambitions. This Strategy sets out how we will do that.

The LNRS is about restoring nature across our county, but it is also about doing so in partnership – with farmers, landowners, community groups, local authorities, businesses, and individuals. The LNRS reflects the voices of those partners, gathered through comprehensive engagement with stakeholders and extensive consultation with communities across Derbyshire. It shows what matters most to people, where we can act most effectively, and how we can ensure that nature recovery delivers benefits for the environment, food production, and flood resilience, as well as for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, and for the economy of the county.

The publication of the LNRS is certainly not the end of the conversation – it is the start of a shared mission. The LNRS will guide and support action across Derbyshire over the coming years, channelling green investment to the places where it can provide the greatest benefits for biodiversity, for the environment and for people. I invite everyone who cares about Derbyshire's future – our residents, visitors, businesses, community groups and local partners – to engage with this work, to champion nature recovery in their communities, and to help us improve the county's natural environment and build a more resilient Derbyshire for generations to come.

Section 1

Introduction and Background to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

1.1 Why do we need a plan for nature recovery?

England is widely considered to be one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world following historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. Government remains committed to end these declines and for nature to recover. This is important for nature's own sake and for all the things that we rely on nature for, like clean water and food production. For nature to recover, targeted, co-ordinated, and collaborative action will be required.

It is proposed that this will be achieved through a framework of Local Nature Recovery Strategies that will agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. This Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) sets out a long-term vision to work towards a resilient network for nature across Derbyshire (the county), by connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive.

1.2 What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a new statutory requirement for each 'Responsible Authority' to produce a locally led Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and plan for its area, which will combine nationally to create a Nature Recovery Network. Derbyshire County Council (the council), as a 'Responsible Authority', has worked with partners, wider stakeholders, and local communities to develop a LNRS for Derbyshire.

This Local Nature Recovery Strategy will describe opportunities and priorities for Derbyshire (including that part of the Peak District National Park that falls within the county, and the city of Derby) to help nature recover. Through the mapping of measures (actions) and identifying 'Areas that could become of importance for biodiversity', it shows where we can protect and enhance the best, and create and restore the rest, whilst conserving and improving the character and quality of Derbyshire's diverse landscapes that are so integral to the county's economy and social wellbeing.

1.3 Who is it for and how should it be used?

Simply put the LNRS will be for everyone - we can all act for nature and play a part in local nature recovery. This LNRS should be used to understand how and where action should be taken to help nature recover across Derbyshire and help guide the actions that will bring about that recovery. This will include:

- Directing public bodies on their enhanced duty for nature recovery (under the Environment Act 2021).
- Guiding farmers and land managers in habitat management and creation decisions.
- Directing the nature recovery component of the new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).
- Directing developers and planning authorities on plan making and decision taking that will benefit nature, particularly through the provisions for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Guide communities and businesses to take appropriate action for nature.

Nature recovery is about enhancing and protecting our best nature-rich sites and creating and restoring new sites where there is opportunity. This can have a range of ecological, economic, and social benefits.

1.4 What does this Local Nature Recovery Strategy contain?

The government has produced Regulations (The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023¹) which set out the process that must be followed in preparing an LNRS and has published further statutory guidance² which provides greater detail about what the information that an LNRS must contain.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/made>

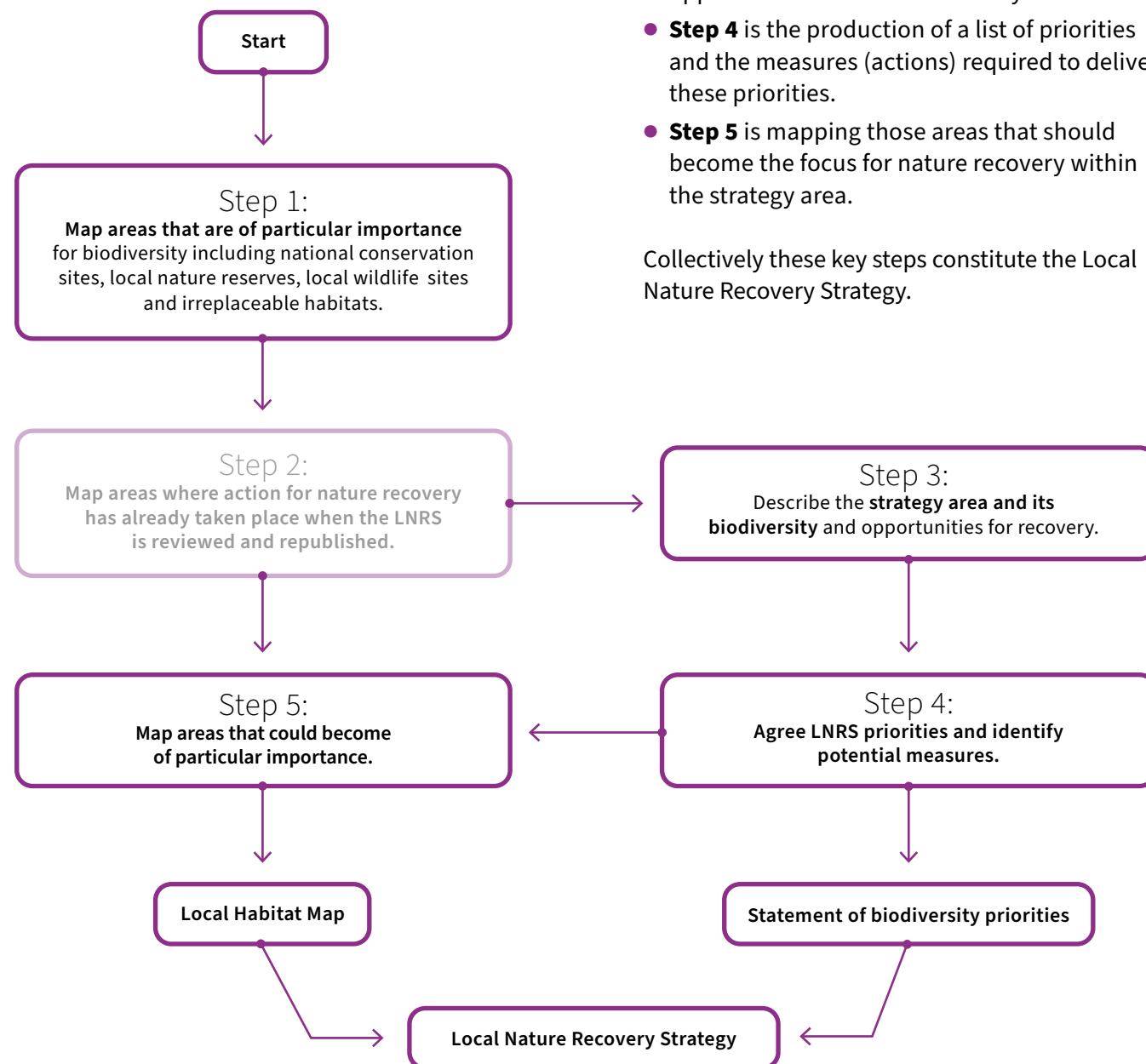
² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategy-what-to-include>

The broad approach to preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy is summarised below:

- **Step 1** is the collection of information about key 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity' – existing designated sites recognised as important for biodiversity, and areas of important habitat types.

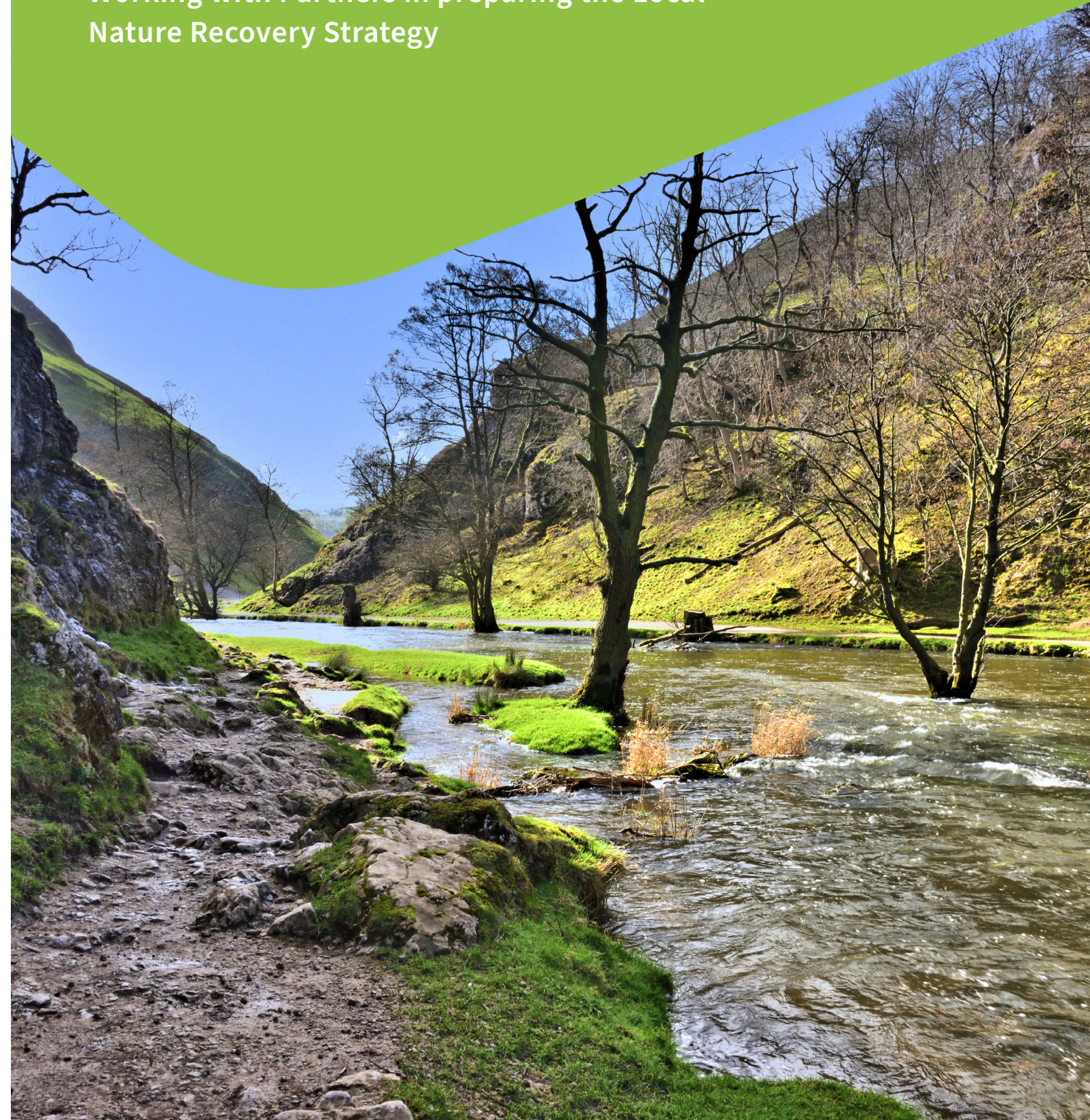
- **Step 2** is the mapping of areas in which nature recovery has already happened, and as such this step will be compiled when the LNRS is reviewed and republished. Note step 2 in this flow diagram is not required for the initial production of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. When the Strategy is formally reviewed, step 2 will be required.
- **Step 3** is the description of the strategy area, its biodiversity, and the identification of the opportunities for nature recovery.
- **Step 4** is the production of a list of priorities and the measures (actions) required to deliver these priorities.
- **Step 5** is mapping those areas that should become the focus for nature recovery within the strategy area.

Collectively these key steps constitute the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.



Section 2

Working with Partners in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy



2.1 Introduction

In June 2023, Derbyshire County Council (the council) was formally appointed by Government to be the Responsible Authority, to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Derbyshire. As such, the council must follow guidance from the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) when developing the LNRS and involve people and groups from across the public, private and voluntary sectors. This involves creating a governance structure for the LNRS development that is based on transparency, inclusivity, and clear communication.

In January 2024 a report and Public Information Memorandum was prepared for and approved by the council's Cabinet on how the LNRS would be developed and on the governance structure that would guide and support this process.

2.2 Who has been involved?

As the Responsible Authority, the council has been charged with preparing and publishing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This involved fulfilling the following requirements:

- 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 for the LNRS from Derbyshire's designated Local Nature Recovery Strategy Supporting Authorities.
- The County Council's Cabinet approval to the LNRS.
- Publishing the LNRS (and then leading on its subsequent reviews).

To help govern the development of the LNRS, three core governance groups were established:

A Supporting Authorities Group

The Supporting Authorities Group includes representatives from all Supporting Authorities, as listed below. The purpose of the Supporting Authorities Group is to enable the involvement of these organisations in the preparation of the LNRS and make proposals for drafting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to the Steering Group (see below). The Supporting Authorities Group is also responsible for coordinating briefings with elected members of their respective authorities and seeking organisational and political support for the LNRS.

Supporting Authorities:

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

A Steering Group

The Steering Group is chaired independently and includes representatives from a range of stakeholder groups including agriculture and farming, environmental regulators, trust and charity landowners, and the supporting authorities. The Steering Group's purpose is to provide technical expertise and oversight to the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and promote and help facilitate effective organisational and sector stakeholder involvement in its development. The Steering Group also makes recommendations to the Advisory Board (see below).

The following organisations are represented on the Steering Group:

- Country Land and Business Association
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Derbyshire's district and borough councils
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Harworth Group
- National Trust
- The National Farmers Union
- Peak District National Park Authority
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- The Devonshire Group
- The Institute of Quarrying
- University of Derby

An Advisory Board

Chaired by the council's Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment, the Advisory Board includes political and officer representatives from Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority, as well as representatives from Natural England, the Supporting Authorities Group, and the Chair of the Steering Group.

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to make recommendations to council's Cabinet in respect to fulfilling its Responsible Authority duties, and in doing so, is responsible for reviewing and validating information referred to it by the Steering Group.

Working Groups

To assist in the development and refinement of key elements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, we established three small working groups, to develop and test our approach to these topics.

These included a:

- **Priorities and Measures Group** – including representatives from the Peak District National Park Authority, University of Derby, Eastern Moors Partnership, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the National Farmers Union (NFU), Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) and the Environment Agency (EA).
- **A Mapping Group** – Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Peak District National Park Authority, Natural England, Environment Agency, the National Forest, and Derbyshire County Council.
- **A Species Technical Group** – including representatives from Derbyshire Biological Records Centre, Sorby Natural History Society, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society, East Midlands Butterfly Conservation, Derbyshire Ornithological Society, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Peak District National Park Authority, Derbyshire Bat Group, Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group, Derbyshire Flora Recorder, mammal, fungi and lower plant experts, Natural England and the council.

Other Project Partners

To support the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire, the council has also worked with, and taken specialist advice from, the following project partners:

- The University of Derby
- The Young Foundation
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Jacobs
- Diva Creative Ltd
- Designing Dialogue CIC

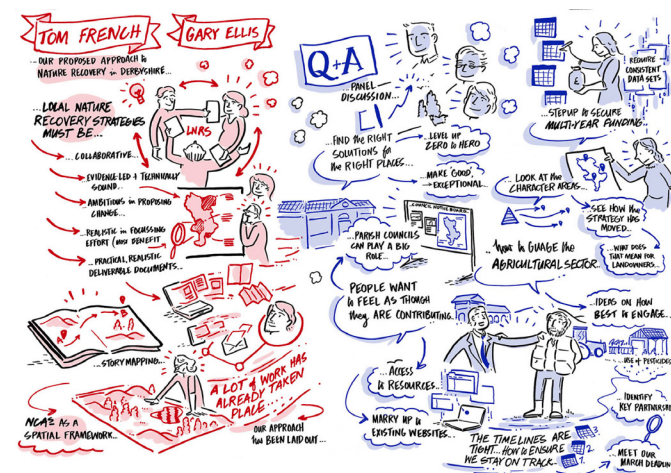
Collaboration – the Involvement of People and Organisations

2.3 Starting the conversation

Working closely with relevant public, private and voluntary sector organisations to draw on their collective expertise has been a critical aspect in the preparation of the LNRS for Derbyshire. Hence the Local Nature Recovery Strategy reflects the 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.

On Monday 29 January 2024 Derbyshire County Council hosted a Local Nature Recovery Strategy launch conference at County Hall, Matlock. The conference was attended by 120 delegates representing a wide range of organisations and sectors. Chaired by the council's Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment, the conference included presentations from organisations including Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the National Farmers Union (NFU) and students from the University of Derby.

As well as a series of informative presentations, the conference gave delegates the opportunity to discuss the importance of open and transparent stakeholder engagement within the LNRS preparation process and review the use of National Character Areas as the baseline for analysing Derbyshire's habitat makeup, potential opportunities, and priorities.



Discussions and outputs from the conference have been used to shape the LNRS and helped to inform the wider engagement activities that commenced shortly after the conference

2.4 Developing our evidence base

As set out much of the evidence base for the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is established and outlined in the statutory guidance and is the basis for the Step 1 mapping. The Government's statutory guidance document (paragraph 40) states that it might be helpful to recognise sub areas within the strategy area that have similar topography, geology, and soil type, as these characteristics heavily influence where different habitats and land management can be supported.

This approach has been adopted because there are obvious connections between those factors that define our landscapes and the habitats they support - our geologies dictate the landform and natural patterns of drainage, which in turn influence the overlying soils, and the type and distribution of natural vegetation cover. Landscape characterisation has been used as the spatial framework in Derbyshire through the lens of National Character Areas. In Derbyshire this national work is underpinned by the more detailed landscape character assessments prepared by Derbyshire County Council and Peak District National Park Authority.

In addition to this work, Derbyshire County Council also has recently completed a Natural Capital Strategy to assist in understanding the present-day value of its natural assets as well as understanding the key ecosystem services that they provide. Full details of this work can be found on the County Council's website.

A key output of the Natural Capital Strategy was the production of a comprehensive, county-wide Habitat Asset Map showing the spatial distribution of the main habitat types as defined in the UK Habitat Classification system. This data has been used to understand and illustrate the distribution of broad habitat types within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area.

The habitats mapped are:

- Cropland – arable crops and horticultural land.
- Grassland – natural and semi-natural grasslands, pasture, meadow, and other neutral and modified grassland as well as temporary grass and clover leys.
- Heathland and shrub – hedgerows, shrubs and scrub, as well as lowland and upland heathland and dwarf shrub heath.
- Rivers and lakes – inland surface water and freshwater habitats, including rivers and streams; lakes, ponds and pools; canals, reservoirs and flooded gravel pits.
- Sparsely vegetated land – unvegetated or sparsely vegetated land, cliffs, scree, rock faces and calaminarian grassland (grassland on lead spoil).
- Wetland – wet and waterlogged habitats such as blanket bog, as well as reedbeds, flushes, swamps, fen, marsh, and rush pasture.
- Woodland – woodland of all kinds.
- Urban – built up areas, developed land, gardens and artificial habitats.

Alongside our understanding of “Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity” reflected through various designations, the landscape character framework has assisted in understanding the spatial distribution of habitats across the county and where the greatest opportunity exists to enhance and extend these main habitat types and improve the ecosystem services that the natural environment provides.

As appropriate, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy process has drawn on other relevant spatial plans such as Local Plans or river catchment management plans, as well as the additional information provided by our key stakeholders through the various engagement phases. The key documents that have informed the strategy, and particularly the spatial description, are included in the references at the end of Section 3 but a comprehensive list of all plans, policies and strategies that have been reviewed is included as Appendix 1.

2.5 Phase 1 engagement

Derbyshire County Council, as the Responsible Authority for preparing Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, is required by the government to take reasonable steps to involve all the county's Supporting Authorities and other appropriate persons and organisations. Such engagement is important to ensuring that the LNRS is designed through true collaboration.

The council is committed to developing and delivering the LNRS in this co-produced way and this is illustrated through the approach taken to, and outcomes from, stakeholder engagement throughout the strategy's preparation process.

Preliminary dialogue was undertaken during April and May 2024 with a focused cohort of representatives from the Supporting Authorities, Derbyshire's agricultural sector and land estate owners, and the county's environmental non-governmental organisations and community sector.

The preliminary dialogue involved **67 individuals** representing **43 organisations** and took place over **7 workshops and meetings**.

The preliminary dialogue provided the opportunity to share and test the LNRS knowledge held by the council, whilst also building relationships with a wide cohort of individuals and organisations and establish a joint working ethos. The outcomes are highlighted below and provided in full in a Preliminary Dialogue Learning Report.

- **The co-creation of a set of principles for guiding the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy:** this helped to set out what, collectively, we wanted the LNRS to achieve and its vision and ambition, and also how an inclusive and collaborative approach to its preparation was crucial.
- **Describing the LNRS area and its biodiversity and exploring opportunities for nature recovery (LNRS Step 3):** workshop participants contributed significant tacit knowledge and experience to reviewing, discussing, updating, and making suggestions on the format of the contextual information drafted by the council in respect to progressing Step 3 of the LNRS preparation process.
- **Refining LNRS priorities and identifying potential measures (actions for their delivery) (LNRS Step 4):** engagement included exploring a draft long-list of priorities and measures prepared by the council and providing feedback and constructive suggestions for developing this work further.
- **How to best engage with stakeholders:** feedback from the preliminary dialogue helped to design and shape future engagement practices, particularly for lesser heard groups, such as farmers and landowners.
- **Identifying further stakeholders to involve in next steps:** the preliminary dialogue identified a wider cohort of stakeholders that needed to be engaged in the LNRS, it also set key lines of enquiry to be used in subsequent engagement and flagged constraints that need to be overtly addressed in the next stages of the LNRS development.

This early engagement allowed the Steering Group to review and reflect on the starting principles for the LNRS allowing key stakeholders to focus on 'What' we want the LNRS to achieve and 'How' this might be done. A summary of the key findings of this preliminary engagement is included as Appendix 2.



2.6 Phase 2 engagement Stakeholder Engagement Events

Building on findings from the preliminary engagement activities, the council worked again with The Young Foundation and the University of Derby to deliver a series of wider stakeholder engagement events during September 2024. The aim of these events was to bring the learning from the preliminary dialogue together with the diverse perspectives from partners, communities, and residents across Derbyshire and Derby to:

- Help co-create a vision for nature recovery
- Validate the technical information developed by the council on the description of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area
- Identify and rationalise nature recovery priorities and measures.

Five place-based in-person events were held in locations across the county:

1. Hasland, Chesterfield – for East Derbyshire landscapes
2. Derby City – for Derby and the Trent Valley
3. Newhall, Swadlincote – for the National Forest area
4. Buxton – for the Peak District landscapes
5. Ashover – for West Derbyshire landscapes

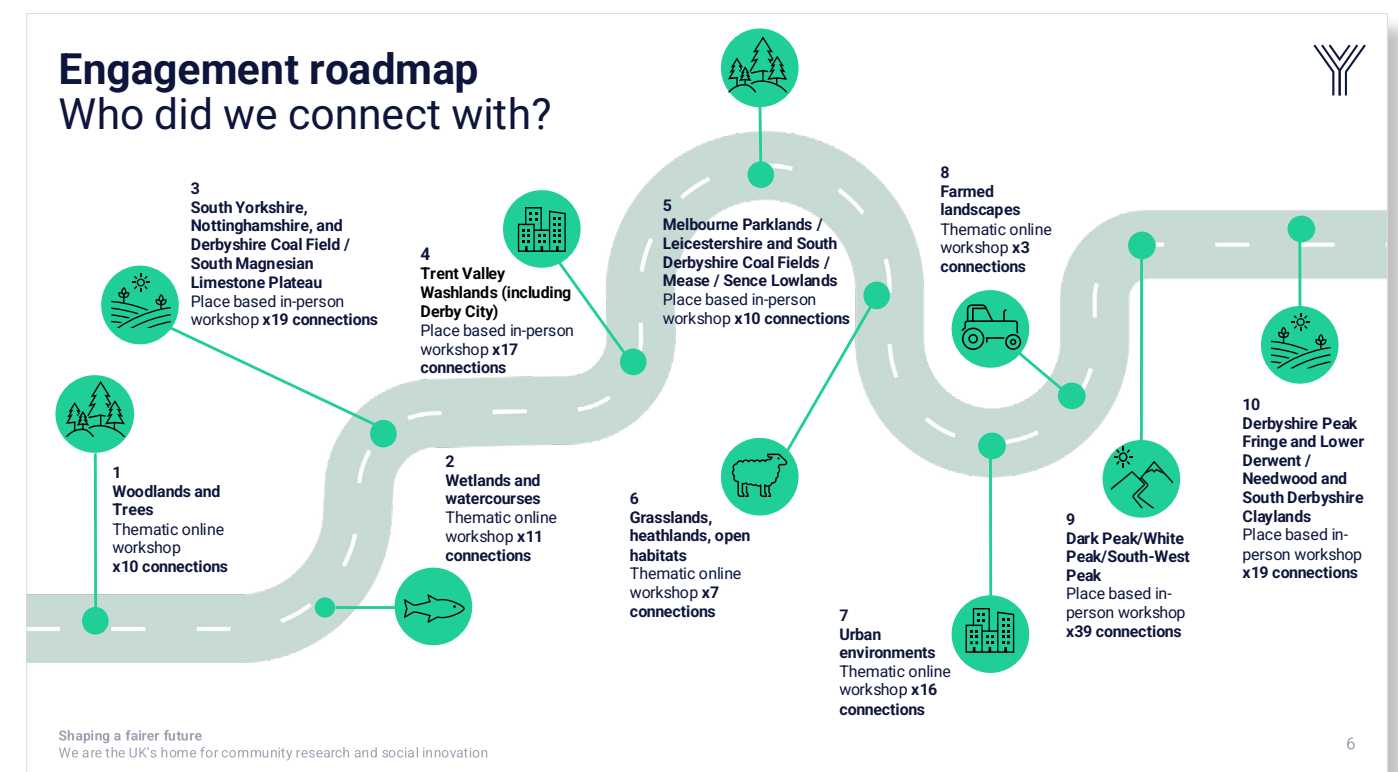
These in-person events enabled attendees to discuss what, from a nature recovery perspective, resonates most for the respective geographical areas, to discuss the potential for nature recovery in the area, and identify associated and specific nature recovery priorities and measures.

To maximise the engagement opportunities over a short space of time, five online sessions focussing on specific themes were also held to gather people with expertise in five specific landscape types:

1. Woodlands and trees
2. Wetlands and watercourses
3. Grasslands, heathlands, and open habitats
4. Urban environments
5. Farmed Landscapes

The findings from the stakeholder engagement activities were fully analysed by the council and used to develop the priorities and measures in the LNRS as well as to inform the LNRS's overarching vision, principles, delivery mechanism and approaches. The full learning report can be found in Appendix 3, with key high-level themes from this engagement being:

A total of **151 individuals** participated in these in-person and online events, **representing over 60 stakeholder organisations** across a range of sectors.



Themes

- **A systemic approach to nature recovery is needed:** Nature recovery efforts can impact on other social and economic systems. For example, an increase in land used for nature recovery could mean a decrease in land available for livestock and crops, impacting the capacity and self-sufficiency of the UK's food production. Therefore, a systemic approach to any action taken is needed to ensure unwanted results in other interconnected systems aren't created and that co-benefits are maximised.
- **There are many different perspectives on what nature recovery looks like:** Working towards nature recovery requires different views and experiences to be understood and navigated. Areas of compromise are inevitable and bringing together collective knowledge and understanding is crucial to enabling widescale nature recovery.
- **Education is an important part of this work:** Awareness raising, and the provision of creative and accessible educational resources and activities, are vital parts of nature recovery. Furthermore, the ways in which people want to interact with nature might be counterproductive to nature recovery and therefore require education and awareness raising – having access to paths for dog-walking which could upset wildlife, for example.
- **Opportunities for ongoing collaboration:** Opportunities for stakeholders to come together, listen and shape nature recovery should continue long after the LNRS is published. By strengthening connections, organisations and individuals can find common ground, fill knowledge gaps and increase their understanding of the system as a whole which, in turn, will provide a joined-up approach to the delivery of the LNRS.

Public Survey

Led by the University of Derby on behalf of the Council, an online public survey was launched on 19 August 2024 to gather views from residents in Derbyshire and Derby on nature and its importance and condition, on the causes and effects of nature's decline, and on potential actions to improve and enhance nature. The survey was promoted through a press release, media articles, social media activity and the LNRS website. The Steering Group and Supporting Authorities Group also promoted it through their channels and networks. Additionally, posters were placed around County Hall and the University of Derby's main campus to encourage participation.

The survey closed on 10 October 2024 and attracted **over 1,000 responses** from the public.

It provides a baseline of the public's opinion of and relationship with nature and provides insights into nature recovery priorities and potential actions for consideration in the LNRS. Full survey findings can be found in Appendix 4, with key highlights being:

- **Survey respondents generally have a strong positive relationship with nature:** 99% of the survey respondents stated that nature makes them happy, and 98% stated nature is important for their health and wellbeing. 87% of respondents have noticed loss or damage to nature.
- **Survey respondents generally have good access to nature:** 97% reported there is a green space within walking distance of their home and 49% reported accessing nature every day.
- **Survey respondents want to spend more time in nature:** 81% of respondents would like to spend more time with nature and just over 60% would like to visit more and different types of nature.

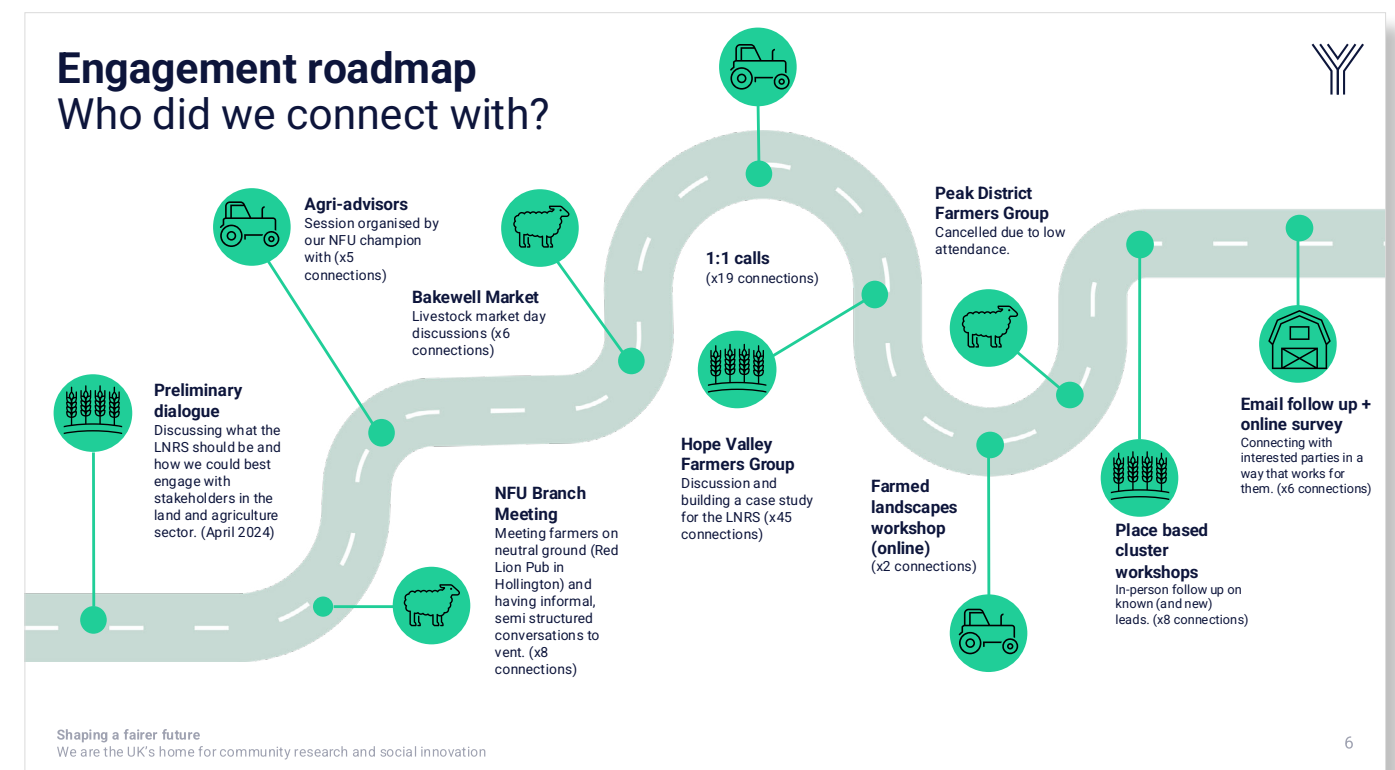
- **There are key factors limiting access to nature:** Respondents cited poor weather, lack of time and travel difficulties as being the biggest barriers to spending time in nature.
- **Respondents are concerned about nature depletion:** The highest areas of concern are extinction or decline of species, reduction in natural pollinators, poor water quality, increases in extreme weather events, and increases in carbon emissions.
- **Respondents showed clear nature recovery priorities:** The top five priorities for nature recovery in Derbyshire and Derby over the next five years are (shown in order of priority):

1. Healthier rivers, lakes, streams, springs and wells.
2. Protection of endangered species.
3. Improved condition of habitats.
4. More trees and woodland.
5. More hedgerows.

- **Nature recovery is already happening at a small scale:** 93% of respondents said that they try to encourage wildlife in the garden, 75% try to encourage pollinators, and 45% reported that they have built bird/bat/bug houses, or similar.
- **Respondents want to do more to help nature recovery:** 40% of respondents said that they would volunteer their time to help nature recovery projects and over 50% said that they would welcome more information on how to encourage biodiversity and protect nature locally.

Engagement with Farmers and Landowners

Between July 2024 and September 2024, the council worked with The Young Foundation and the University of Derby to engage with farmers and landowners across the county to better understand the opinions and experiences of this important sector and generate practical ideas for nature recovery, thereby informing the priorities and measures for inclusion in the LNRS.



Being conscious of the time pressures faced by the sector, an adaptive, creative, and flexible approach was applied to this engagement.

This included:

- Going to where the farmers are already (e.g. farmers markets) rather than expecting them to come to organised LNRS events.
- Visiting farmers at their own farms at convenient times.
- Being flexible to conduct 1-2-1 phone calls around their availability.
- Hosting events online, as well as in-person.
- Attending existing and well attended sector events, and utilising existing and trusted forums and networks.
- Sending emails/texts for those who can't devote time to a full conversation but can answer a few questions.
- Communicating with the sector that this is just the start of a longer, more meaningful relationship and there will be other opportunities to provide input in the future.

The findings from this engagement were fully analysed by the Responsible Authority and applied to the LNRS. The full findings report from this engagement can be found in Appendix 5, with key findings summarised below:

- **Sustainable farming practices:** Funding and incentives need to focus on making the shift to sustainable farming practices financially viable for farmers by subsidising lost income in the transition and making a switch to sustainable farming practices attractive in the long-term. Opportunities to focus on could include circular farming schemes (e.g. using food chain residues to feed livestock), promoting agroforestry and hedgerow management on farms, and reducing emissions by promoting low carbon feed and methane-reducing feed additives, and organic fertilisers.

- **Pollution reduction and improved water quality:** The LNRS should support the reduction of pollutant run-off into watercourses through encouraging incentives and subsidies that support farmers to adopt practices that support improvement to water quality and pollution control.
- **Increased carbon sequestration and climate resilience:** The LNRS has an opportunity to promote the introduction of new and strengthened schemes and funding for farmers on activities to reduce emissions and build climate resilience, such as tree planting and peatland restoration, and for investing in carbon sequestration technologies (such as manure harvesting and carbon capture systems).
- **Nature-based land use and multi-functional landscapes:** The farming community can work in collaboration with local stakeholders and communities to foster a joined-up approach to nature recovery across different landscapes. Opportunities for community land projects, such as planting schemes, pollinator gardens, or recreation areas, can promote farmer involvement as can grant funding for multi-functional land use and community-led projects.

Farmer, landowner and land manager survey

Led by the University of Derby on behalf of the council, an online public survey for farmers, landowners and land managers was launched on 10 October 2024 to gather views from the sector on the current challenges facing the sector, nature and its importance and condition, and on potential and existing actions to improve and enhance nature. The survey was promoted through a press release, media articles, social media activity and the LNRS website. The LNRS Steering Group and Supporting Authorities Group also promoted it through their channels and networks.

The survey closed on 30 November 2024 and attracted **158 responses** from the sector.

The full survey findings can be found in Appendix 6, with the headlines including:

That the farmer, landowner and land manager sectors want the LNRS to achieve the following outcomes:

- Promote improved farming practices, restore boundaries and increase tree cover, including through hedges and agroforestry rather than rewilding and mass planting.
- Targeted funding to identified land for nature continuity or public access.
- Knowledge support and advice, possibly funding support for new landowners.
- A greater recognition of the work farmers do to protect, enhance and restore nature on their farms.
- More young people involved via education and employment opportunities.
- Support local employment and farming, sustainable communities and empower land managers.

When asked which nature recovery initiatives they were most likely to engage with, this sector prioritised:

1. Improving, increasing or maintaining existing habitats
2. Supporting specific species (e.g. farmland or woodland birds)
3. Improving water quality
4. Creating new habitats (woodlands, grassland and wetland etc)
5. Carbon sequestration

LNRS website

To enable the council to effectively engage partners, residents, communities, businesses and wider stakeholders in the preparation of the LNRS, and to provide a location for the LNRS and its supporting materials and content to be hosted, a dedicated Derbyshire LNRS website was created and launched in August 2024: <https://derbyshirenaturerecovery.co.uk/>.

The website has been used successfully to promote stakeholder engagement events and surveys, share information on the LNRS preparation process and timeline, and to promote the formal public consultation process.

2.7 Approach to Species

Local Nature Recovery Strategies have a critical role to play in delivering the national ambition to increase species abundance and reduce risk of species extinctions.

The government has set legally binding targets³ to:

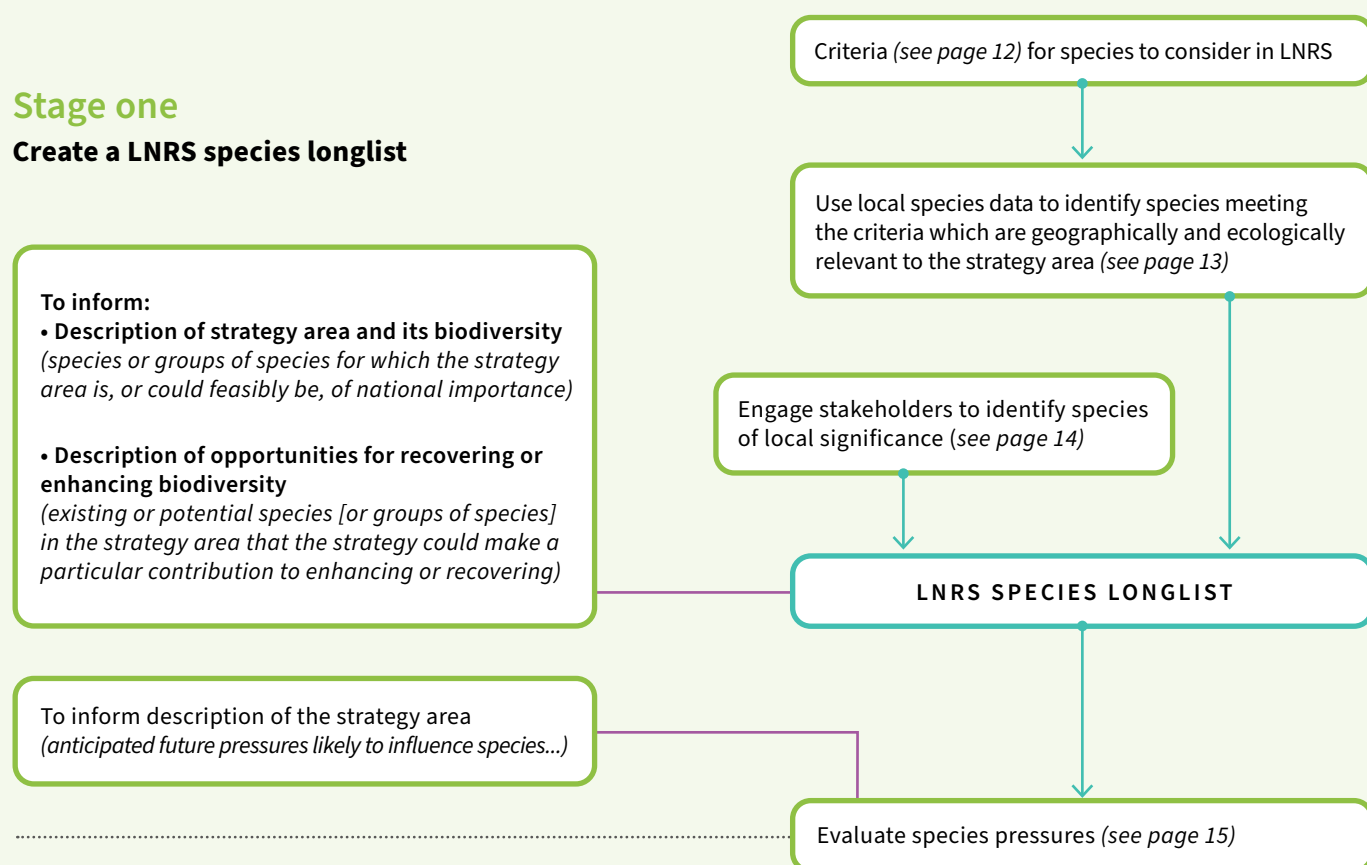
- **Halt the decline in species abundance** by the end of 2030
- **Increase species abundance** by the end of 2042 so that is greater than in 2022 and at least 10% greater than in 2030
- **Reduce the risk of species' extinction** by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022

The LNRS system aims to deliver a coordinated approach for planning a nationwide network of more, bigger, better, and better-connected habitat across England. Many species are likely to benefit from this greatly improved habitat network delivered by LNRS measures, supporting species recovery and resilience. This will help to halt the decline in species abundance and should deliver increased species abundance over time.

³ The Environmental Targets (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations 2023

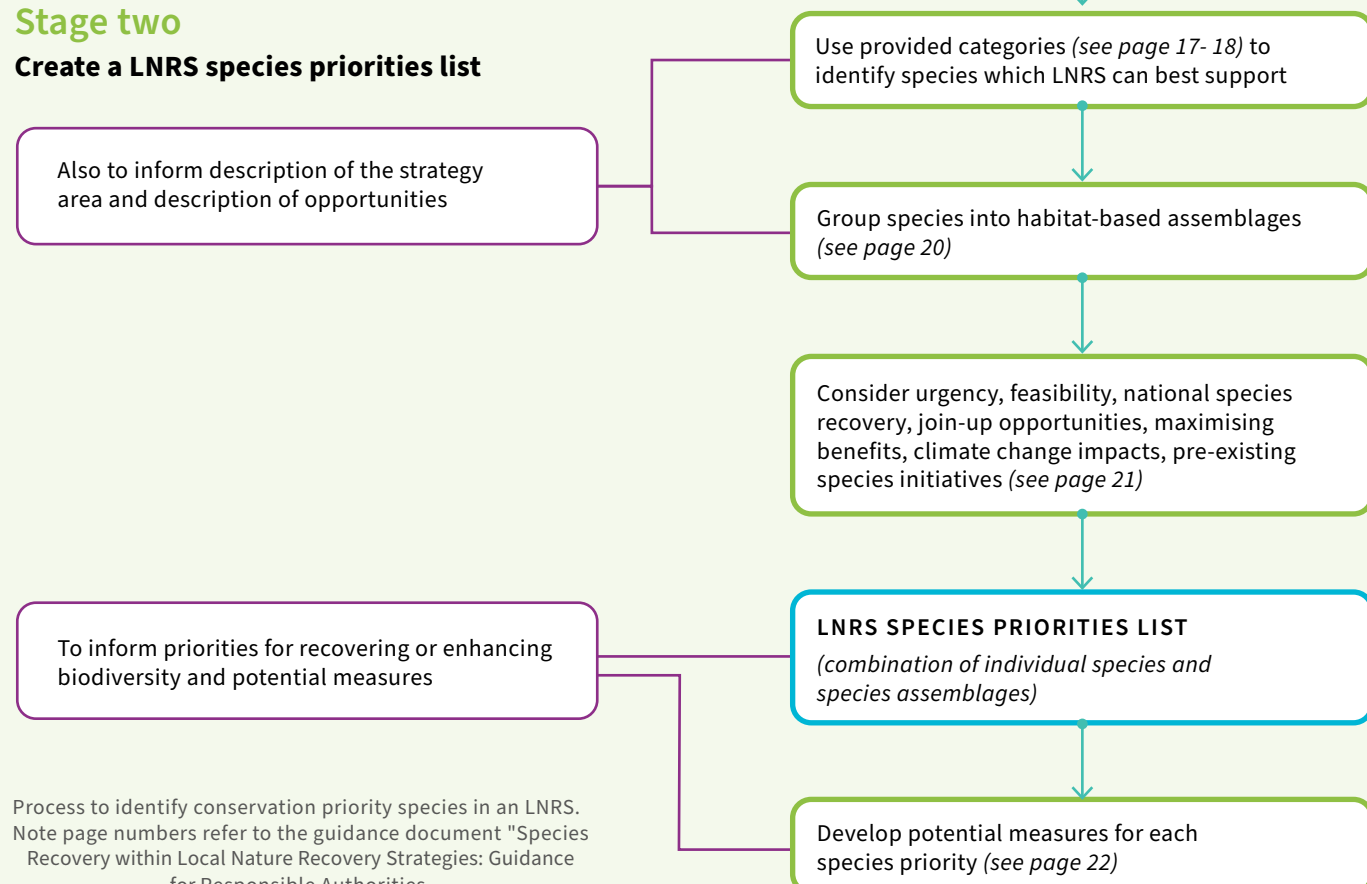
Stage one

Create a LNRS species longlist



Stage two

Create a LNRS species priorities list



However, to contribute to the government's extinction risk target, Responsible Authorities were advised to follow a process to identify species conservation priorities for their area. The first part of this process involves identifying species at a high risk of extinction in England that occur in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area, species that could be reintroduced to the area, and other locally significant species, to create a 'species long-list'. The second part of this process is to identify which of these species are local conservation priorities, and to then propose specific measures and actions to support the recovery of those species.

The Derbyshire Biological Records Centre (hosted by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust) began work to compile the initial draft species long-list, working with Natural England, the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council. We then formed a broader 'Species Technical Group' to support the development of the species opportunities, priorities, and potential measures. The Species Technical Group consisted of a small number of local experts and organisations who hold local expertise in the major species groups (amphibians and reptiles, birds, bryophytes, fish, fungi, invertebrates, lichen, mammals, vascular plants) found in Derbyshire.

The Species Technical Group included representatives from

- Derbyshire Biological Records Centre
- Sorby Natural History Society
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society
- East Midlands Butterfly Conservation
- Derbyshire Ornithological Society
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Peak District National Park
- Derbyshire Bat Group
- Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group
- Derbyshire Flora Recorder
- Mammal, fungi and lower plant experts
- Natural England
- Derbyshire County Council

Through a series of online workshops, the Species Technical Group considered and reviewed 757 individual species, identifying 477 species to include on our species long list. They then reassessed the species on that list to identify a shorter list of 199 species that they felt the Derbyshire LNRS had the greatest potential to support. The Species Technical Group then re-examined those species, to identify those species that share habitat requirements, which might thereby benefit collectively from the same recovery measures. Species with similar needs were grouped into habitat-based assemblages where possible. Some species however will require specific, individual species recovery measures, and so those species were not included within assemblages. This resulted in the identification of an initial pool of 20 potential priority species assemblages, and a further 15 species that did not fit into assemblages.

Finally, that list of potential priority species and assemblages was reviewed using criteria (urgency, feasibility, national species recovery, join-up opportunities, maximising benefits, climate change impacts, pre-existing species initiatives) to select a combination of assemblages and individual species to constitute the LNRS species priorities list for Derbyshire and these are identified in Section 4 of the strategy. The full methodology to this selection process is set out in Appendix 7.

2.8 Mapping of priorities and measures

Through the data analysis and spatial description set out in Section 3, strategic priorities and measures were identified to support nature recovery and other ecosystem services across Derbyshire. All the habitat themes identified within the priorities will play a key role in recovering nature, supporting species, and providing wider environmental benefits that are essential to our social and economic prosperity, as well as creating greater resilience to address the longer-term impacts of climate change.

All priorities and measures demonstrate how they align with the evidence provided by the data, the opportunities identified through the analysis of that data and the spatial description of the area, and the National Environmental Objectives set by Government. All these priorities and measures were developed further through a comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement exercise operating throughout the strategy development (as set out in Appendices 2 to 7 inclusive) and informing the process in a truly iterative manner.

The guiding principles established at the outset, and validated and developed through wider engagement, helped identify priorities and measures that would achieve bigger, better, more and more connected and safeguarded spaces for nature to thrive. The focus will be on the continued protection and enhancement of our most valuable and irreplaceable habitats and most threatened species, and then taking the necessary steps to increase the extent of these habitats and species into the areas that best support them.

The priorities and measures identified through this process are set out in section 4 of the strategy document and a detailed description of how priorities and measures were defined and mapped is included in Appendix 8.



Section 3

State of Nature and Spatial Description

Derbyshire is essentially a rural county occupying a unique position at the centre of England. It is the meeting place of upland and lowland England and the transition from pastoral dairy belt in the west to arable farmlands in the east. Our landscapes are iconic with the Peak District National Park being the first landscape designation of its type. Allied to this, is a diversity of habitats, from the upland bogs and heaths in the high peaks; through ancient, wooded landscapes of the Derwent Valley; the broad floodplain of the River Trent; to the many nationally important historic parklands scattered through the county.

Derbyshire is home to around 800,000 people predominantly located in communities in the former coalfields in the east of the county and in Derby, our only city. Despite this the county is only 8% urban with the remainder consisting of farmland, woodland, and other habitats.

The natural environment of Derbyshire is one of the cornerstones of its economy. It encompasses all our natural assets – wildlife, water, woodland, farmland, and urban green space – supporting the basics we need to live – air, clean water, and food. These ecosystem services link and underpin human life and economic activity by cycling water, pollinating crops, regulating the climate, and contributing to health and wellbeing.

However, some of the landscapes and many of the associated habitats are in decline because of human behaviour and modern pressures for change that include climate change, agricultural practices, quarrying, and new built development.

3.1 State of Nature in Derbyshire

Like many areas, Derbyshire's wildlife has seen a significant decline in the extent and diversity of its habitats and species as a result of land-use change, the expansion of urban development, pollution, persecution, pests and diseases, as well as pressures resulting from global factors like climate change. Lowland meadows, pastures and mires have declined by 80 – 90% in most parts of lowland Derbyshire, for example, faring slightly better in the Peak District. This downward trend has slowed but efforts to create and restore these habitats have not yet addressed decades of loss.

Rivers have been affected by nutrient enrichment, engineering works along their channels, becoming isolated from their floodplains, and lack features such as meanders, shallows, pools and in-stream woody debris. There are very few large swamp, fen habitats and ponds, with only around 20% of ponds in good condition.

There have been historic losses of ancient woodland including their conversion to conifer plantations, although more recently some ancient woods are now being restored. Overall woodland cover has increased because of planted new woodlands and natural regeneration, within the National Forest and parts of north-east Derbyshire. There continue to be several initiatives to increase woodland cover across the county.

Brownfield sites have and continue to play a crucial role as 'wildlife refuges' for many species, although development pressure and natural succession have resulted in more than half of the sites disappearing or declining in value. This is especially damaging for a host of species that depend on open grass and herb rich habitats such as butterflies like dingy skipper and small heath, which now rely on these artificial sites due to the absence of suitable semi-natural habitats.

Even in the Peak District, wildlife rich, priority habitats have undergone marked changes with many in decline. There remain extensive areas of calcareous grassland, scrub, upland woodlands, moorland and blanket bog, much of which is included within national and international designations. Large areas of iconic blanket bog are under restoration and there

is a need to re-invigorate natural processes and change some adverse management practices to further protect these moorland landscapes.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest cover approximately 30,000 ha of Derbyshire, predominantly in the Peak District and extending into neighbouring counties. Only 20% is in a favourable condition, 74% is listed as unfavourable recovering, and 6% is unfavourable (declining, unassessed, fully or partially destroyed). Whilst encouraging, recovering sites will take years to reach favourable status, whilst others have not been visited for 5 to 10 years.

The condition of non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) is even more concerning, with only 40% of the sites known to have received positive management in the last 5 years. Most sites are unfavourable, and 226 (c.19%) are declining or suffering damage. For some, the lack of management has led to irreversible changes in the habitats, such as the loss of species rich grassland to bramble and hawthorn scrub. Built development impacts some sites and many are now within urban or semi-urban environments. Many more have been reduced in size, have been partially damaged or destroyed in the past 20 years. More positively, at least 200 Local Wildlife Sites have benefited from agri-environment and forestry payments, whilst about a third are owned and/or managed by public bodies, environmental charities, or community groups.

Our native flora has been significantly affected by climate change, land-use change and non-native introductions, with 245 species now extinct, rare or in decline. Many of these species depend on sympathetic grazing, infertile soils, and clean water in habitats such as meadows, rocky limestone dales, fens and mires, watercourses and ponds. For many species, initiatives would be better focused on enhancing, restoring and maintaining existing sites.

In recent decades the importance of Derbyshire for fungi, lichen and lower plants has become better understood, in particular fungi associated with traditional species rich grassland.

National and local datasets show dramatic changes in the abundance and distribution of insects and invertebrate species. Grasshoppers and crickets have increased in abundance from 7 to 14 species and extended their ranges north. Dragonflies and damselflies share a similar story in recent years, mostly restricted in their occurrence due to climatic factors.

Butterflies and moths have experienced significant declines in both their abundance and range. Of the 34 species of butterfly currently found in Derbyshire, 8 are threatened due to significant declines. However, speckled wood and silver washed fritillary have increased in number, and purple emperor is a new arrival. There are 575 species of macro-moth in Derbyshire with 85 (c.15%) of these are of conservation concern including the argent and sable, and pretty chalk carpet. Twenty-nine species are already extinct. Some species have increased or are recent additions such as black arches, dark crimson underwing, hummingbird hawk-moth and Jersey tiger, probably due to climatic and land-use change combined with the impact of pesticides, chemicals and light pollution.

Our understanding of the status of bees, sawflies and wasps is incomplete, but there have almost certainly been losses including of several bumblebee species. There is evidence for the increasing abundance of some bees and wasps and even new species arriving in the county, but other species like the Bilberry Bumblebee face a less certain future as its upland habitats warm. We know far less about the fortunes of other insect and invertebrate groups such as flies, beetles, true-bugs and spiders, which underlines one of the huge gaps in our understanding of the state of biodiversity in Derbyshire.

One invertebrate that has been at the forefront of conservation efforts for many years is the white-clawed crayfish, a species that has declined nationally and is now confined to an ever-decreasing number of watercourses and ponds, or translocated to refuges referred to as Ark sites.

Several fish species have declined including salmon, brown trout, spined loach and European eel, with the focus of some river restoration projects being weir removal and fish ladders to allow for fish passage.

Derbyshire has five amphibian and four reptile species with adder and common toad being of particular concern due to their restricted distribution and significant national decline respectively. Grass snake, slow worm, common lizard and great crested newt are also under considerable pressure due to habitat loss and disease.

National changes to bird species are also reflected in the county, with declines in over 100 species across a range of habitats and landscapes in the county, including curlew, hen harrier, lesser spotted woodpecker, willow tit, corn bunting, tree sparrow, turtle dove, spotted flycatcher, wood warbler, red-necked grebe, ring ouzel and starling. The causes of their decline are varied, but relate primarily to habitat loss and climate change. A small number of birds have increased in recent years, including great spotted woodpecker, raven, buzzard, peregrine falcon and red kite.

The state of Derbyshire mammals is also varied, with notable declines and increases. The most compelling story is the return of otter to Derbyshire's rivers, now being re-established across most of the county, although the size of the population is unknown, and numbers may still be quite low. Roe, muntjac and red deer have all increased and polecat has re-established itself in the county. Beaver have been reintroduced to Derbyshire within enclosed areas after an absence of hundreds of years with the hope of returning them to the wild within the lifespan of this plan. Some, if not most species of bat are stable or increasing their populations, and a new bat species – lesser horseshoe bat – was recently discovered in the county. However, several species remain of concern including Leisler's, Soprano Pipistrelle and Western Barbastelle.

Water vole is now a rare site across most of lowland Derbyshire, although more abundant in the Peak District. The hedgehog has disappeared from many of its previous locations possibly due to land-use change, road mortality and lack of food availability. Both brown and mountain hare have suffered from

disease, persecution and land use change but populations remain stable in some areas. The once ubiquitous rabbit is also far less prominent, if still widespread. Derbyshire remains a stronghold for badger especially in the Derwent Valley and Peak District, despite some localised culling. The status of most mice, voles and shrews is unknown, but harvest mouse is probably quite localised and may be more vulnerable to habitat decline.

3.2 Derbyshire's Natural Capital

The natural environment is not just important for wildlife and nature. Our landscapes, and the habitats and wildlife found across the county are a key part of the reason why people want to live in, work in, invest in, and visit Derbyshire. Those habitats and landscapes aren't just nice to look at – they are critical to large parts of our economy and are essential to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

What is Natural Capital?

Natural Capital is the term used to describe the world's stock of natural resources. Natural capital includes:

- Geology and soils – everything below the surface including rocks, minerals, and soils.
- The ecosystems and landscapes that exist on the surface.
- All the habitats that make up those ecosystems and landscapes, and all of the species found in them.
- Other critical components of the natural environment, like air and water.

When we talk about Natural Capital, we are viewing our natural environment as a set of 'assets' that are valuable to us. Those assets can often be used, consumed, or damaged – or with care they can sometimes be improved or have their number increased.

What Are Ecosystem Services?

Ecosystem Services are the many and varied benefits, goods or services provided to humans by the natural environments. Environments that are in good condition are likely to provide us with more resilient ecosystem services.

Ecosystem services include:

- Provisioning services – the products that the environment provides for people such as food, drinking water, timber, fuel, or building materials. It includes natural materials that can be made into clothes or extracted for medicines.
- Regulating services – the way the environment can do things for people such as purify air or water, regulate the climate, help pollinate crops, or protect us from flooding.
- Supporting services – the most basic processes that support all life on earth such as the formation of soils, production of oxygen, and the cycling of water and nutrients.
- Cultural services – the benefits people get from their interactions with the environment and give us the chance to enjoy the great outdoors, through sport, leisure and recreation, watching wildlife or just taking in the view.

Ecosystem services are critical to our life on Earth.

The Value of Derbyshire's Ecosystem Services

The Natural Capital Strategy for Derbyshire estimates that the 'natural capital assets' of Derbyshire – our environmental resources – provide us with £2.6 billion worth of goods and benefits every year. These include contributing:

- £1.6 billion per year to carbon capture and storage helping reduce the effects of climate change.
- £298 million per year to quarrying for stone and minerals.
- £100m per year to farming and agriculture.
- £181 million per year to leisure and recreation.
- £132m per year to the supply of clean water.
- £105m per year to tourism.
- £86m per year to physical health and wellbeing.

The environment also provides huge benefits by absorbing water and reducing flooding – natural flood management. This is hard to value but is likely a huge benefit to Derbyshire, reducing the frequency and intensity of flooding in our villages, towns and in Derby city.

The environments of Derbyshire are priceless – but it has been calculated that Derbyshire's natural capital assets have a value of £87 billion in present value terms.

Different habitats and land uses provide different ecosystem services. When we change the land use in an area, or convert an area from one habitat to another, we alter the ecosystem services that land provides, often resulting in fewer ecosystem services of one type, but more of another. Converting farmland to woodland for example can yield benefits for carbon sequestration, biodiversity and natural flood management, but at the expense of agricultural productivity and domestic food production. The land management decisions promoted in this strategy will hopefully lead to an improvement in environmental quality, and a net gain in ecosystem service provision. Increasing the extent, condition and function of natural habitats invariably means that they deliver more environmental benefits as well as having greater value for wildlife.

When planning for nature recovery, we have strived to increase biodiversity, but also endeavoured to increase ecosystem services, to get the greatest environmental gains possible. Examples could include improving the condition of moorlands through positive management, so that they are better for wildlife and function better as carbon stores, improve water quality and absorb water to prevent flooding downstream; targeting woodland creation to areas where it can provide access and recreation opportunities for local communities as well as providing habitat for wildlife; or restoring natural processes in rivers, to benefit wildlife and species migration whilst also alleviating flooding

3.3 Climate change context

Data from the Met Office demonstrates that Derbyshire's climate is already showing evidence of change:

- Average annual temperatures are now around 1°C warmer than the pre-industrial period.
- The 10 warmest years since 1884 have all occurred since 2002.
- The highest temperatures ever recorded were experienced in 2022.
- Average annual rainfall levels and the average number of annual days with very heavy rainfall have increased since the 1960s.
- Whilst there have been some heavy snow events in recent years (in 2018, 2013, 2010 and 2009), they have happened less often since the 1960s

These changes are already having a direct impact on Derbyshire's natural environment, particularly the impacts from the more frequent and severe flooding, heatwave, drought and storm events experienced over recent years.

Looking forward, data from the Met Office Hadley Centre's UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18) show that, under a high emissions scenario (if global emissions follow the current trend), Derbyshire's climate will continue to change in the following ways:

Temperature:

- The average annual temperature across the county could increase by around 3°C by the 2080s.
- Summer temperatures across the county will increase, with the temperature regularly reaching 37°C in the south of the county and 33°C at higher altitudes in the north by the 2080s.
- The number of days each year when the temperature is below 0°C will decrease with ice and snow becoming increasingly rare events.

Rainfall:

- Average annual rainfall amounts will remain largely unchanged from current levels, however, there is likely to be considerable change in when rainfall occurs.
- Summers will be much drier, particularly in the south and central parts of the county.
- Winters will become wetter, particularly in the north of the county.
- There will be an increase in the numbers of days per year when there is very little or no rain, as well as days with very heavy rain.

Wind:

- There is projected to be an increase in near-surface wind speeds over the UK for the second half of the 21st century for the winter season when more significant impacts of wind are experienced.

These changes have the potential to have significant impacts on the county's natural environment. The UK's third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) summarises these impacts as:

- The impacts of climate change (changing average climatic conditions and extreme events) on the natural environment, including terrestrial and freshwater species, forests and agriculture.
- An increase in the range, quantities and consequences of pests, pathogens and invasive species, negatively affecting terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species, forestry and agriculture.

Climate change will not affect all parts of the county and all habitats and species equally, for example:

- Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns will make some places become less suitable for supporting species and habitats, while other places become more suitable.
- Greater fluctuations in temperature are expected in lowland areas, which coincide with the most productive agricultural land, than the uplands. This could pose an increased risk to habitats in these areas and to agricultural food production.
- Certain habitat types are particularly vulnerable to climate change. This includes blanket bog, which is important for surface water regulation and carbon storage but can be particularly impacted by changes in rainfall patterns and hydrology.

The natural environment is also crucial in helping Derbyshire adapt to the impacts of climate change by providing benefits such as flood risk management, cooling and shading, pollutant absorption, biodiversity connectivity and spaces for health and wellbeing.

For example, temperature increases, and an increase in heatwave events, are particularly significant for densely populated and deprived urban areas, where there is a greater risk of heat stroke and other impacts on health and well-being. To mitigate the effects of heat, green corridors and cooling features such as trees and wetlands are increasingly valuable, particularly in urban environments.

3.4 Nature and opportunities for nature recovery within Derbyshire's National Character Areas

Derbyshire's natural environment is highly diverse with an innate value that provides a range of wider benefits and ecosystem services. However, we need to place the sites that are good for nature within the wider geography of Derbyshire to fully understand where the scope to expand and connect these habitats exist, and to identify the gaps where 'stepping-stones' are needed. Feedback from our early engagement supported the use of National (Landscape) Character Areas (NCAs) as a spatial framework or lens for reviewing the range and distribution of habitat types that occurs across the county.

Derbyshire's landscapes are described through eleven National Character Areas. National Character Areas were developed by the predecessors to Natural England culminating in the 'Map of England' describing 159 discrete areas with boundaries defined by their geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, and cultural context. Many of the 11 National Character Areas across Derbyshire extend beyond the county boundary, allowing for good joint working across county boundaries with neighbouring RAs who share similar landscapes. For the purposes of the spatial description, and following feedback from key stakeholders, the Dark Peak and South-West Peak NCAs have been combined into a single area reflecting the many common characteristics that define these areas.

Each NCA is detailed below, with a map, description of the landscape, an analysis of land-use mapping, habitat distribution, and key species, key sites for nature, the natural capital and wider ecosystem services associated with each landscape, land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery, and then potential opportunities for nature recovery conveyed by this data.

Derbyshire defined National Character Areas

© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.



National Character Areas

- Dark Peak & South-West Peak
- White Peak
- Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent
- Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Yorkshire Coalfield
- Southern Magnesian Limestone
- Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands
- Trent Valley Washlands
- Melbourne Parklands
- Leices & South Derbyshire Coalfield
- Mease/Sence Lowlands

3.5 Dark and South-West Peaks

The Dark and South-West Peaks covers a total area of 68,410 Ha in Derbyshire.

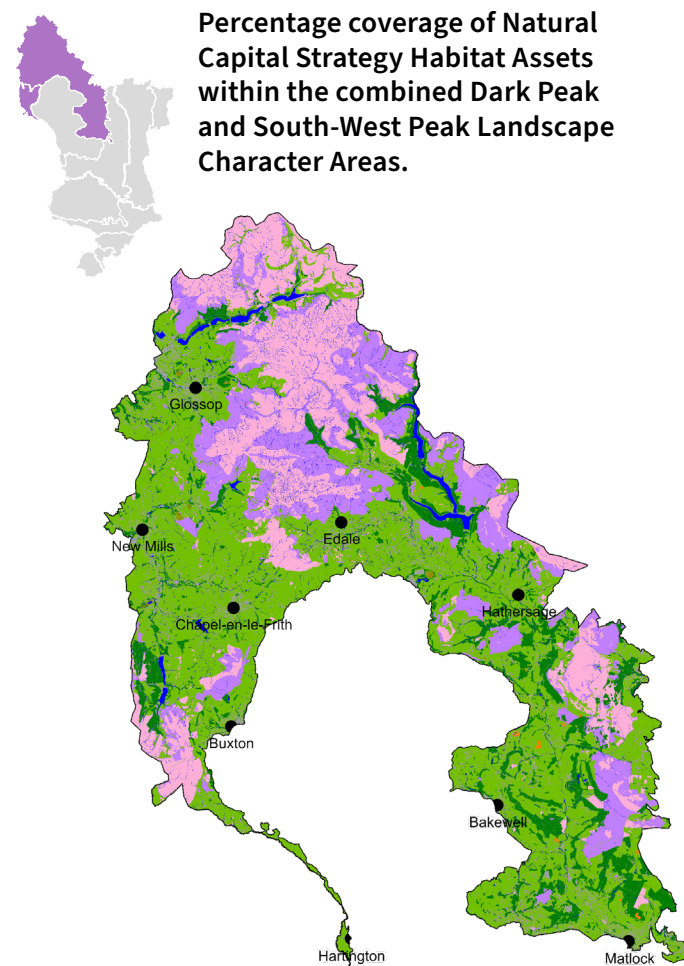


and heather/grass moorland across the upland plateaux and hill summits, contrasts with the more sheltered, lower lying valleys of predominantly pastoral farmland enclosed by hedgerows and dry-stone walls.

In areas of previously enclosed moorland over slightly better soils, acid grassland is more common with species like sheep's fescue, common bent, and mat grass, and in wetter areas purple moor grass prevails. Woodland persists at lower levels and on the steepest slopes, extending along some cloughs into moorland areas, and is particularly prevalent as plantation woodland around the large reservoirs in the upper Derwent Valley and in patches along the Goyt Valley.

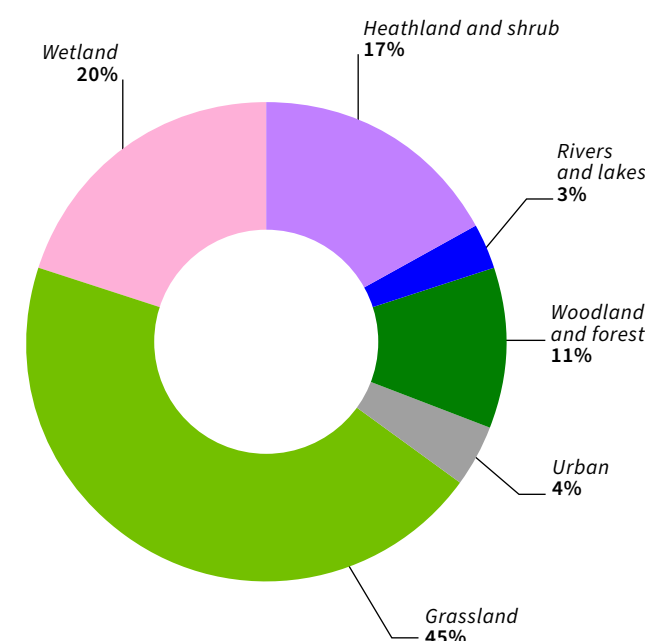
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the combined Dark Peak and South-West Peak Landscape Character Areas.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Wetland – the upland summits and plateau areas of the Dark and South-West Peaks are defined by large expanses of blanket bog on deep peat comprising 20% of land coverage. Here common cotton-grass dominates with heather or with bilberry and crowberry. These blanket bogs support breeding birds such as golden plover and dunlin, as well as an important moorland population of water vole, present within streams and gullies as well as within blanket bog. Large parts of these blanket bogs are protected by international and national

designations including the South Pennine Moors SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and SPA (Special Protection Area) and Dark Peak SSSI.

Heathland and shrub – on lower moorland summits and slopes, shallower peat supports heather dominated upland heath covering 17% of the area. These upland heaths support birds such as red grouse, meadow pipit, curlew, merlin, and short-eared owl whilst associated areas of bracken are important in places for breeding twite and whinchat. The heather moorlands have the potential to be particularly important for hen harrier, and for the possible reintroduction of species like golden eagle and black grouse. The moorlands support the only mountain hares remaining in England. Acid flushes have developed locally, with carpets of sphagnum moss, sedges, and rushes, with local plants such as cranberry, bog asphodel and sundew. The heathland and shrub category also includes the hedgerows that enclose farmland at lower elevations, with walls being more common on upper valley slopes. Where hedgerows are present, they tend to be a mix of holly, hawthorn, hazel, and blackthorn, with oak as the predominant hedgerow tree.

Grassland – this remains the predominant land-use covering 45% of the area, including acidic, neutral, and wet grassland in both improved and unimproved condition often reflecting topographical variation. The valley slopes characterised by enclosed farmland still support patches of unimproved pasture and hay meadows. Some unimproved grasslands hold important populations of fungi – with a few sites internationally and nationally important for waxcaps. Upland areas can be species poor, with purple moor-grass, but this is valuable habitat for upland, ground-nesting birds including curlew, lapwing, and snipe.

Woodland and forest – this land-use covering 11% of the area is typically associated with the lower valley slopes and urban areas but sometimes extends along watercourses and into moorland cloughs, including patches of ancient woodland such as Highlow Wood, Oxhay Wood, and Rough Wood near Hathersage, and Elle Bank near Hayfield. Some cloughs and moorland slopes support areas of upland sessile oak wood

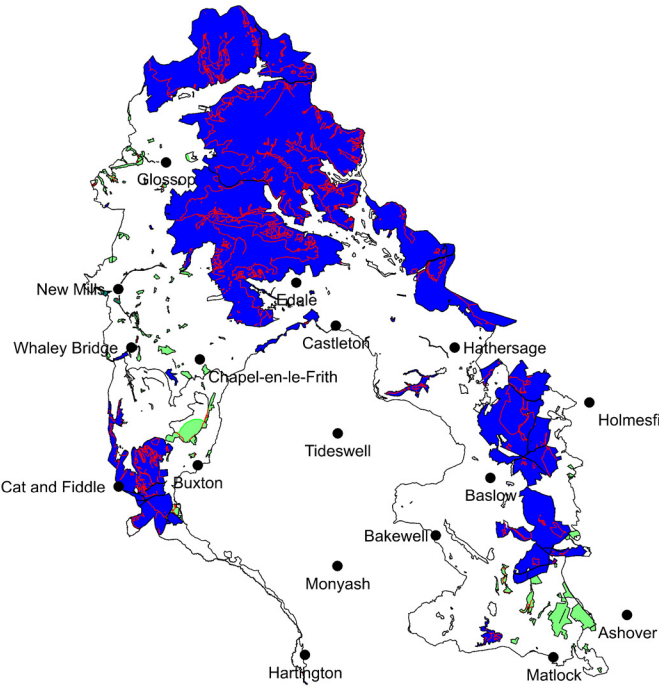
with associated species such as birch with holly and hazel. On base rich soils over shale these woodlands can support a variety of ground flora, including dog’s mercury and yellow archangel, and wavy hairgrass and bilberry on the more acidic soils. Characteristic birds of these woodlands include pied flycatcher, redstart, and wood warbler. Conifer plantations are often associated with reservoir valley sides and may have patches of semi-natural woodland or broadleaf plantation within them. The flora is often limited but can be important for fungi. Several birds of note are associated with these plantations, including goshawk, nightjar and crossbill.

Rivers and lakes – comprising 3% of the area, this covers the main rivers of the Dark and South-West Peaks including the River Derwent, Etherow, and Goyt and including the large reservoirs of the Derwent Valley, and along Longdendale, as well as Fernilee and Errwood reservoirs in the Goyt Valley, often associated with marshes around inlet streams with various rushes, tufted hairgrass, marsh bedstraw and water mint. It also includes the fast-flowing streams of upland cloughs; often important for their diverse plants such as mosses, liverworts and ferns, and animals associated with wet flushes, particularly small populations of birds like dipper, grey wagtail, and common sandpiper. The southwest peak offers great potential to assist in the recovery of white clawed crayfish, as it supports numerous ponds and streams which are isolated from other watercourses, protecting and isolating native, white-clawed crayfish populations from invasive species such as signal crayfish, as well as from the crayfish plague that they carry. Large valley reservoirs support small numbers of wintering ducks, and common sandpipers breed along the shorelines in summer. The drawdown zones of these reservoirs can be important for flora such as mudwort and shoreweed.

Urban – towns, villages and scattered dwellings within the lower lying valleys constitute 4% of the total land coverage and are rarely dominant in the wider landscape with buildings constructed from the local gritstone.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the combined Dark Peak and South-West Peak Landscape Character Areas.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	38
Local Wildlife Sites	2
Irreplaceable Habitats	23
Combined Areas of Importance	41

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

Large parts of the Dark and South-West Peaks are already identified as ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with 41% of the area being protected by international, national, and local designations comprising statutory designations (38%),

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
International - Special Protection Area (SPA)	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1)	25,057.94 Ha	Principally designated because of the size of the breeding populations of short-eared owl, merlin, and golden plover, for which the site is internationally important. The SPA is underpinned by three SSSI designations, the Dark Peak SSSI, the Eastern Peak District Moors SSSI, and the Goyt Valley SSSI, and largely mirrors the boundary of the South Pennine Moors SAC.
International - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	South Pennine Moors	24,804.9 Ha	Primarily designated as an SAC because of the presence of dry heaths, blanket bogs and associated habitats (wet heath, mire, and bog habitats), fringed in places by old sessile oak woodlands. The site is of international importance for these habitats. This designation is underpinned by two SSSI designations, the Dark Peak SSSI and the Eastern Peak District Moors SSSI.
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	28no individual sites	25,660.8 Ha	The Dark Peak SSSI (the main moorland area of the Peak District) and the Eastern Peak District Moors SSSI, together with the Goyt Valley and Leek Moors SSSIs cover more than 25,000 Ha (250km2), accounting for more than 98% of the area of SSSI in this NCA. These sites are designated because of the occurrence of upland (blanket bogs and mires, heath, acid grassland, oak woodland) and other habitats and the important assemblages of breeding birds (dunlin, meadow pipet, curlew, twite etc), over wintering and passage birds, lower plants, sphagnum moss, lichens and bryophytes, moorland and moorland edge invertebrates, and populations of regionally scarce higher plants and animals, including species at the edge of their national range., as well as the geological features present. The Dark Peak and Eastern Peak District Moors SSSIs are also the county stronghold for common lizard (records also from the Leek Moors SSSI in this NCA) and adder, although the latter species is far more localised in its distribution. Other SSSIs in this area contain a variety of features of interest but are principally designated for their geological/ geomorphological interest, ancient woodland, parkland and veteran trees, and smaller sites (containing unimproved neutral grasslands, as well as drawdown communities associated with reservoirs.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland Blanket Bog Blanket Bog, deciduous woodland Lowland fens	687.99 Ha 456.1 Ha 14,460.73 Ha 0.28 Ha 78.84 Ha	The Dark and South-West Peaks contains a significant proportion of the county’s recorded ancient woodland habitat (over a fifth of both the ASNW (ancient and semi-natural woodlands) and replanted Ancient Woodland stock), over a third of the county’s lowland fen habitat, and all of the blanket bog recorded in Derbyshire.
National Nature Reserve	Kinder Scout	1083.3 Ha	Part of the Dark peak SSSI, Kinder Scout was designated as a National Nature Reserve because of its importance as a site for both public access and engagement with the natural environment, as well as for the blanket bog and heathland habitats and the upland breeding birds present. Kinder Scout was the site of the famous 1932 Mass Trespass – the catalyst for the creation of our National Parks and so is symbolic of the movement for public access to nature and the countryside.
Local Nature Reserve	8no individual sites	27.41 Ha	Aside from Goytside meadows (10.37 Ha) and Mousley Bottom (28.25 Ha), LNRs in the Dark and South-West Peaks are predominantly small sites, over half of which are under 1Ha. Habitats within LNRs in this area include grasslands and meadows, ponds, woodlands, and heathland.
Local Wildlife Sites	124no individual sites	1451.53 Ha	Comprising predominantly woodland and grassland sites (62%) with open water and wetland sites (18%), heathland, upland mire (10%), and habitat mosaic sites (10%).

irreplaceable habitat (23%), and Local Wildlife Sites (2%). The small number of Local Wildlife Sites in this area reflects the fact that the LWS system has not historically operated in the Peak District, whilst many higher value habitats are already covered by national conservation designations and higher.

The interest in this NCA predominantly relates to the blanket bog, mire, heathland, and other upland habitats within the Dark Peak SSSI and the Eastern Peak District Moors SSSI. The international importance of these habitats is further recognised by their designation as a SAC (for habitats) and as an SPA for important bird populations. These designations also feature upland dry heath with heather and bilberry, and patches of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland including clough woodlands containing dwarf shrub, lichens and mosses edged by old sessile oak woods.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Surface water regulation and natural flood management – the high moors of the Dark and South-West Peaks such as Goyt's Moss and Axe Edge are covered by deep peat supporting blanket bog and are the source of several rivers including the Dove, Manifold, Goyt, Dane, Wye, and the Derwent. These uplands areas have been identified as providing the highest levels of Natural Flood Management services in Derbyshire due to the high occurrence of peaty soils that absorb and retain water. The function of this area for natural flood management therefore plays a crucial role in protecting downstream communities – villages in the Peak District downstream to Derby City and beyond – during both routine and high rainfall events.

Water quality regulation – slope, soil type, vegetation cover and land management practice all have an impact on maintaining water quality. Peat habitats make a significant contribution to maintaining water quality downstream. However, degraded peat within the area is a risk to water quality in the wider catchment. The Howden, Derwent, Ladybower, Fernilee and Errwood reservoirs provide most of the drinking water for the residents of Derbyshire, as well as supplying many neighbouring counties.

Carbon Storage and Sequestration – the intact bog habitats on deep peat soils have been identified as providing the greatest area of carbon storage in Derbyshire. However, areas of degraded peat, particularly in the Dark Peak NCA, are likely emitting, rather than sequestering carbon, and the greatest benefits to carbon sequestration could be achieved through bog and heath restoration in the Dark Peak and maintaining their functionality in the South-West Peak.

Tourism – the extensive, open moorland landscapes have a long association with access and are an important destination both for residents and tourists supporting a valuable visitor economy. Tourism is focused both on the extensive moorland areas, as well as the many reservoirs.

Recreation and public health – the recreational landscapes of the Dark and South-West Peaks support active leisure such as walking and cycling. These environments will therefore make a strong contribution to both the physical health and mental wellbeing of visitors and residents.

Food production – farmland within generally falls within grades 4 and 5 (poor and very poor) of the Agricultural Land Classification system. However, livestock farming is nevertheless an essential component of this landscape and the rural economy.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

Much of this area – and particularly most of the designated sites and important habitats – is located within the Peak District National Park. Within this area, the National Park designation has largely protected the area from large scale developmental change seen in other parts of the county, helping maintain a sense of remoteness and tranquillity. However, this does not mean that the habitats and species in this area are without some pressures for change, primarily through broader climatic effects, agricultural intensification, tourism, and recreational demand. Extensive areas of moorland are in a degraded state due to past pressures and more recent burning. More locally habitats are affected by

the expansion of towns such as Buxton and Glossop, which lie outside the National Park designation, and by the impacts of deer particularly in the Eastern Moors and Goyt areas. River habitats including the River Etherow have also been impacted by past industrial legacy and urban expansion.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Dark and South-West Peaks

DSP1 – Protection, conservation and enhancement of upland moorlands (including blanket bog, upland heath, and associated habitats) – focussing on improving the condition and function of the existing resource, and extending this resource into transitional areas. Seek to maximise the wider environmental benefits, including capture and storage of carbon, reducing flood risk, and improving water quality.

DSP2 – Ancient woodland and other broadleaved woodland – the protection, conservation and enhancement of existing ancient semi-natural woodland sites, and the restoration of plantation ancient woodland sites, to increase their ecological diversity and ensure their function and longevity. Additional woodland focussed on appropriate locations, including cloughs, areas of low value habitat, and moorland fringe and transitional areas. Woodland action should maximise nature recovery as well as wider environmental benefits to capture and store carbon, improve flood risk, and provide better connected habitat for woodland birds. Opportunities also exist to increase tree cover in the wider landscape particularly those that occur within hedgerows.

DSP3 – Grasslands – protection and enhancement of unimproved grassland, and the conservation, restoration, creation, and enhancement of other grasslands, focussing on acidic, neutral, and wet grassland as conditions dictate. The objective is to deliver robust networks of structurally diverse, locally appropriate, functional and biodiversity rich grassland that support pollinators and other invertebrates, as well as to provide improved and better-connected habitats for farmland birds, including curlew, lapwing, and snipe.

DSP4 – Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses – naturally functioning and resilient water environments and river catchments, that provide ecological connectivity through the area and into neighbouring areas, help us adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce the risk of flooding, and provide habitat rich with native plants and animals such as otter, water vole, and trout. River restoration and enhancement could improve these functions whilst land management decisions within the catchment should seek to deliver downstream improvements in water quality and natural flood management benefits, including through the possible reintroduction of beaver.

DSP5 – Birds – the upland and moorland habitats in this area are critically important for several species of birds which together with overwintering and passage bird species are central to the national and internationally important designations in this area. However, some of these species require conservation action or species recovery work to support their numbers and ensure viable populations. Whilst habitat enhancement works involving bog and upland heath habitats should generally be beneficial to these species, further interventions may be required to support others. In addition, specific, targeted interventions may be required in relation to birds of prey, and the upland woodland bird assemblage, to improve their numbers across the area.

DSP6 – Species assemblages – measures which improve the extent, quality and connectivity of blanket bog, heathland and other upland habitats should support and enhance the area for species associated with those habitats (lower plants, lichens and bryophytes, moorland and moorland edge invertebrates, and populations of regionally scarce higher plants and animals, adder and common lizard) as well as the water vole population present here. Again, care should be taken to ensure the diversity and extent of habitats can support thriving populations of these species, with specific interventions developed as required. Identify further opportunities for species recovery, including the potential to expand white clawed crayfish initiatives, or to support notable populations of higher plants, lichens, and bryophytes, as well as moorland and wetland invertebrates.

3.6 White Peak

The White Peak covers an area of 39,130Ha in Derbyshire.



The White Peak character area is in the west of the county. Most of the White Peak NCA lies within the Peak District National Park, stretching from Castleton in the north, to Wirksworth in the south-east and Dove Dale in the south-west. Outside of the National Park, the White Peak NCA also includes the spa towns of Matlock Bath in the east and part of Buxton in the northwest.

The White Peak is significant in Britain, as the junction between southern/lowland and northern/upland species of plants and animals. Variations in landform, soil and a diverse land-use history have produced a broad range of wildlife habitats and associated species, many of which are of national and international importance.

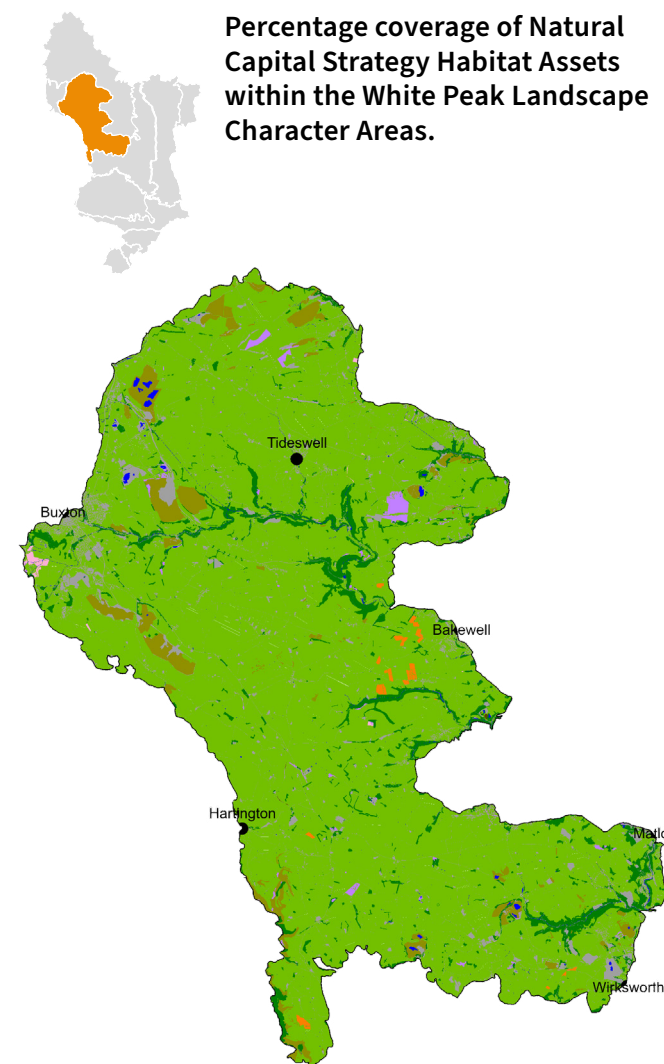
The landscape presents itself as a broad, open, upland plateau with scattered villages with the main habitats associated with grasslands used for dairy and livestock farming. Unimproved, species-rich, hay meadow and pasture are of greater value for wildlife but have declined dramatically in recent years due to agricultural intensification. Most of the grassland is improved for grazing and silage or haylage production. Occasional flower rich meadows and calcareous grasslands can still be found in this farmed landscape but are more commonly restricted to the dales and roadside verges.

On higher ground, above 350 metres, the cooler, wetter climate, and poorer soils favours the development of peaty topsoil and iron pans with impeded drainage giving rise to acid grassland and heath. These factors, alongside reduced accessibility to these areas, have limited the agricultural potential of the land and in places, a few small relics of the original limestone heath survive.

In the dales and around the edge of the limestone plateau where soils are shallow and slopes are often too steep for agricultural improvement, these areas commonly support strikingly species-rich calcareous grassland. Other dales support ancient semi-natural woodland, particularly upland ash woodland, which is often of international importance, but which does not generally occur elsewhere within this landscape.

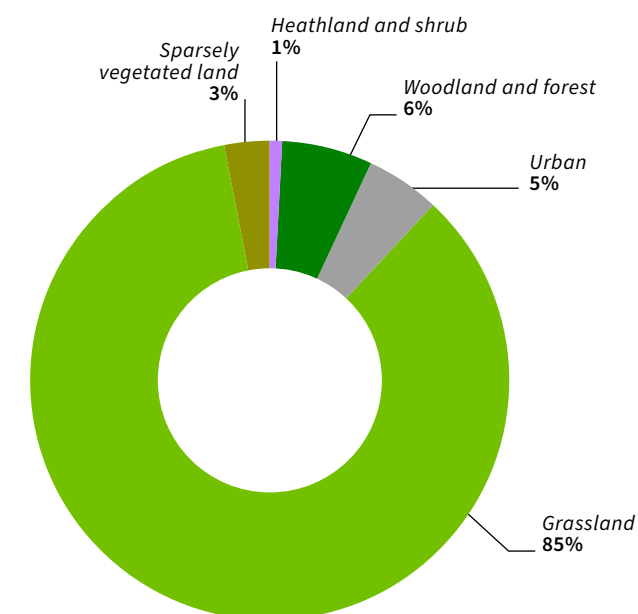
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the White Peak Landscape Character Areas.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Grassland – is the predominant land use comprising 85% of the land coverage. Agriculturally productive pastures on rich loamy soils predominate including areas of highly productive grass and clover leys. A limited number of flower-rich hay meadows survive in places, and typically support species such as oxeye daisy, knapweed, yellow rattle and lady's bedstraw. Species rich unimproved grasslands are also a notable component of the dales systems, varying from calcareous, neutral to acidic, depending upon the site aspect, soil type, and the impact of rainfall. Lead mining has had an important influence across much of the White Peak. Remnant spoil heaps frequently

occur as linear features, called 'lead rakes', across the landscape and support a mosaic of important grassland types including specialised metal-tolerant plant communities classed as the priority habitat calaminarian grassland and characterised by plants such as spring sandwort ('leadwort'). The White Peak NCA is a notable hotspot for great crested newts, which favour the pastoral landscapes containing extensive grasslands, together with dew ponds, stone walls, and some scrub or woodland cover. This area is also important for brown hare, which are relatively common here compared to other parts of the county.

Woodland and forest – semi-natural ash woodland, much of it ancient, is a habitat (6% of land coverage), clothes extensive areas of steep slopes along many dale sides, and collectively forms the largest extent of ravine ash wood in Britain. These habitats are ecologically important, recognised through a range of International and National designations. Wych elm and hazel are typical associates, and the ground flora is very varied with ramsons often dominating the heavier soils on lower slopes, and dog's mercury and woodland grasses dominating shallower soils and stony ground on the higher slopes. These woodlands support many rare and scarce plants and invertebrates, and typical birds include marsh tit, redstart, and a variety of warblers.

Urban – villages across the broader plateau area constitute 5% of the total land coverage but they are rarely dominant in the landscape with buildings constructed from the local limestone. They form a sharp interface with the surrounding farmland with characteristic narrow strip fields enclosed by dry stone walls. Individual trees around the village are more noticeable, often ash and sycamore, associated with public open space such as village greens, private gardens, road verges, and against field margins.

Sparsely Vegetated Land – this land-use, covering 3% of the area, primarily relates to large scale quarrying, which occurs at discrete locations across the limestone plateau. Quarrying is an important industry in the area, often for lime production, but more recently for aggregate and cement production, and today this area has some of the largest quarries in the UK. Progressive restoration of these sites has created interesting biodiverse habitat mosaics, and the rock faces provide nesting opportunities for raptors such as peregrine falcon.

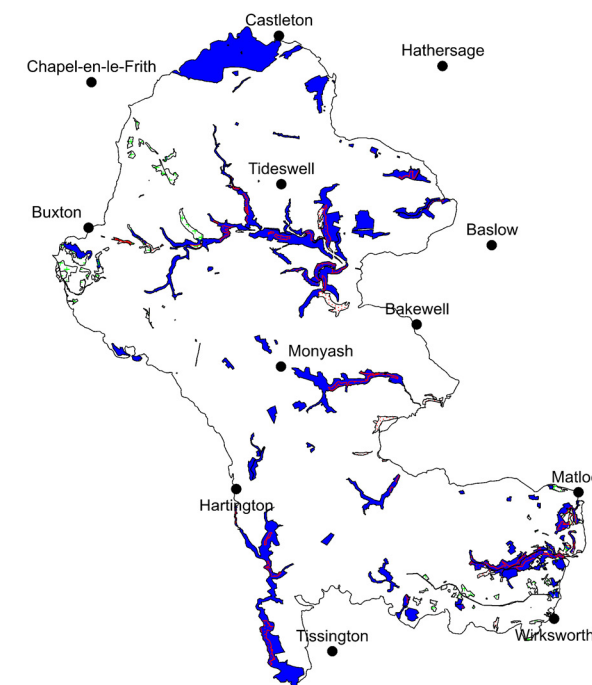
Heathland and shrub – although only covering 1% of the total land area, these small areas of upland heath are a relic of a once more widespread habitat type across the limestone plateau particularly on higher land. In these more elevated areas, climate favours the development of humic soils with impeded drainage. Such factors limit the agricultural potential of this land and in places, a few small relics of the original limestone heath survive. More commonly, patches

of hilltop rough grazing land occur, often supporting acid grassland with species such as mountain pansy and bilberry in the sward. In the dales, areas of scrub are included in this habitat type including both species-rich hazel scrub of particular importance for plants such as globeflower, and butterflies such as the dark green fritillary, as well as more invasive hawthorn scrub.

Rivers and lakes – this is a free draining limestone landscape and so open water is not a key feature of this area in terms of land coverage. However, where it occurs in the dale systems, it is a key component of the habitat mosaics within these designated areas. This area is also notable for the way water moves underground through the landscape, sometimes in unpredictable ways and with consequences for the movement of diffuse pollution. Water vole and otter are also present in parts of the river systems, whilst parts of the dale systems have previously been known to hold white clawed crayfish, although remaining populations face pressure from invasive, non-native signal crayfish, and the crayfish plague they carry. Atlantic salmon have started to return to the River Dove to spawn, following successful releases of parr in the river since 1998. Migratory fish species will continue to benefit from work to remove barriers to fish migration on the Rivers Trent and Derwent. Species such as lamprey and dipper are also noteworthy in this area.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the White Peak Landscape Character Areas.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	9
Local Wildlife Sites	1
Irreplaceable Habitats	2
Combined Areas of Importance	11

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The White Peak already has moderate 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' with 11% of the area being protected by international, national, and

local designations comprising statutory designations (9%) and Local Wildlife Sites (1%), and/or supporting irreplaceable habitat (2%).

The White Peak NCA contains by far the greatest number of statutorily designated sites – including 47 SSSIs – of all the NCAs in Derbyshire. Despite this, the percentage of land covered by statutory designations is noticeably lower in the White Peak than the Dark and South-West Peaks, reflecting the smaller average size of SSSIs in this area.

These SSSIs show a remarkable relationship with the underlying limestone geology, with a significant number of sites designated for their geological interest alone. SSSI designations cover many of the limestone dales, where the steep slopes and thin soils have prevented agricultural improvement, and ancient woodland, unimproved grassland, and other habitats dominate. The ecological value of the dale systems relates to their orientation, with slopes on different aspects supporting a breadth of grassland and woodland types, whilst the nature of the soils, geology, and the influence of rainfall (leaching out the calcareous influence of the geology) ensuring the occurrence of calcareous, neutral, and acidic grassland throughout and across this suite of sites.

The SSSI grasslands of the limestone dales are nationally important for the grasslands they support. As well as supporting rich wildflower communities, these sites are important for species of lichens, invertebrates, and orchids. The area also contains a significant number of calaminarian grasslands – grasslands that have developed on former lead mining spoil. These heavy metal rich soils support 'metallophyte' vegetation, and uncommon or rare plant species that can thrive there - spring sandwort, alpine pennycress, moonwort, mountain pansy and associated lichens.

The Peak District Dales are of national and international importance for the habitats they contain, whilst the extent, diversity and juxtaposition of habitat types supports many rare and notable plant species, lichens, bryophytes, invertebrates, and birds. Outside of the dales, several SSSIs support nationally important grasslands and other open habitat types.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
International - Special Area of Conservation (SAC) -	Peak District Dales	1848.48 Ha	The Peak District Dales SAC is a collection of 13 individual dale SSSIs located across a larger area within the White Peak NCA. The majority of the SSSIs (c80%) that form this site fall within Derbyshire. The site is considered internationally important, principally for the dry grasslands with broadleaf deciduous woodlands present. These dale systems support a range of notable habitats including a mix of semi-natural calcareous grassland (or calcareous, neutral, and acidic character, depending upon soils, slope, topography etc), upland ash woodland and other ancient woodland, scrub, lead rake/mine spoil plant communities, stream habitats and more. Gang mine is a site supporting the most species-rich anthropogenic calaminarian grasslands in the UK, with notable and rare plant species adapted to live in the heavy metal rich soils of the former mine workings. Bees nest and Green Clay Pits is primarily designated as a SAC for the population of great crested newts present on site, and for the semi-natural dry calcareous grassland and scrub habitats that support this species.
	Gang Mine	8.23 Ha	
	Bees nest & Green Clay Pits	14.66 Ha	
National – Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	47no individual sites	3516.55 Ha	A very large number of SSSIs fall within the White Peak NCA. Although a number of these SSSIs are designated for geological reasons (and other sites include geological value in addition to their ecological value), it is the SSSIs within the limestone dale complexes, which are particularly notable. Other sites support species rich meadows with unimproved neutral, calcareous, and acid grassland, whilst several sites are notable for their limestone heath.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	587.42 Ha	The white peak contains a notable proportion of our ancient woodland irreplaceable habitats, supporting 20% of the county's ASNW (ancient and semi-natural woodlands) resource. It also contains the only recorded area of Limestone Pavement.
	Ancient Replanted Woodland	118.85 Ha	
	Lowland fens	1.24 Ha	
	Limestone pavement	0.33 Ha	
	Blanket bog	4.35 Ha	
National Nature Reserve	Derbyshire Dales Dovedale	385.03 Ha 475.92 Ha	Two NNRs covering several accessible limestone dales with ash woodland, species rich grasslands and open water.
Local Nature Reserve	3no individual sites	34.21 Ha	Accessible sites with calcareous grassland habitat, woodland, and exposed rock.
Local Wildlife Sites	96no individual sites	520.42 Ha	Comprising primarily grassland habitat including that associated with former lead rakes (69%) with semi-natural woodland sites (12%), some open water and wetland sites (13%), and sites with habitat mosaics such as former quarries (5%).

Although the Local Wildlife Site system operates in less than 20% of the White Peak area (i.e., outside of the Peak District National Park), it is notable that the area nevertheless supports 91 individual Local Wildlife Sites. Grassland habitat types dominate the Local Wildlife Sites in this area (69%), although woodlands, wetlands and mosaic sites are also present. Whilst there are many LWSs in the area, many are small sites covering only a few hectares.

Although the area covered by SSSIs is extensive, these sites are localised to the dale systems, or consist of individual, geographically distinct sites spread throughout the NCA. Similarly, though numerous, Local Wildlife Sites are generally small sites, concentrated in the very south of the NCA between Matlock and Ballidon, or in the very north of the NCA, around Buxton and Dove Holes.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Surface water regulation and natural flood management – the White Peak contains the headwaters of water courses such as the River Dove and River Wye, and flow down to join the Rivers Trent and Derwent respectively. Most of the area is however a free-draining landscape, with rainfall infiltrating into the ground, and flowing through underground routes to emerge into watercourses some distance away, with peak flows following high rainfall events delayed to some degree.

Water quality regulation – the pastoral land use, and the intensive nature of that farming, has the potential to adversely affect water quality downstream, with diffuse pollution entering the free-draining landscape and migrating into nearby water courses. The River Wye is noted as suffering from high nutrient levels both from diffuse agricultural pollution, and point-source pollution from water treatment works associated with settlements in the area.

Carbon Storage and Sequestration – outside of the ancient woodlands of the dale systems, carbon storage and carbon sequestration are likely to be quite modest across the agricultural grasslands of the White Peak, whilst some areas may already be net emitters of carbon at the present time.

Tourism – the natural beauty of the White Peak with its good public access and visitor facilities attracts many visitors, principally for walking, cycling, and quiet enjoyment of the open countryside.

Recreation and public health – the recreational landscapes of the White Peak support active leisure activities particularly walking, but also cycling. These environments will therefore make a strong contribution to both the physical health and mental wellbeing of visitors.

Food production – the White Peak is predominantly a rural, pastoral, farmed landscape. Agricultural land within the area generally falls within grade 4 (poor) of the Agricultural Land Classification system, although some grade 3 land exists in places. Farming is a significant component of the rural economy.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

Although there are villages scattered across the White Peak area – and this area also contains or abuts some larger settlements and towns such as Matlock, Wirksworth, Bakewell and Buxton – this NCA is generally rural in character. Furthermore, much of the area falls within the Peak District National Park and this designation has helped control urban growth and maintain its rural nature. This is likely to mean that development pressure will generally continue to be relatively low and localised, though potentially higher outside of the National Park around Buxton, Matlock and Wirksworth. The road network – including major roads such as the A515, A6 and A623 – is a notable intrusion into this otherwise rural landscape. This area contains several limestone quarries, some of which are amongst the biggest in Europe. Quarrying on this scale leads to permanent land-use change, but creates opportunities for nature-based restoration.

The National Park designation, and the underlying reasons for that designation, will continue to be a key consideration in this NCA, conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area whilst also promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of those characteristics.

The White Peak contains almost half of the SSSIs in Derbyshire. Most of these sites fall within the steep sided dales, where the landform and topography have resisted agricultural improvement allowing these habitats to persist. This contrasts with most of the area, where gentler topography and deeper soils have allowed agricultural improvement and intensification, leading to a decrease in the biodiversity value of large areas. Nevertheless, there are some notable examples of meadow SSSI sites (and a significant number of valuable grassland LWS) across the plateau that hint at what the ecological value of this area might have been before, or perhaps could be again. It is likely that the remaining species rich grasslands will continue to persist thanks to statutory protections and/or their location in landscapes that make agricultural improvement less likely, whereas across the rest of the area, farming and agricultural intensification could threaten less valuable and less well protected sites. There are however numerous factors that could support the re-establishment of more species rich grasslands across this area, which would greatly assist in buffering, extending, and connecting between existing high quality grassland sites, and deliver habitats that would contribute strongly to the character of the area. Sensitive livestock farming will be critical in enabling this transition, provided this is financially viable.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the White Peak

WP1 – Protection, conservation, and enhancement of existing high-quality sites – focussing on the extensive SSSI network and the habitats and species they support. The key objective would be to ensure these sites are in optimal condition to become the cornerstone of nature recovery across the landscape. Land outside but immediately adjacent to these

designated areas would be the focus for habitat creation and enhancement, to extend, buffer and connect core sites as well as create stepping-stones between them.

WP2 – Grasslands – grassland is the dominant land use across the NCA, but outside of statutorily designated sites, these are predominantly species poor. Restoration or reversion of these grasslands to species rich meadows could provide tremendous ecological gains. However, noting the productivity of this landscape and the improved nature of the soils in many areas, a more appropriate approach would be to promote the widespread adoption of species rich herbal leys and local habitat improvements such as pond restoration and wildlife friendly field margins. This would represent a relatively modest and achievable change, and one that would be appropriate to – and beneficial in – this landscape, preserving and enhancing its generally open character and distinctiveness.

WP3 – Woodlands and trees – although this NCA supports a notable proportion of the county's ancient woodland resource, this is confined to the dale systems. The woodland priority for this area would be to focus on protecting, restoring, and enhancing these woodland sites, and ensuring they are able to meet the challenges of plant disease (most notable ash dieback at the present time) as well as climate change. There is also opportunity to extend these woodlands and improve connectivity particularly towards the Derwent Valley but also on the dale tops through the limited introduction of wood pasture, agro-forestry and scrub development blurring the edge between woodland and pasture. Plantation woodlands across the wider plateau are frequently even aged and limited in species diversity and would benefit from active woodland management. Carefully targeted woodland creation and tree planting could be supported where this is appropriate to the historic and cultural qualities of the landscape as recognised by the National Park designation in this area.

WP4 – Great Crested Newt – the White Peak NCA is notable for the populations of great crested newts. For GCN, the focus should include improving terrestrial habitat adjacent to dew ponds known

to support this species, maintaining and enhancing connectivity across the landscape, maintaining existing dewponds and restoring derelict dewponds.

WP5 – Rivers, streams, and watercourses are highly localised but very important components of the White Peak NCA. Continued action is required to address both point source and diffuse pollution in the upper River Wye catchment, for the benefit of habitats and species and the protection of designated sites. Increasing habitat 'roughness' and diversity, particularly in relation to grasslands, would improve local flood risk issues. Wetland habitat protection and enhancement should seek to ensure the conservation and recovery of key species such as GCN (for which the White Peak is a stronghold), but also for water voles, otters and white-clawed crayfish which are more closely associated with specific watercourses.

WP6 – Lowland heath – whilst limited in occurrence and distribution, small areas of limestone heath can be found in this NCA, particularly associated with the limestone plateau. The objective for limestone heath should be to protect and enhance existing sites and seek opportunities to buffer and extend these habitats where conditions allow.

WP7 – Mineral Extraction – this area contains several limestone quarries, some of which are amongst the biggest in Europe. Quarrying leads to the removal of existing habitat prior to extraction but creates the opportunity for large scale creation of biodiverse habitat mosaics including opportunities to create rare habitats such as calcareous grassland as well as retaining rock faces for raptors such as peregrine falcon.

3.7 Derbyshire Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent

The Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent covers an area of 37,165 Ha.



The Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent is a Character Area exclusive to Derbyshire, being a transitional landscape between the Derbyshire Coalfield in the east, the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands to the south and the Peak District (comprising the Dark and White Peaks) to the north-west.

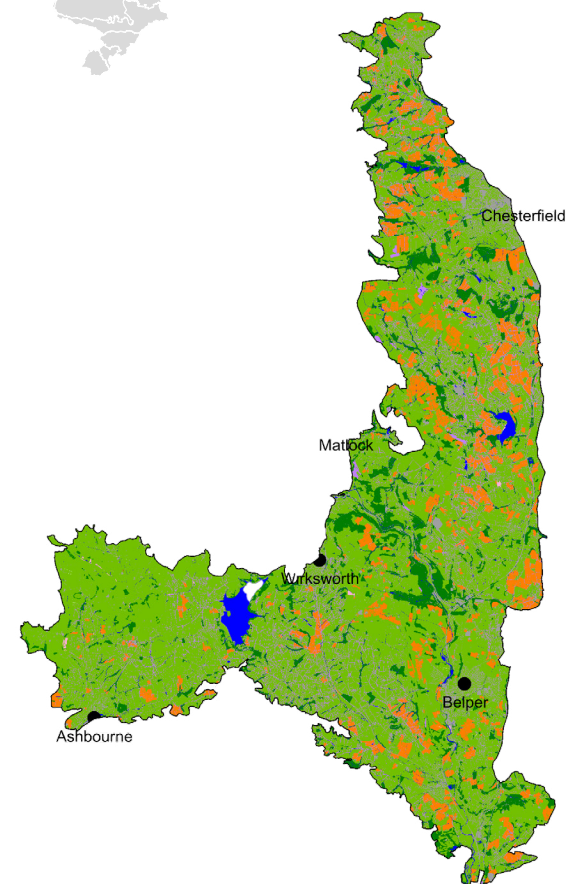
It is an undulating, well-wooded, pastoral landscape incorporating the river valleys of the Ecclesbourne, the Amber and most notably the Derwent. The Derwent Valley extends through the heart of the area from Cromford to Derby taking in the settlements of Belper and Duffield. With steep, wooded valley sides in the north, the flood plain broadens towards Derby with the River Derwent meandering through it.

The landscape retains an intimate scale with small irregular fields enclosed by mixed species hedgerows with mature trees, contrasting with the more open enclosed moorlands and former common land, defined by more geometric or regular field patterns, and enclosed by dry stone walls or simple hawthorn hedges. Towards the east of the area and on lower valley slopes there are areas of mixed farming that provide localised arable habitats.

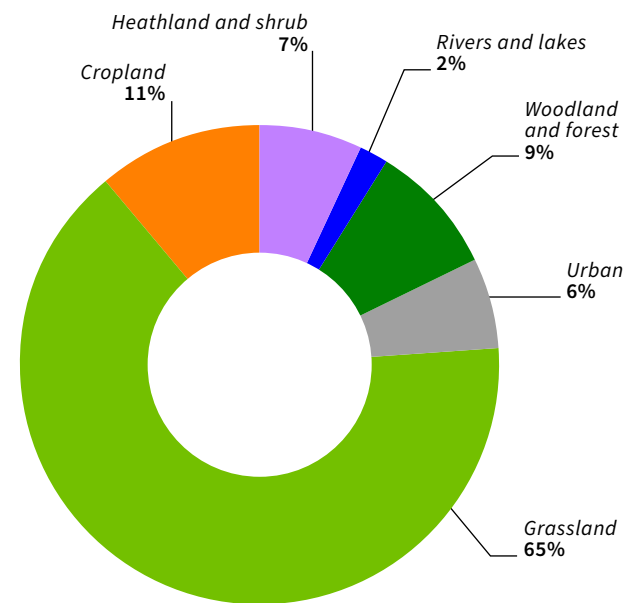
Ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland is a prominent characteristic made up typically of oak, birch, and hazel with many ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebell amongst the ground layer. Species-rich grassland tends to be neutral in character but there is localised calcareous grassland associated with limestone outcrops. Acid grassland and heath is found on steeper slopes over sandstone around the moorland fringe, as remnants of a perhaps once more widespread habitat type. The river valleys associated with the Derwent, Ecclesbourne and Amber, as well as the many tributaries that feed these rivers, provide valuable wetland habitats.

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the Derbyshire Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent Landscape Character Areas.



Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Grassland – is the dominant land use comprising 65% of the land coverage. The underlying soils and the undulating nature of the topography restricts intensive agricultural practices so the area continues to support dairy and livestock farming. As such patches of unimproved pasture and flower-rich hay meadows survive in places.

Cropland – arable farmland constitutes 11% of the land coverage, predominantly occurring along the lower slopes of the Ecclesbourne Valley towards Duffield, and along the eastern margins where this landscape transitions into the more mixed farming coalfield area.

Woodland and forest – mixed broadleaf woodland covers 9% of the area and is a prominent characteristic. Along the Derwent Valley it creates a network of interconnected woodland, much of which is defined as irreplaceable Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland supporting a range of key indicator species. Several woodlands are protected such as Crich Chase and Shining Cliff Woods SSSIs, with many others defined as Local Wildlife Sites, particularly important for their woodland birds such as pied flycatcher, wood warbler, and in winter, brambling. Some commercial, coniferous woodland is locally significant particularly associated with the enclosed moorland areas around Wirksworth and Matlock Moors supporting important ground nesting birds including nightjar. The area is likely to be a stronghold for species assemblages associated with mature and ancient woodland, and this area has previously been highlighted as important for woodland birds – including tree pipit, wood warbler, pied flycatcher, lesser woodpecker, marsh tit, willow tit, willow warbler, garden warbler and hawfinch. Nightjars have recently also been recorded in the area.

Dormouse have been recorded in the Derwent Valley but subsequent surveys have shown they died out. A population was reintroduced in 2004 to one site in the Derwent Valley and may subsequently have colonised adjacent sites within the valley.

Heathland and shrub – this land cover category, comprising 7% of land coverage, mainly relates to the many hedgerows that enclose the pastoral farmland. In areas of early enclosure, often associated with small, irregular fields, these hedgerows will be mixed species including hazel, holly, and numerous mature oak trees. In enclosed moorland areas or areas of later enclosure where fields are more geometric and regular in shape, then boundaries are dominated by simple hawthorn hedgerows or dry stone walls with less boundary trees. The area also includes isolated patches of upland, dry heath such as that found around Ashover Rock and the Fabric supporting heather with some bilberry, and dense scrub along moorland edges such as that found at Highoredish.

Rivers and lakes – although rarely visually prominent (only 2% of land coverage), the many rivers in the area create an important habitat network. The River Derwent alongside the other main rivers in the area, still retain a number of associated wetland habitats that support a number of key species such as otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish. Otters can also be found on the Henmore Brook and the River Ecclesbourne, whilst water vole have historically been recorded throughout the NCA, especially around the Cromford Canal, but also from watercourses around and west of Carsington Reservoir, River Hipper west of Chesterfield, Barlow Brook. White clawed crayfish were previously recorded from numerous rivers and watercourses in this area but have declined dramatically on connected watercourses where non-native crayfish have colonised. Isolated waterbodies offer more hope, with a healthy population of white-clawed crayfish at Wingerworth Lido, whilst crayfish ark (safe haven) sites have been developed at Holmebrook Country Park and Carsington Water.

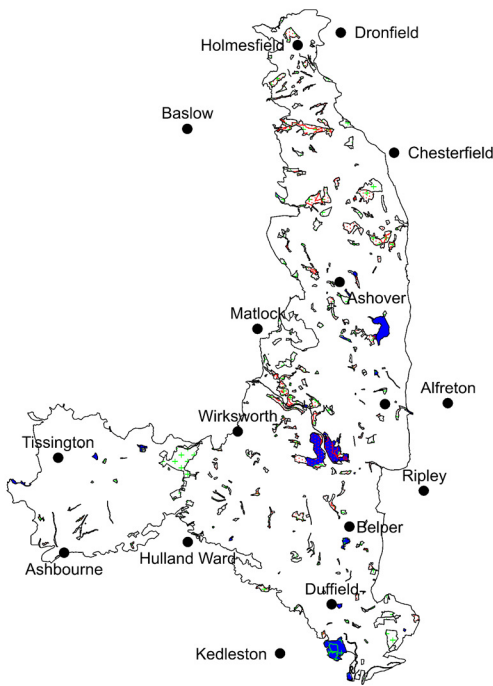
As well as coarse fish species, the River Derwent supports brown trout, with Atlantic salmon returning to the river following recent weir removal works. Migratory fish species will continue to benefit from work to remove barriers to fish migration on the Rivers Trent and Derwent.

The large reservoirs at Carsington and Ogston are particularly important for their populations of resident and migratory wetland bird species. The Cromford Canal is now an important protected site for nature conservation and creates good linkages with other valuable habitat.

Urban – urban is recorded at 6% of the land coverage in this area, and whilst the area remains rural in character, this reflects the fact that the Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent extends to Derby in the south, includes the western edge of Chesterfield, and incorporates the much expanded towns of Ashbourne and Belper, and the eastern edge of Matlock.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Derbyshire Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	1
Local Wildlife Sites	7
Irreplaceable Habitats	3
Combined Areas of Importance	8

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent already has some significant ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with 8% of the area being protected by international, national, and local designations. Only 1% is covered by statutory designation principally

relating to protected woodland along the Derwent Valley and the wetland habitats at Ogston Reservoir. In addition, a further 3% is defined as irreplaceable habitat, again mostly relating to Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, and 7% as Local Wildlife Sites.

The NCA contains a limited amount of land designated as of international importance for biodiversity, that land being part of much larger internationally important sites predominantly within adjacent NCAs, where only a small part of these designations extends into this area. This NCA supports several SSSIs covering a diversity of habitat types, but those sites are often small, and so the total area of the area covered by SSSIs is scarcely more than 1%.

Despite this, the area does contain a significant proportion of the county’s Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Ancient Replanted Woodland resource. It is comparatively well served with Local Nature Reserves, as well as containing nearly a quarter of the county’s designated Local Wildlife Sites. Though dominated by woodland sites, grasslands are also a significant component of the NCA’s Local Wildlife Sites.

The Cromford Canal between High Peak Junction to Ambergate is a notable hotspot for reptiles, with records for all four of the Derbyshire species (grass snake, common lizard, slow worm, and adder), though grass snake records are by far the most numerous, followed by slow worm.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Agriculture and food production – the land in this area is mostly grade 3 and 4 and is primarily used for pastoral farming. This is an important component of the rural environment in this area.

Carbon sequestration and storage – the woodlands in this area are likely to be functioning well for both carbon storage, and active carbon sequestration. However, the agricultural soils in this area are likely sequestering limited amounts of carbon, and in places are at risk of becoming net emitters of carbon. This landscape could therefore offer opportunities to improve carbon abatement.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
International – Special Protection Area (SPA)	Peak District Moors	0.23 Ha	—
International – Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Peak District Dales South Pennine Moors	5.2 Ha 0.23 Ha	Lower reaches of the White Peak dales system. Expansive blanket bog and upland wet and dry heath.
National – Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	17no individual sites	383.75 Ha	SSSIs in this area include important grasslands (mostly neutral, but also some acid grasslands and a limited amount of calcareous grassland, reflecting the transitional nature of the Peak Fringe), woodlands and anthropogenic wetland (canal, reservoir, and flooded brick pits) sites, as well as geological sites.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland Lowland fens	783.52 Ha 406.18 Ha 8.02 Ha	This NCA contains the largest proportion ancient and semi-natural woodland (27.2%) as well as a significant proportion of the Ancient Replanted Woodland resource (20%), but only 3.5% of the lowland fen resource, and no other records of irreplaceable habitats.
National Nature Reserve	Dovedale	9.81 Ha	Accessible limestone dales with ash woodland, species rich grasslands and open water, this NCA contains only a relatively small proportion of the much larger Dovedale NNR, which continues into the White Peak.
Local Nature Reserve	10no individual sites	179.49 Ha	10 individual accessible sites ranging from small, isolated heathlands to a large public park (the largest LNR in the county) undergoing rewilding, with other sites including a mix of grassland, heathland, woodland, parkland, and water.
Local Wildlife Sites	308no individual sites	2476.45 Ha	Dominated by woodland sites (57%) with unimproved neutral grassland sites (28%), some open water and wetland sites (8%), heathland (3%), and sites with habitat mosaics such as former quarries (4%).

Leisure and recreation – there is significant recreational interest in the area with attractions such as Carsington Reservoir and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, as well as sites of natural interest such as Shining Cliffs Woods, Allestree Park, Linacre Reservoirs and Cromford Canal.

Water storage and supply – carsington and Ogston Reservoirs provide important water storage and supply drinking water.

Natural Flood Management – deciduous woodland along valley slopes help to control surface water run-off and deliver natural flood management.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

The area is not an especially urbanised landscape. However, there are key settlements within and at the periphery of this area – Chesterfield, Matlock, Belper and Ashbourne, as well as the northern edge of Derby – that are significantly larger and more developed than elsewhere in this NCA. Many of these areas have been the focus of urban expansion over recent years, and it would seem likely that over the coming years, further development will continue to be a localised pressure around those settlements. In the wider area, development pressure will be less, whilst the nature of the soils and topography will continue to resist agricultural improvements.

The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) is a significant asset in this area, being the only World Heritage Site in the East Midlands, and a site of international importance for its cultural heritage. The Derwent Valley Mills are in many ways a product of their valley environment, with mill locations selected to take advantage of waterpower and other environmental opportunities in the valley. The World Heritage Site designation is dependent not only on the core mill buildings and man-made structures, but also the relic landscape setting of those assets and the associations between the sites and the surrounding land which supported the mills and their workers. There will be opportunities for nature recovery within the DVMWHS but land use decisions, development proposals, and habitat creation and enhancement work should support and enhance the aims and objectives of the designation.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent

PF1 – Ancient woodland and other broadleaved woodland – this area offers the greatest opportunity for enhancing the woodland network and improving connectivity. The key objectives should include protecting and enhancing existing assets, including through good woodland management to improve woodland condition and structure, species diversity, and to protect and retain ancient and veteran trees. This should focus on core areas of woodland habitat particularly in the lower Derwent Valley from Cromford to Ambergate, around Clay Cross to Holymoorside, and around the Linacre Reservoirs area, as well as around the ancient woodlands in the north of the NCA. The woodland network should be enhanced by connecting woodlands including through new woodland planting and natural regeneration in appropriate locations, taking account of cultural constraints and other statutory designations. This would benefit woodland species and assemblages and would connect to and extend the woodlands of the White and Dark Peak NCAs.

PF2 – Hedgerows and hedgerow trees – this is an area notable for the presence of mature mixed species hedgerows supported by hedgerow trees, predominantly oak with some ash. The opportunity exists to improve the protection and management of these hedgerows, including the retention and planting of hedgerow trees.

PF3 – Grasslands – especially lowland meadow, species rich grassland, and small-scale mires and rush pasture. This area has potential to revert pastoral farmland to woodland, however it also has some of the best opportunities to reconnect grasslands. The enhancement and creation of species rich grasslands is therefore a key opportunity particularly where they reduce grassland habitat fragmentation, would buffer and extend the grasslands of the White and Dark Peak NCAs, and/or where this approach may be more appropriate in the World Heritage Site designation.

PF4 – Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses – enhancement of key wetland corridors, particularly rivers, streams, and canals. This includes improving connectivity along watercourses, removing barriers to species movement, and reconnecting watercourses to their floodplains and adjacent habitats. This also includes addressing watercourse pollution. In addition, Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures within this area could help address flooding both within the Derwent Valley, its tributaries, and further downstream.

PF5 – Heathland – the area contains a small amount of heathland, but given the rarity of this habitat in Derbyshire, these are very important. Measures should focus on protecting and enhancing existing sites wherever possible, and seeking opportunities to buffer, extend and connect these sites where conditions allow.

PF6 – Riparian mammals – the Peak Fringe, particularly the River Derwent and Cromford Canal, are important for water voles and otters. The survival and recovery of water vole and otter will be dependent on the maintenance of high-quality habitats, and the connectivity to habitats up and downstream, but water vole success will be particularly dependent on the control and eradication of mink. The River Derwent in the future could become a focus for beaver reintroduction.

3.8 Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Yorkshire Coalfield

The Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Yorkshire Coalfield covers an area of 40,900 Ha within Derbyshire.



The Derbyshire Coalfield is in the east of the county, stretching from the outskirts of Sheffield in the north, to the Trent Valley in the south and is a broad belt of low-lying land, approximately 10km wide and 45km in length. The area is strongly influenced by its underlying coal geology comprising alternating bands of sandstone, shale, mudstone, and coal, collectively referred to as Coal Measures. Over time, natural processes have shaped the landscape to form the characteristic series of sandstone ridges and gentle valleys.

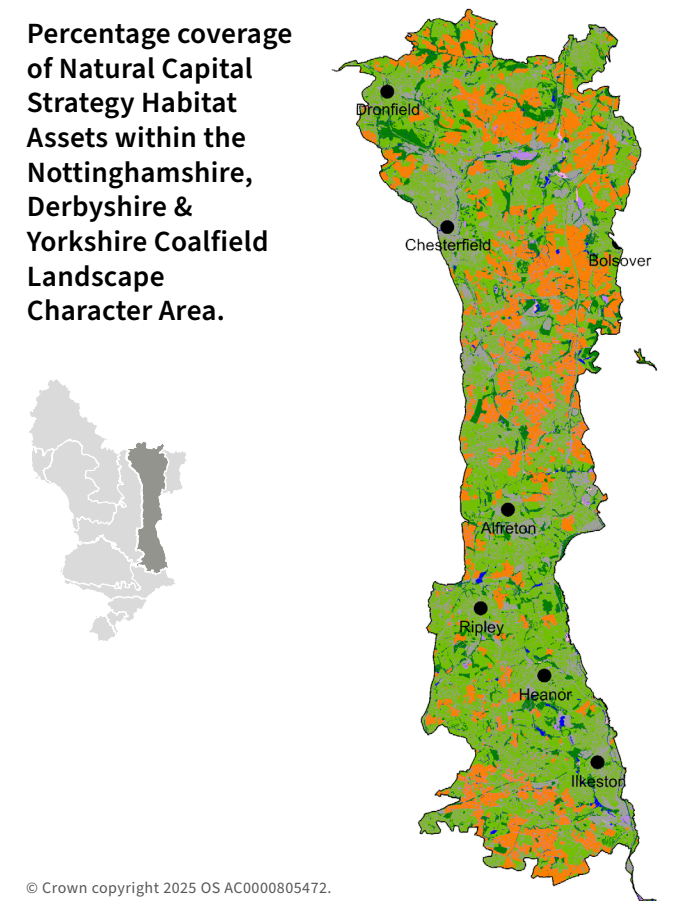
Widespread industrialisation in the coalfield, particularly associated with the former coal mining, has significantly altered the landscape's visual and ecological integrity, yet in the most part, the underlying natural character remains evident and distinctive, giving rise to a diversity of habitats associated with the underlying geology or human influences. The soils are predominantly heavy, and seasonally waterlogged, and have traditionally supported dairy farming. Over time, agricultural changes have led to an increasingly more mixed farming system with remnant habitats associated

with river valleys, meadows, heath, and woodlands. Many of these habitats are small, fragmented remnants of the pre-industrial landscape, although they include flashes, which are wetlands resulting from ground subsidence because of past underground mining. A few habitats have developed through recent changes created by coal mining, dereliction, or neglect, and can now support some important invertebrate species. Ancient semi-natural woodland remains a characteristic feature in some parts of the coalfield particularly in the Moss Valley to the north where there are several large woodlands.

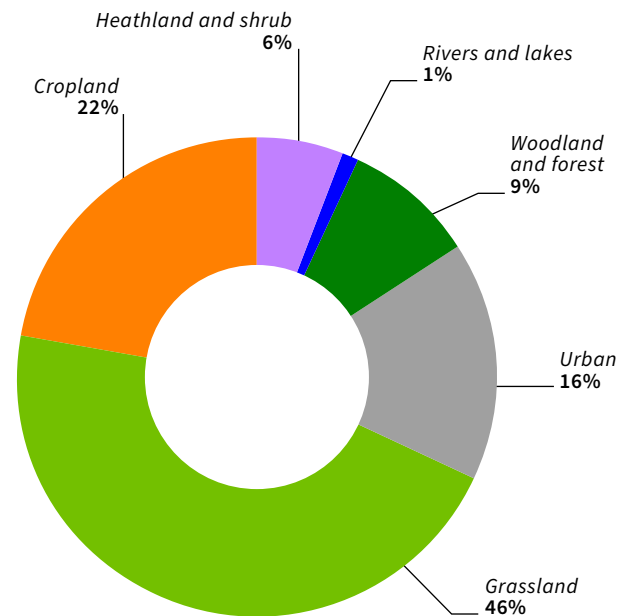
The area includes several important river corridors including the Rother and Doe Lea in the north of the area extending through Chesterfield, and the Erewash in the south forming the eastern boundary with Nottinghamshire. These river valleys support important habitats including reedbeds, fen and marsh.

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Yorkshire Coalfield Landscape Character Area.



Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Grassland – covering 46% of the area, pasture is still the predominant land use. However, the history and industrial legacy of the coalfield has resulted in some of the lowest amounts of priority grassland in the county. Traditionally the area would have supported extensive neutral grassland with some acidic grassland on steeper slopes over sandstone in the north, but today much of the grassland has been improved to produce silage and haylage. Grass snakes are reasonably common and widespread within

this NCA, typically associated with grassland sites and especially those associated with wetlands and waterbodies in low lying areas. The open grasslands associated with previously developed, brownfield, and recently restored sites are important for dingy skipper butterfly, and outside of the Peak District, the coalfield is a stronghold for this species.

Cropland – arable farmland is a key component with 22% land coverage, although it is slightly more prevalent in the north of the area where the landscape undulates on a broader scale allowing for the use of larger farm machinery. This is predominantly cereal crops supporting livestock farming as part of a mixed agricultural system.

Woodland and forest – woodland comprises 9% of the area and is a combination of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, secondary woodland, and more recent plantation woodland created through the restoration of former colliery sites such as those at Williamthorpe, Grassmoor, and Holmewood. The Moss Valley in the north is an important area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland designated for its upland oak and wet woodland that supports a range of ancient woodland indicators such as yellow archangel and bluebell. The valley is important for breeding birds including green woodpecker, great spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, kingfisher, and grey wagtail. Ancient woodland as a relic habitat also occurs as isolated patches in other locations across the coalfield such as Cloves Wood and Morleyhayes Wood near Stanley Common. There are some significant concentrations of plantation woodland to the south of Alfreton around Riddings and Golden Valley, many designated as Local Wildlife Sites, that define a locally, more wooded character.

Heathland and shrub – this land cover category (6% of land coverage) mainly relates to the many hedgerows that enclose farmland with isolated patches of scrub often found on derelict or neglected land such as the former Staveley Works site near Chesterfield. In areas of earlier enclosure and especially in areas with Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland such as the Moss Valley, hedgerows are typically mixed species with many characteristic species such as hazel and holly with mature

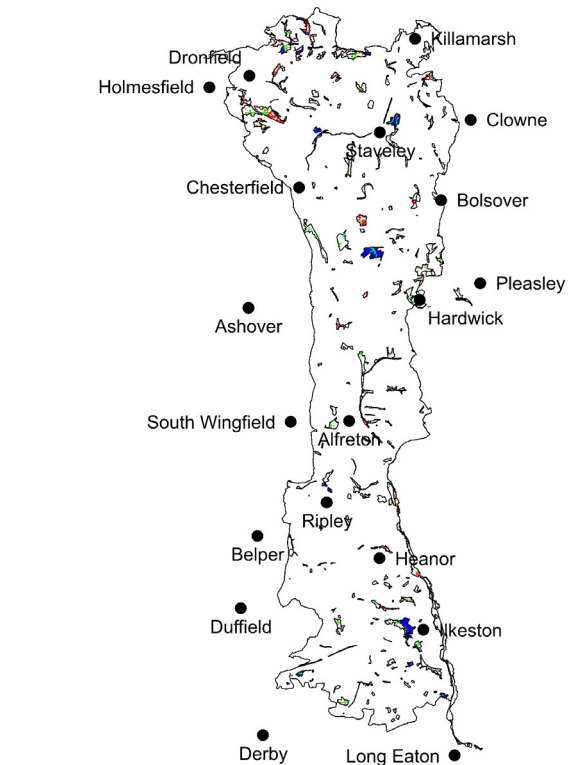
hedgerow trees including oak. In many areas field enclosure has been significantly modified as a result of widespread opencast coal mining, and in these areas, hedgerows are often missing or fragmented, or where restoration has taken place, species poor and dominated by hawthorn.

Rivers and lakes – comprising just 1% of land coverage, there are three notable rivers within the area: the Rivers Rother and Doe Lea in the north flowing through Chesterfield, and the River Erewash in the south forming the county's eastern boundary with Nottinghamshire and discharging into the River Trent. Several tributary streams and brooks feed these rivers and contribute to the diversity of wetland habitats. There are many waterbodies, often former colliery lagoons or small reservoirs, canals, and other wetlands scattered across the coalfield with several designated as Local Nature Reserves including Brearley Wetland, Norbriggs Flash, and Pewitt Carr. These sites provide important habitat for key species such as great-crested newt. The various canals, river corridors and key wetland sites in this NCA previously supported healthy populations of water vole. However, in common with many parts of the country, water vole populations are in sharp decline, with predation by mink greatly exacerbating the current cause, in addition to historic habitat losses.

Urban – this is a highly urbanised area because of both past mining, but also more recent development delivered through regeneration schemes to bring employment to the area following the closure of the coal mines. Today 16% of the area is defined as urban. Many of the original pit villages have seen significant residential expansion in recent years and in areas around Chesterfield and Alfreton many of these individual settlements have started to coalesce into larger urban areas.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Yorkshire Coalfield Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	1
Local Wildlife Sites	5
Irreplaceable Habitats	2
Combined Areas of Importance	6

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The Derbyshire Coalfield has limited ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with only 6% of the area being protected by national and local designations comprising statutory designations (1%) and Local Wildlife Sites (5%) and/or supporting irreplaceable habitat (2%).

The Derbyshire Coalfield has a comparatively low proportion of its area designated as SSSI - just 0.15% - this interest mostly relating to woodland, wetland, and grassland sites in the northernmost reaches of the NCA. This paucity of nationally important sites likely reflects both the underlying geology and prevailing environmental conditions, as well as the intensity of settlement and land use change in this area.

Despite this, the area contains the greatest number of Local Wildlife Sites (although not the highest percentage land cover of LWS, at less than 5%), suggesting that many pockets of ecological interest occur throughout the area. These LWSs include a real variety of habitats, but woodlands are particularly prominent, followed by wetlands and grasslands. This NCA is also recognised as supporting some significant proportions of the county’s Ancient Woodland and Lowland Fen resources. These figures highlight that despite the absence of statutory designations, and

even considering the intensity of land use in this area, there remains a notable level of ecological interest throughout the area.

The NCA also contains the greatest number of Local Nature Reserves of the NCAs in the county. This reflects the many settlements and urban areas, and the steps that have been taken by local authorities to protect and provide areas of semi-natural greenspace for their residents, although not all communities are equally well served. Some LNRs have been designated on former colliery sites, taking advantage of their dereliction following the decline of industry, and subsequent restoration to nature conservation and public access.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Recreation and public health – given the level of urbanisation throughout this NCA (16% by land coverage), then high-quality semi-natural green spaces will be especially important for residents and members of the public looking for local opportunities to exercise and experience the natural environment. This area benefits from numerous local recreational facilities, including country parks, Local Nature

Reserves, accessible sections of canal, and linear features such as footpaths and riverside access routes which are highly valued locally and are particularly important to the health and wellbeing of residents. However, many communities within this NCA have been identified as lacking access to recreational sites within easy reach of their own home (see Natural Capital Strategy, figures 45-48).

Water quality regulation – land use within this area will be a key determinant of water quality further downstream. The River Erewash has previously been identified as a source of poor water quality within the Attenborough SSSI complex and further downstream, with agricultural runoff, sediment and nutrient load identified as a particular concern. Similarly, run off and leachate from former mining sites within this area have previously been identified as contributing to poor water quality in Alfretton Brook and Oakerthorpe Brook, leading to poorer water quality in the River Amber, and further downstream in the River Derwent. Water quality within Hardwick Hall Park is adversely affected by agricultural and sediment run-off between the park and the river source a little way upstream.

Tourism – whilst not traditionally considered a tourist hotspot, this NCA nevertheless supports several key cultural heritage assets (Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle, Sutton Scarsdale Hall) which are intimately related to their surrounding natural environment and somewhat dependent on this for their tourism offer.

Carbon storage and sequestration – land within this NCA has been identified as storing a very limited amount of carbon, and in places is identified as likely to be a net emitter of carbon (or likely to become so soon), although could offer opportunities for carbon abatement/storage.

Agricultural productivity – agricultural land in this area is predominantly grade 4 (poor) with limited areas of grade three land, with a mixture of arable and pastoral farming. Whilst farming will remain an important sector, the area is likely to experience greater land-use change whether for residential development, energy generation such as large-scale solar, or even for the delivery of biodiversity.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

Nature in this area has historically been under pressure from population growth and industry, although its industrial past has also shaped current habitats. Today it faces pressure from housing and industrial development.

The eastern side of the county along the Nottinghamshire border has traditionally been the focus of much settlement and urbanisation associated with mining and industrial growth, and the Derbyshire Coalfields NCA continues to be one of the most urbanised and populous areas of the county. With a continued national focus on the delivery of new housing, there will be inevitable pressure for the settlements throughout this area to grow and expand, exacerbating habitat fragmentation and potentially impacting directly on biodiversity. This development could also lead to indirect impacts such as degradation of water quality through increased surface run-off and pressure on water treatment facilities or increased recreational pressure. Conversely, the new statutory requirement that development should deliver a ‘net gain’ for biodiversity could offer a mechanism for investment in biodiversity in this part of the county, particularly given the imperative that ‘biodiversity offsetting’ should be delivered near the development site, or within the NCA in which the development impact occurred.

This area benefits from being part of the Heartwood Community Forest, with part of this area also included within the Bolsover Community Woodlands Project, which will significantly increase the extent of woodland in this area, improving habitat connectivity and linking communities to woodlands.

Whilst farming will remain an important sector for landowners, it’s limited profitability in this area will facilitate land-use change – whether for residential development, energy generation, or even for the delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Transport corridors are also a consideration in the area, with the M1, A38, A610, A61 and A617 just some of the major routes through the NCA, and with railway lines adding to this picture running from both Nottingham and Derby to Chesterfield and onwards to Sheffield.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	8no individual sites	62.68 Ha	Varied sites comprising former railway cuttings, meadows, woodlands, and wetlands. Over 80% of the SSSI interest lies in the very north of the NCA around the Moss Valley (north of Dronfield and Eckington), these sites having been designated for their ancient woodland, meadow grassland and wetland habitats, each of value to invertebrates.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	442.23 Ha	The Derbyshire Coalfield supports around 15% of the county Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland resource (focussed in the north of the NCA but also around Stanley/ Shipley area), but nearly a quarter of the county resource of lowland fen, focussed around the River Erewash/Erewash canal north of Heanor/Eastwood, at Brinsley Meadows, Aldercarr Flashes, with smaller sites in the vicinity of Ilkeston and in the Norbriggs and Carr Vale Flashes further north.
	Ancient Replanted Woodland	290.75 Ha	
	Lowland fens	52.76 Ha	
Local Nature Reserve	24no individual sites	247.97 Ha	Accessible sites including trails with a mix of grassland, woodland, and wetland.
Local Wildlife Sites	337no individual sites	2171.72 Ha	Varied sites comprising woodland (40%), wetlands and open water (26%), grasslands including wood pasture (23%), and mosaic habitats often associated with previously developed land (10%).

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield

DC1 – Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses

– the river corridors are especially important for biodiversity in this NCA. The Rivers Rother and Doe Lea in the north, and the Erewash in the south, as well as their tributaries, together with Chesterfield and Erewash canals are important environmental assets and corridors. In places their value is greatly enhanced by the presence of adjacent wetland habitats, flashes, areas of grazing marsh and other complimentary habitats, which collectively support a suite a wetland habitat types and dependent species. Connectivity along watercourses could however be improved through management of the intervening land and the creation of additional wetlands. Many watercourses in this area have been modified and could be improved by restoring their alignments and natural profiles and reinstating natural processes. Water quality in this area is sometimes adversely affected by the level of urbanisation, industry, and legacy issues from coal mining, and opportunities exist to improve this situation through nature-based solutions and targeted interventions.

DC2 – Woodlands and trees – ancient woodland is mostly locally distributed although there are opportunities to protect and connect these sites and restore Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites. Other woodlands are a constant and recurring feature in this NCA with significant opportunities to extend and connect these sites including into similar landscape within Nottinghamshire. Further woodland creation could be promoted in large parts of the area to help connect people to woodlands and associated habitats, including for recreation, health, and wellbeing.

DC3 – Grasslands – existing high-quality grasslands are locally distributed, focussed particularly within the SSSIs at the northern end of the area. However, good quality grasslands do remain, including sites designated as LWS. Grassland opportunities in this area therefore relate to the protection and enhancement of existing high-quality sites, the enhancement of other grasslands sites of

biodiversity value, using those sites as a basis of a connected habitat network, and the restoration and creation of new grasslands sites, recognising that this area can support a variety of grassland types.

DC4 – Accessible semi-natural greenspaces – this is an urbanised area, with villages and towns distributed throughout. Despite the presence of many local wildlife sites and an above average number of Local Nature Reserves, many communities across this area are poorly serviced with accessible semi-natural green spaces. Such spaces could make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of these communities, some of which remain disadvantaged following the decline of industry. Habitat creation and enhancement should therefore seek to maximise both nature recovery and public access benefit wherever possible or be strategically directed towards areas of disadvantage and green infrastructure deficit. Biodiversity Net Gain could be used to secure environmental enhancements in this area, especially in or adjacent to areas of high development pressure and urban growth.

DC5 – Farmland – farmland is lower quality (predominantly grade 4, with localised grade 3 land) and of limited productivity in this area. However, nature-based solutions could deliver improved biodiversity on this land, and contribute significantly to environmental improvement, improving water quality by reducing agricultural runoff, or by providing improved carbon sequestration. Nature-based solutions, such as agroforestry, could be funded by marketing the benefits provided, improving the environment whilst also supporting farming within this area to remain viable, providing alternative income streams, and benefiting nearby communities.

DC6 – Great crested newts – opportunities should be sought to support GCN in this landscape and provide sustainable locations for stable, connected populations. Development pressure could fund strategic habitat delivery to benefit the GCN habitat network.

3.9 Southern Magnesian Limestone

The Southern Magnesian Limestone covers an area of 9,320Ha within Derbyshire.



The Southern Magnesian Limestone area is a gently rolling plateau dissected by narrow river valleys and rocky gorges. The landscape is characterised by large arable fields enclosed by predominantly hawthorn hedgerows creating an open landscape on a broad scale. It occurs in the northeast of the county as a narrow belt of elevated land, approximately 10km wide by 20km in length, running between Barlborough in the north to Hardwick and Pleasley in the south. The magnesian limestone geology weathers to form a light, very fertile, friable soil which supports intensive arable farming.

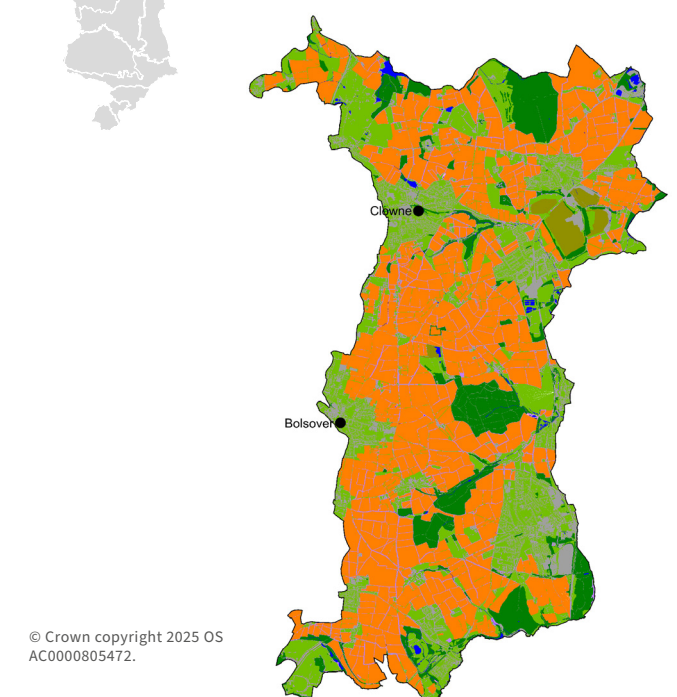
Woodland is locally prominent but never dominant, occurring as large, isolated blocks across the landscape such as Whitwell Wood, Scarcliffe Park Wood, and Pleasley Park. Although these woodlands are of ancient origin, they have now been largely converted to commercial coniferous woodland managed by large estates. Beyond the woodlands, tree cover is sparse and often limited to isolated amenity trees around the villages and towns scattered across the plateau. However, further remnant ancient woodland persists in the narrow gorges that dissect the plateau.

The narrow, steep sided gorges that cut through the plateau remain as important natural features in this landscape. Their inaccessibility, along with the steep rocky sides, have minimised human disturbance and allowed many original habitats to survive. Magnesian limestone can support a very species-rich flora, including some species that occur nowhere else in the county.

Historically, the area also supported deep underground coal mining and many rural villages such as Clowne, Bolsover, and Shirebrook expanded into larger pit towns during that time. Like many pit towns and villages, these have seen significant expansion in recent years as part of wider regeneration strategies for the area becoming larger urban areas. Many former colliery sites and their associated tips, like those at Langwith and Pleasley, have now been restored to create country parks that contain a range of valuable habitats.

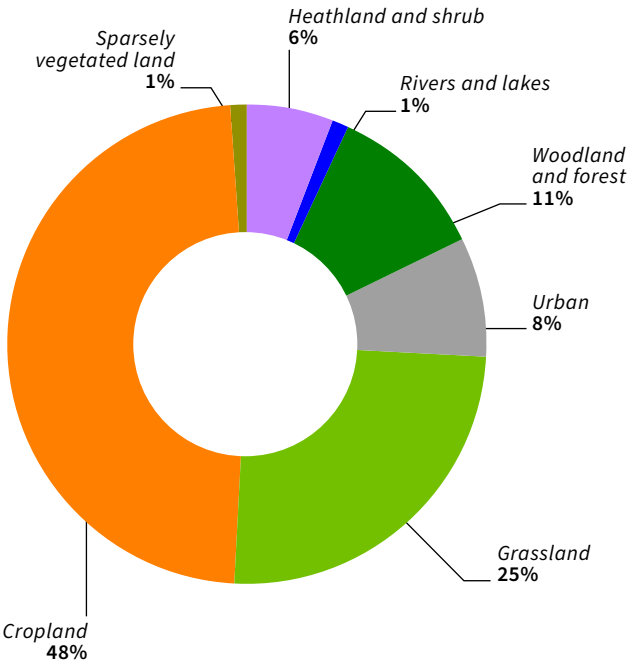
i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the Southern Magnesian Limestone Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS
AC0000805472.

Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Cropland – the deep, fertile soils and gently undulating nature of the Magnesian limestone plateau has ensured that arable farming, mostly cereal cropping, is the dominant land-use in the area comprising 48% of total land coverage. This has previously been an important part of the county for farmland birds such as skylark, yellowhammer, linnet, grey partridge, lapwing, tree sparrow and yellow wagtail. In recent years, farmland birds have been in decline in this area.

Grassland – grassland cover comprises 25% of total land coverage although this is dominated by intensively managed grassland. Where relic grassland survives these small patches are calcareous in character and often isolated. The most significant grasslands in the area are those associated with reclaimed colliery sites such as Poulter and Pleasley Country Parks, the parkland landscape at Hardwick, and fragments of calcareous grassland that persist within the limestone gorges. Unimproved Magnesian limestone grassland is generally uncommon and is the main justification behind the designation of Markland Grips as a SSSI, where patches persist. The species rich calcareous grasslands, together with the open grassland habitats of former industrial and mining sites have previously been identified as important for several notable butterfly species including dingy skipper, small heath, as well as (previously) grizzled skipper.

Woodland and forest – woodland is another important habitat across the plateau comprising 11% of the total area. These are relatively few but very large in size including woodland such as Whitwell Wood and Scarcliffe Park Wood, often on ancient woodland sites, as well as younger plantations associated with the reclamation of former colliery tips. Most of the woodland is mixed broadleaf in nature although commercial coniferous planting has taken place within these large estate woodlands. This area has also been identified as important for woodland and woodland edge butterfly species such as white letter hairstreak.

Heathland and shrub – this land-cover type (6% of land coverage) relates almost exclusively to the hedgerows that enclose this arable landscape. These are mostly simple hawthorn hedgerows with the occasional limestone wall around settlement edges, although species-rich hedgerows can still be found and where they persist are often in good condition. Hedgerow trees are notable by their absence, although elms would once have been common prior to their demise due to Dutch elm disease. This network provides important ecological connections through the landscape and between the large woodland blocks although today these hedgerows are often fragmented, gappy, and poorly managed.

Sparsely vegetated land – comprising 1% of the area, this land use category relates primarily to two large limestone quarries at Bolsover Moor and Whitwell, but also includes Steetley Quarry and some railway sidings. Progressive restoration of these quarry sites has created some ecological interest, and the rock faces provide nesting opportunities for raptors such as peregrine falcon.

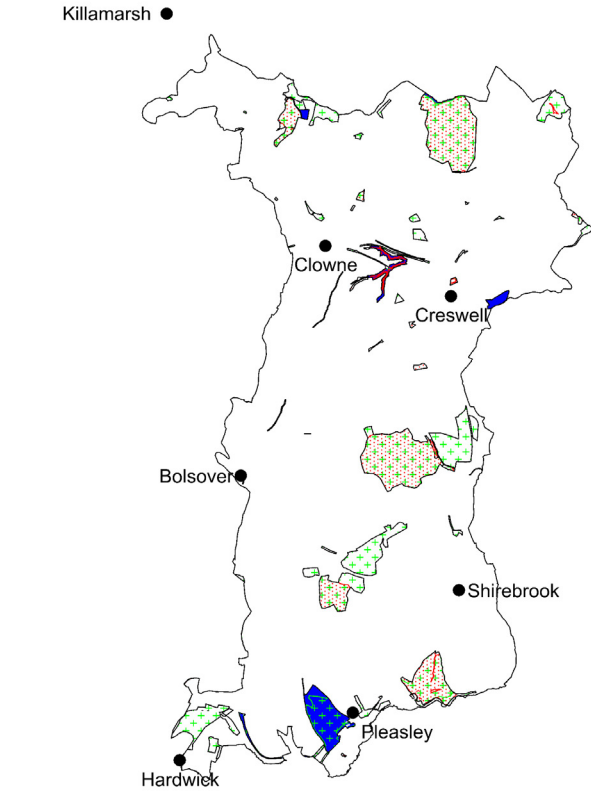
Rivers and lakes – water is not a prominent feature of this free draining limestone plateau at just 1% of land coverage. Primarily it is confined to the few infrequent streams that cut through the plateau from west to east creating the gorges, and some water bodies formed through the reclamation of former colliery sites. One of these sites is Pleasley Country Park, which is designated as a Local Nature Reserve due to its access to a mosaic of habitat types.



Urban – large, expanded settlements are becoming an ever-increasing feature of the limestone plateau and now comprise 8% of total land coverage. Many of the original pit villages have seen significant expansion in recent years to accommodate growing populations and accommodate new sources of commercial development to compensate for the demise of the coal industry in the area.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Southern Magnesian Limestone Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	1
Local Wildlife Sites	10
Irreplaceable Habitats	6
Combined Areas of Importance	11

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	6no individual sites	36.24 Ha	Hollinhill and Markland Grips is the largest SSSI in the area, supporting important unimproved magnesian limestone grasslands and some woodland in a steeply sided incised valley cutting into the limestone. Other SSSIs include two small wetland sites supporting base-rich flushes where water seeps out from the limestone. Creswell Crags is a nationally and internationally important geological, paleontological, and archaeological site.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland Lowland fens	74.08 Ha 435.88 Ha 4.41 Ha	This NCA contains over 20% of the county's Ancient Replanted Woodland resource.
Local Nature Reserve	3no individual sites	87.51 Ha	Accessible sites including mixed habitats in Pleasley Vale, Pleasley Pit Country Park, and the Rowthorne Trail.
Local Wildlife Sites	71no individual sites	933.66 Ha	Primarily relate to pockets of mixed deciduous woodland (39%) and unimproved calcareous grassland (38%), with some wetland and open water habitats (17%) along the minor stream valleys and gorges, and habitat mosaics (6%) on previously developed sites

The Southern Magnesian Limestone area already has moderate 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' with 11% of the area being protected by national and local designations comprising statutory designations (1%) and Local Wildlife Sites (10%), and/or supporting irreplaceable habitat (6%).

This NCA contains no internationally designated sites of biodiversity value, whilst less than 0.5% of the area is designated as SSSI. Hollinhill and Markland Grips, and Creswell Crags SSSIs make up most of the land designated as SSSI in this NCA (over 80%), with both sites occupying steep sided valleys within this landscape. The relative lack of sites covered by statutory conservation designations reflects the history of land use and more intensive agricultural practices which occupy most of the plateau.

However, this NCA contains one of the highest proportions of land designated as Local Wildlife Site (around 10%), most of these sites supporting either deciduous woodland or calcareous grassland, with some wetland habitats in localised areas in the valleys. It is notable however that a relatively small number of very large LWS account for a very large proportion of the land designated as LWS, with just 8 sites accounting

for nearly 80% of those designations. These are predominantly ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland sites. Other large sites of nature conservation interest include Poulter Country Park and Pleasley Pit Country Park – both restored former colliery sites – as well as Hardwick Hall, which is of high cultural and historic significance as well as supporting important wood pasture and parkland habitats.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Agriculture – the Magnesian Limestone NCA contains some of the county's best and most versatile farmland, with most of the agricultural land identified as grade 2 (very good), with some grade 3 (good to moderate) land. Farming in this area is therefore an important, agriculturally productive, and economically viable land use. Whilst these are doubtless positive attributes, they do mean that opportunities for large scale land use change (for example for nature conservation) will be limited given the economic value of the land for farming, and the importance of the area for domestic food production.

Carbon storage and sequestration – the intensive farming and land use practices in this area tend to mean that the soils currently have limited value for carbon storage, and in places are at risk of becoming net emitters of carbon. Conversely, the ancient woodland and plantation ancient woodland sites make a valuable contribution to carbon storage and sequestration.

Recreation and public health – although this area contains numerous settlements and is relatively urbanised, it has very few Local Nature Reserves, whilst urban areas like Shirebrook and Clowne have been identified as having some degree of shortfall in their access to local semi-natural green spaces per population. Nevertheless, the semi-natural green spaces of the area are well recognised as being an important resource for local people and will make a positive contribution to health and well-being. Examples of important sites in this regard would include Whitwell Wood, Poulter Country Park, Pleasley Pit Country Park, and Hardwick Hall Park amongst others.

Tourism – key sites in the area also have an existing value for tourism (particularly the heritage sites of Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle and Creswell Crags) whilst there is also an appetite to grow the recreational tourism offer in this area through the delivery of interconnected green spaces using former railway lines as greenways.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

The deep, fertile soils of this area have led to widespread intensive farming, which has left little space for nature. Coal mining facilitated the growth of the settlements and consumed land for collieries and coal processing, further squeezing nature into ever smaller areas, although some of these former colliery and industrial sites have since been restored to benefit nature conservation.

Given the productive nature of the farmland in this area and the current focus on domestic food production and food security, it would seem likely that the imperative for intensive and arable farming in this area will persist. Similarly, the continued need for housing growth will likely mean ongoing pressure for the settlements throughout this area to grow and expand, exacerbating habitat fragmentation and potentially impacting directly on biodiversity.

However, the new statutory requirement that development should deliver a 'net gain' for biodiversity could offer a mechanism for investment in biodiversity in this part of the county, particularly given the requirement that 'biodiversity offsetting' should be delivered close to the development site, or within the NCA in which the development impact occurs. There will also be a need to provide enhanced access to green open spaces, both to address current shortfalls for existing populations, and to meet the needs of new residents, and this could be achieved through the delivery of well-planned green infrastructure.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Southern Magnesian Limestone

ML1 – Maintain, restore, enhance, and expand key habitats in this area – this should focus on improving the condition of existing deciduous woodlands (including plantation on ancient woodland sites) and extending them where appropriate as significant new woodland creation opportunities are likely to be limited. This should include appropriate public access where possible. Opportunities to conserve and enhance the grassland resource as well as open mosaic on previously developed land should also be prioritised.

ML2 – Ecological connectivity – there are opportunities for landscape connections such as hedgerows between ancient woodland sites, the use of river corridors and associated floodplain habitats, field margins and highway verges, to create high quality networks crossing the productive agricultural land.

ML3 – Farmland – conservation measures to improve the value of the farmed landscape for small mammals and bats, invertebrates including pollinators, arable plants, and bird species. Measures should include encouraging habitat recreation as well as field margins, hedgerow restoration, beetle and butterfly banks etc.

ML4 – Accessible greenspaces – the area contains several settlements that are becoming urbanised through more recent expansion. Although the NCA contains a small number of larger sites of wildlife interest, many communities are not well served by

locally accessible greenspace. Such spaces could make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of these communities, some of which remain disadvantaged following the decline of industry. Habitat creation and enhancement should therefore seek to maximise both nature recovery and public access benefit wherever possible or be strategically directed towards areas of disadvantage and green infrastructure deficit. Biodiversity Net Gain could be used to secure environmental enhancements in this area, especially in or adjacent to areas of high development pressure and urban growth.

3.10 Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands

The Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands covers an area of 33,040Ha within Derbyshire.



This is a well settled area of gently undulating to rolling pastoral landscape over Mercia mudstones, sandstones, and glacial drift to the west of Derby that extends beyond the county boundary into Staffordshire. Small irregular fields are enclosed

by mixed species hedgerows with many mature hedgerow trees, mostly oak, while the plateau areas have more regular shaped fields with thorn hedgerows and fewer trees. Where the topography allows and on lower valley slopes towards the Trent Valley there are areas of mixed farming that provide localised arable habitats. Although much of the pasture has now been improved, there are still remnants of unimproved pasture and meadows, and some older hedgerows are species rich.

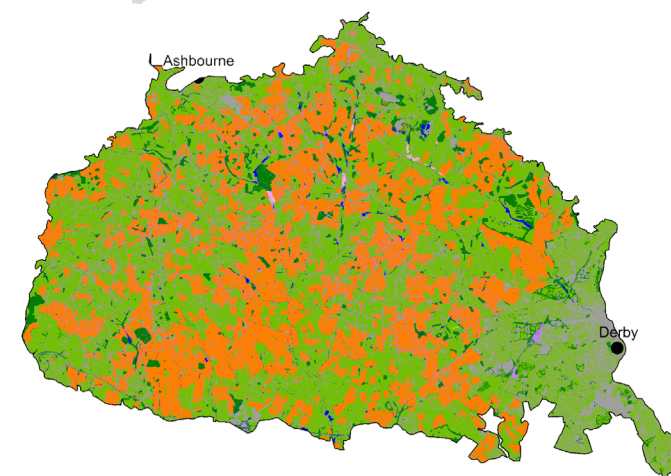
The Derbyshire Claylands, unlike the Needwood area in Staffordshire, is less wooded. Woodland habitat occurs sparsely, but locally occurring parkland, such as that at Kedleston Hall, makes a significant contribution to the overall character and habitat value of the area with its high concentration of veteran trees, as do the densely scattered hedgerow trees.

There is a dense network of small tributary streams, often delineated by dense lines of riparian trees, that provide important wetland habitats including rush pasture, mire, and fen. The western boundary is defined by the River Dove, which also forms the administrative boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Locally occurring heathland with gorse and heather is still to be found, though mostly confined to the steepest slopes or road verges over sandier substrates.

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species



Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands Landscape Character Area.



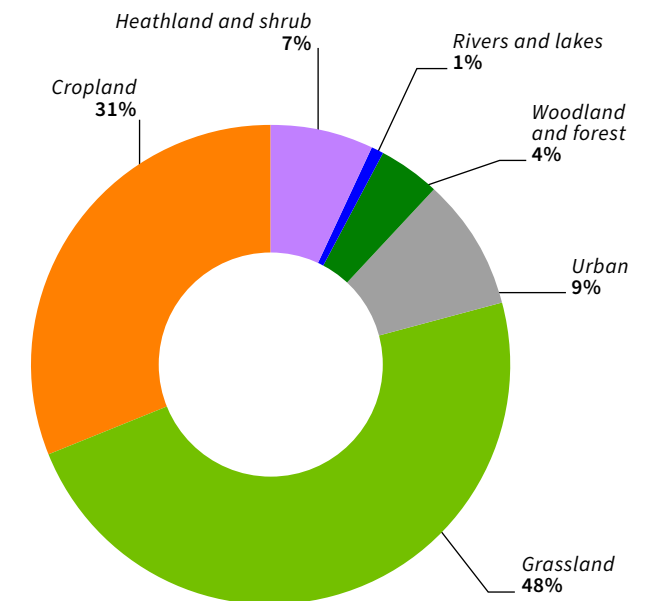
© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Grassland – grassland accounts for 48% of the land coverage and whilst much of this land use is improved, modified pasture or temporary grass leys, a third of it is still recorded as neutral grassland although this is becoming increasingly fragmented. There are some concentrations of unimproved pasture to the west of Kedleston Park between Weston Underwood and Meynell Langley, as well as an area to the north of Sutton-on-the-Hill.

Cropland – arable farming is becoming an increasingly more prominent land-use in the South Derbyshire Claylands comprising 31% of total land coverage, associated with cereal cropping.

Heathland and shrub – this land-cover type (7% of land coverage) relates almost exclusively to the hedgerows that enclose this mixed farming landscape. Hedgerows can be species rich in areas of earliest enclosure, with holly, hazel and field maple, to predominantly hawthorn in areas of late parliamentary enclosure.

Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Woodland and forest – this area presents itself as a well treed landscape although woodland only comprises 4% of total land coverage. However, the small woodlands that exist combine with densely scattered hedgerow trees, dense watercourse trees, and parkland trees to create this well treed character with restricted views through the landscape. Parkland includes a number of important habitats such as wood pasture and veteran trees that support some rare species such as the oak polypore fungus.

Rivers and lakes – water is not a prominent characteristic of this area comprising 1% of land coverage and confined to the tributary streams that flow into the River Dove and Trent. These stream corridors contribute to the diversity of wetland habitats including lowland fen as found at Mercaston Marsh and Muggington Bottom SSSI along Black Brook and Mercaston Brook. Otter can be found along the River Dove, with a smaller number of records from the Markeaton Brook between Kedleston and Markeaton Park, and onwards into Derby. Water vole have also previously been recorded along the Markeaton Brook, and occasionally in other watercourses in this NCA.

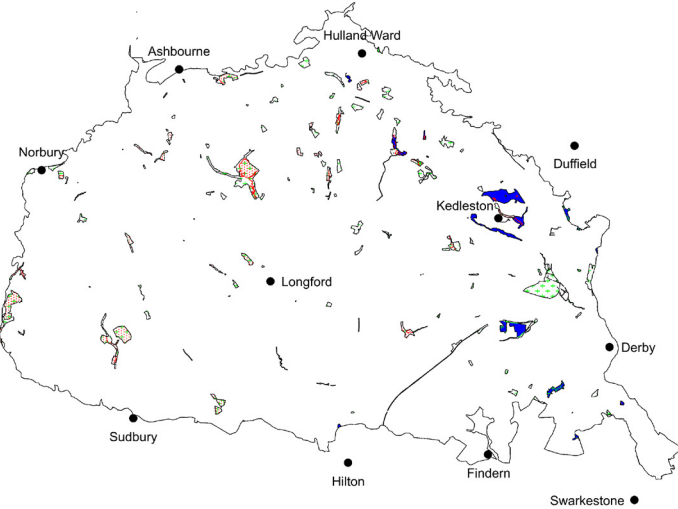
Urban – the South Derbyshire Claylands is a sparsely settled area of small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, ensuring it retains a deeply rural character. Although the area has 9% urban land coverage this specifically relates to the western edge of Derby and the southern edge of Ashbourne that have expanded into this area.



Image: Regenerating sand and gravel site near Mercasto

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

-  Statutory designations
-  Local wildlife sites
-  Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	1
Local Wildlife Sites	2
Irreplaceable Habitats	1
Combined Areas of Importance	3

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The South Derbyshire Claylands area has very few ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with 3% of the area being protected by national and local designations comprising irreplaceable habitat (1%), Local Wildlife Sites (2%), and 4no statutory designations (SSSI) although the main interest relates to the historic parkland at Kedleston Hall.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	4no individual sites	111.66 Ha	At over 90Ha, Kedleston Hall SSSI is by far the largest statutorily designated site in the area, with the historic parkland containing important wood pasture with numerous veteran trees. Other sites include Mercaston Marsh and Muggington Bottoms (marshland), Hulland Moss (a small lowland bog and dry heath site) and a small part of Hilton Gravel Pits.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Ancient Replanted Woodland Lowland fens	148.62 Ha 83.46 Ha 34.97 Ha	This NCA contains around 15% of the county’s identified lowland fen resources, and around 4-5% of the ancient woodland resource.
Local Nature Reserve	7no individual sites	59.71 Ha	Accessible sites including woodlands and meadows and areas of parkland within Derby.
Local Wildlife Sites	156no individual sites	752.59 Ha	Apart from a few large parkland areas at Markeaton, Darley Park and Shirley Park, sites are a mix of small woodlands including some important hedgerows (34%), wetlands comprising streams, ponds, and swamp areas (32%), and small pockets of neutral and acid grassland (25%).

There are 4 SSSIs within this NCA although in terms of total land coverage, SSSI designations cover just 0.33% of the NCA, one of the lowest proportions of SSSI coverage in the county, the vast majority of which is accounted for by Kedleston Hall SSSI at 93.24Ha. Kedleston Park is designated principally on account of the rich and diverse deadwood invertebrate fauna found there.

Mercaston Marsh and Muggington Bottoms are important for their marshland containing a selection of wetland plants, whilst Hulland Moss is a fine example of lowland bog and dry heath, with abundant bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp) as well as bog asphodel, marsh violet, and marsh valerian. It is a similar picture with regards to Local Wildlife Sites – although there are 154 LWS designated within this NCA, they cover just 2.2% of the area – again, one of the lowest figures for percentage land cover of LWS within the county. Furthermore, whilst there are a small number of very large Local Wildlife Sites in this NCA – most notably the larger parkland sites at Markeaton, Darley Park and Shirley Park, as well as larger woodland sites – the remaining sites are relatively small, with around one third of these sites under 1Ha in area, and a

total of two thirds being under 3.5Ha. The habitats supported by these sites is split between woodland (34%), wetlands including both open water and swamp areas (32%), and remnants of neutral and acid grassland (25%). Woodland sites include the important ancient semi-natural woodland at Eaton Wood and elsewhere, as well as some important hedgerows.

Most of the Local Nature Reserves in this NCA relate to sites within the administrative area of Derby city and include a variety of publicly accessible land containing woodland, grassland, and wetland sites, as well as habitat mosaics on previously developed land such as the former Chellaston Brickworks.

Markeaton Brook has previously been important for white clawed crayfish, with records from Kedleston Hall to Markeaton Park and its lake. However, this population is under threat from the non-native signal crayfish which are already present at Markeaton Park. White-clawed crayfish from Kedleston Park have already been transferred to an ‘ark site’ elsewhere in the county.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Agriculture – land in this area is associated with cereal cropping and intensively managed grass and clover leys, with neutral grassland also a feature. This is likely a reflection of the Agricultural land classification in this area, where land is predominantly grade 3, but with equal proportions of grade 4 (most notably along watercourses) and Grade 2 (around Kedleston and along the A52 corridor).

Carbon sequestration – the land in this area has been identified as generally supporting low levels of carbon sequestration and being at risk of moving to net emission of carbon.

Recreation and public health – outside of Derby City and away from Kedleston Park, this area has been recognised as supporting relatively few sites of importance for recreation and attracting very few recreational visitors, although beyond Derby City at least, it is sparsely settled. That said, the communities in this area generally have limited access to semi-natural green space, although the rural nature of the area suggests access to the wider countryside is good.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

Outside of Derby City, large parts of this area are generally characterised by low levels of urbanisation, with settlements generally consisting of small, scattered villages. It is anticipated that these areas may face some urban growth pressures, particularly west of Derby. Locally however, mineral extraction may continue to exert a development pressure.

The comparatively productive farmland in this area is likely to result in continuing pressure for agricultural production, and likely agricultural intensification. Agricultural land in this area was previously identified as predominantly pastoral, although there is evidence of a more recent growth in arable farming. It is likely that this will continue where soils and landform allow. Agricultural intensification could impact on existing mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, undermining the apparent treed character of this area.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands

CL1 – Maintain, restore, enhance, and expand key habitats in this area – this should focus on protecting and enhancing wood pasture and parkland, as well as wetland and neutral and acid grasslands where these occur.

CL2 – Ecological connectivity – ecological assets in this area are generally both small and isolated – robustness could be improved by extending and buffering existing sites and improving connectivity via hedgerows with hedgerow trees including the improved management of these features, as well as field margins and highway verges.

CL3 – Woodlands and trees – although woodlands are not especially common in this NCA, locally, woodlands can be important and contribute to a well treed character. The treed character of this area is primarily a consequence of the densely scattered hedgerow trees, alongside these pockets of woodland. The area would benefit from the management of existing hedgerow trees and the planting of replacements, supported by agroforestry options and some additional woodland planting. Opportunity exists to connect into the wooded landscapes of Needwood to the south and the Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent to the north.

CL4 – Farmland – focusing on biodiversity improvement in less productive areas, options could include reversion of improved grasslands to species rich meadows, and the protection of and reinforcement of the hedgerow network. Nature-based solutions in this area could not only deliver improved biodiversity on this land, but could also contribute significantly to environmental improvement, improving water and air quality by reducing agricultural runoff, or by providing improved carbon sequestration.

CL5 – Lowland heath – although not a common habitat type in this NCA, in certain localities conditions are potentially suitable to support lowland heath creation. This might particularly be associated with the working and restoration of sand and gravel sites around Mercaston and Muggington, although farmland and road verges over suitable substrate may offer other opportunities.

3.11 Trent Valley Washlands

The Trent Valley Washlands covers an area of 18,620Ha within Derbyshire.



This is a mixed farming landscape associated with the floodplains of the Rivers Trent and Dove although grassland habitat is more prevalent within the Dove Valley. It also includes the lower reaches of the River Derwent as it passes through Derby. The landform is flat to gently rolling and is characterised by areas of pasture and semi-improved flood meadows enclosed by predominantly hawthorn hedgerows. Willow pollards, wet woodland and scrub are locally distinctive sitting alongside gravel pits and other industrial development particularly within the Trent Valley. The meandering river channel, flood meadow and numerous flooded gravel pits and other man-made lakes influences the character of the area.

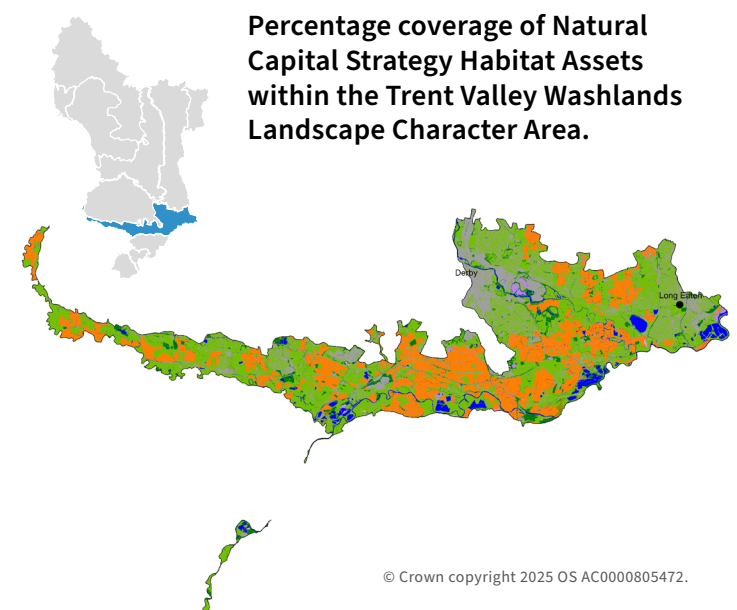
It is a broad, linear landscape, following the middle reaches of the slow flowing River Trent, between Burton on Trent in the west and Long Eaton in the east, extending beyond the county boundary in both directions into Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire. To the north the valley rises to the South Derbyshire Claylands and the Derbyshire Coalfield, whilst the south is bounded by the Melbourne Parklands and Mease/Sence Lowlands.

The area presents itself as a somewhat fragmented landscape of pastoral and arable farmland, intermixed with urban development, transport routes and localised mineral extraction. In areas of pastoral farmland against the river, farmland is defined by small to medium sized, hedged fields with scattered hedgerow tree, but in areas of arable farmland, fields are larger and more regular in shape, and bound by tightly trimmed hedgerows with fewer trees. The broad, meandering rivers are unobtrusive often only revealed by lines of willow and poplars. The rivers regularly flood over the adjacent land creating a temporary but very different wetland scene.

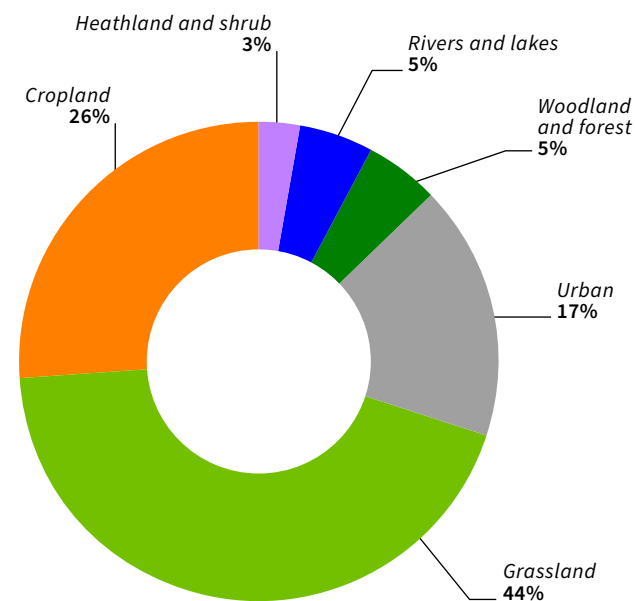
Areas of traditional semi-natural habitats, such as wet grasslands and marsh, small fields with species-rich grasslands, ponds and ditches, and wet woodlands, have all been marginalised or isolated by modern farming practice and the deepening and canalisation of the River Trent, which has drained adjacent land. In some areas there has been considerable loss of hedgerows through removal to enlarge fields for arable crops or through neglect. The rivers themselves and their tributaries are recognised as valuable wildlife corridors both for terrestrial animals and migratory birds. Mineral extraction has created additional open water areas, marshes, and wet woodland, some of which have become important wildlife habitats.

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the Trent Valley Washlands Landscape Character Area.



Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types



Grassland – is the dominant land use accounting for 44% of the land coverage although most of this land comprises improved and modified pasture or intensively managed grass and clover leys. Some neutral grassland is still recorded although this is becoming increasingly fragmented. Areas of unimproved pasture persist along the lower reaches of the Dove Valley and in smaller field enclosures adjacent to the River Trent.

Cropland – arable farming constitutes 26% of total land coverage, mostly down to cereal cropping.

Woodland and forest – woodland is not a prominent feature across the valley only comprising 5% of the land coverage and occurring mainly as fragmented blocks. It is locally significant around Elvaston and along the lower reaches of the River Derwent and is becoming more prevalent in the restoration of sand and gravel quarries. Woodland is predominantly broadleaf in character with many riparian species including black poplar, which can be locally distinctive.

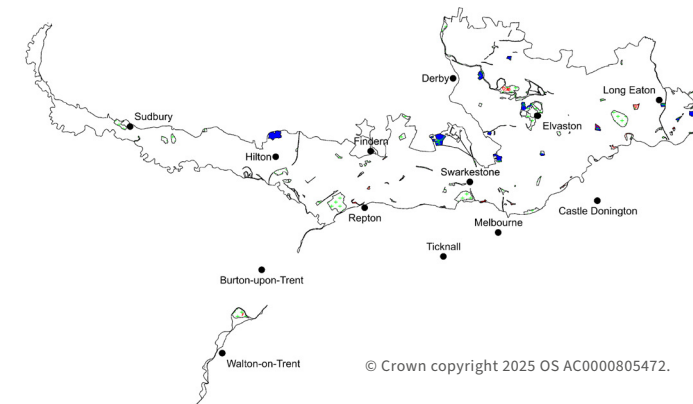
Rivers and lakes – open water including the rivers covers 5% of the area and has increased significantly in recent years through the restoration of sand and gravel sites to large, open waterbodies. Many of these are now associated with other habitat types such as wet woodland, reedbeds, wet grassland, and rush pasture. The Trent and Mersey Canal is another important heritage feature within the area and contributes to the matrix of open water.

Heathland and shrub – this land-cover type (3% of land coverage) relates almost predominantly to the hedgerows that enclose this mixed farming landscape but does include pockets of dense scrub that can be found on derelict land within urban areas or former gravel workings. Hedgerows can be species rich in areas of earliest enclosure, but others are predominantly hawthorn in areas of later enclosure with many having been removed to accommodate more intensive arable farming.

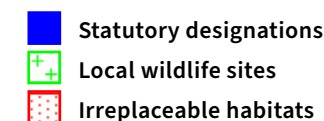
Urban – urban land-uses are a prominent characteristic of the Trent Valley covering 17% of the total area, associated with the southern edge of Derby, several other expanded settlements along the valley such as Hatton and Hilton, transport infrastructure such as the A50, A38 and the Midland Mainline railway, other development attracted to the area by these transport connections such as Toyota and the Dove Valley Park, as well as several sand and gravel quarries across the valley.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Trent Valley Washlands Landscape Character Area.



Key sites for nature



Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	1
Local Wildlife Sites	5
Irreplaceable Habitats	<0.5
Combined Areas of Importance	5

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The Trent Valley Washlands area has very few 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' with 5% of the area being protected by international, national, and local designations comprising statutory designations (1%), Local Wildlife Sites (4%), but very little irreplaceable habitat.

This large NCA contains just three SSSIs or parts thereof, the largest of which is Hilton Gravel Pits, which at 29.67Ha accounts for almost 90% of the SSSI resource in this area. This area also contains the entirety of Boulton Moor – a geological SSSI, and a tiny fraction of the Attenborough SSSI site, the majority of which is in Nottinghamshire. Overall, less than 0.2% of this area is designated as SSSI, one of the lowest proportions in the county.

Whilst the NCA is relatively well served with Local Nature Reserves, these are concentrated towards the eastern half of the valley, around Derby City and in Erewash.

Across statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites, wetland habitats dominate. Wetland habitats within the Trent Valley span a variety of types including rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, canals, reservoirs, former gravel workings and ponds – both semi-natural and man-made. They also include reed beds, swamp, mire and lowland fen, wet woodland, carr, and wet and floodplain grassland habitats, whilst

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	3no individual sites	33.80 Ha	Wetland mosaic habitat on former quarry sites at Hilton Gravel Pits and Attenborough Nature Reserve (Derbyshire part) and a small area at Boulton Moor designated for its geomorphological interest.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland Lowland fens	1.02 Ha 30.11 Ha	This area contains around 13.5% of the county resource of lowland fen.
Local Nature Reserve	13no individual sites	110.11 Ha	Accessible sites including woodlands, meadows and wetlands including several sites within Derby, and further to the east within and around Long Eaton, Aston-on-Trent and Church Wilne.
Local Wildlife Sites	133no individual sites	848.84 Ha	Sites dominated by wetland habitats (50%) comprising lakes, ponds, swamps, and reedbeds often associated with former sand and gravel workings, with small parcels of neutral or wet grassland (20%), secondary woodland including wet woodland (18%), and areas of habitat mosaics often associated with previously developed land such as former railway lines (12%).

some Local Wildlife Sites have been designated for the wetland and riparian species, supporting water vole and wetland bird assemblages. Sites designated for non-wetland attributes are less common, but include grassland and broadleaved woodland sites, as well as sites supporting a mosaic of habitats.

The Trent Valley area is especially notable for its value for a variety of notable species, particularly those associated with rivers and associated riparian habitats. The Trent Valley forms part of the Severn-Trent flyway, a migratory route used by some bird species to cross Britain between the Humber estuary and the Severn estuary, whilst former gravel pits along the river now provide habitat for both breeding and overwintering birds. Bittern bred in Derbyshire for the first time in 2023, whilst willow tit is notable around Willington and Hilton. Willington is also home to the county's only beavers, which were released into an enclosure at the site and which in 2023 bred for the first time.

The rivers are also important habitat for a variety of coarse fish species, whilst the installation of the fish passage at Colwick in Nottingham will allow increasing numbers of migratory fish species, including salmon, trout and eels, to move upstream to their spawning grounds in the River Derwent and River Dove.

The Trent Valley is also particularly important for otter, with many records coming from the River Trent, the River Dove, the River Derwent Corridor from the Trent to Derby City, and the River Erewash. Water vole are more commonly associated with the River Derwent, the Trent and Mersey Canal, the Erewash Canal, and minor watercourses. Remnant populations of Black poplar – a rare and declining species nationally – can be found around and immediately north of Hatton and Hilton.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Water quality regulation – according to the Natural Capital Strategy for Derbyshire, the Trent Valley contains a significant proportion of land which is currently having a negative impact on water quality.

This is due to the intensity and nature of farming and land management in this area and the location of this land within the catchment, leading to the potential for watercourses to be affected by agricultural run-off, or where livestock farming risks introducing pollutants into the watercourse. Water quality is also impacted by upstream inputs from urban areas including outside of the county. Conversely, nature-based solutions in this area could have a significant impact in improving water quality and flood attenuation within the Trent Valley.

Recreation and public health – the data demonstrates that whilst some areas benefit from the provision of Local Nature Reserves and similar sites, in many areas, residents lack access to semi-natural green spaces. In those areas however, it is likely that access to the wider countryside through the Rights of Way network will be important, even if those spaces are not semi-natural.

Tourism – the Trent Valley does not currently attract much tourism, but it is believed that there is significant potential to increase this, if waterbodies and other habitats associated with former mineral working can be restored according to coherent master planning seeking to maximise recreational opportunities in nature-rich environments.

Agriculture – agricultural land is predominantly grade 3 under the Agricultural Land Classification system, with pockets of grades 2 and 4 also present in smaller quantities, leading to moderate levels of agricultural productivity across and along the valley.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

Urban growth – with significant growth being planned for Derby City, some of this growth will likely be directed south of the city and into the Trent Valley, and large amounts of housing are already being delivered within south Derbyshire. High levels of residential development will also likely stimulate demand for employment land uses leading to further land-take, whilst both existing and new communities will need access to green and blue infrastructure, and recreational landscapes.

The Trent Valley is also an important area for mineral extraction, particularly for sand and gravels, and whilst there is a constant need for these materials, extensive residential and other development is likely to drive up demand for sand and gravels still further. Whilst development for housing and employment uses tends to lead to the permanent loss of land and associated habitats, minerals extraction is a temporary operation that leaves opportunities for habitats creation and enhancement, delivering biodiversity gain (as well as recreational and other opportunities) in the longer term.

In addition, farming is currently a significant sector within the Trent Valley, and the ongoing drive for domestic food production and self-sufficiency is likely to maintain the need for farming within the valley. At the same time, land take through housing development and minerals extraction could lead to fragmentation of farming units, making some areas less viable for farmers.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Trent Valley Washlands

TV1 – Wetlands – seek to maintain, restore, and expand on the wetland habitats within the Trent Valley, focussing on floodplain grazing marsh, reedbed, wet woodland, lakes, swamp, and fen habitats. Ideally, this work should aim to enhance ecological connectivity between wetland sites within the area, provide habitats for breeding and overwintering birds, and contribute to a vibrant leisure, recreation and tourism offer in the Trent Valley.

TV2 – Ecological connectivity – increase connectivity of other semi-natural habitats within the area particularly as part of new green infrastructure assets that connect with new development areas.

TV3 – Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses – protect, restore and enhance the ecological value of the River Trent and its tributaries, reinstating natural processes and dynamics where possible; connecting habitats within, along and adjacent to the river; and ensuring action taken within the Derbyshire stretch of the Trent is complimentary

to action taken both up and downstream. Improving fish passage at Sawley would open significant lengths of the river for all fish species to migrate and move. The design and restoration of sand and gravel sites provides great opportunities for habitat creation and connecting the river to its floodplain. The Trent and Mersey Canal also represents an extensive length of watercourse through the Trent Valley contributing to the wider wetland network. Nature-based solutions on land adjacent to watercourses could deliver other environmental benefits, such as improved water quality and carbon sequestration, whilst improving biodiversity on this land.

TV4 – Riparian mammals – the river valley is managed for the benefit of otter and water vole, removing and addressing barriers to their movement along the river corridor, and controlling mink, to support and restore water vole populations. Support the reintroduction and expansion of beaver along the valley, currently confined to a release into an enclosure at Willington Wetlands.

TV5 – Woodlands and trees – using the opportunities afforded by minerals extraction and other development within the valley, use woodland planting – particularly large blocks of planting – to create new woodland habitat that can add to biodiversity whilst also improving the ecosystem service delivery in this area, by providing new recreational opportunities, and which contribute to a new, unifying visual character in the valley which helps mitigate the visual impact of large-scale industrial developments as well as mineral working. The Trent Valley offers opportunity for the creation and expansion of riparian woodland habitats including wet woodland which could also benefit species like willow tit. Retention and expansion of the black poplar population should also be strongly promoted.

TV6 – Restoration of Mineral Sites – mineral extraction is especially notable within the Trent Valley and often represents a long-term land-use change that offers multiple opportunities for habitat creation as well as public access and connecting people to nature.

3.12 Melbourne Parklands

The Melbourne Parklands covers an area of 7,560Ha within Derbyshire.



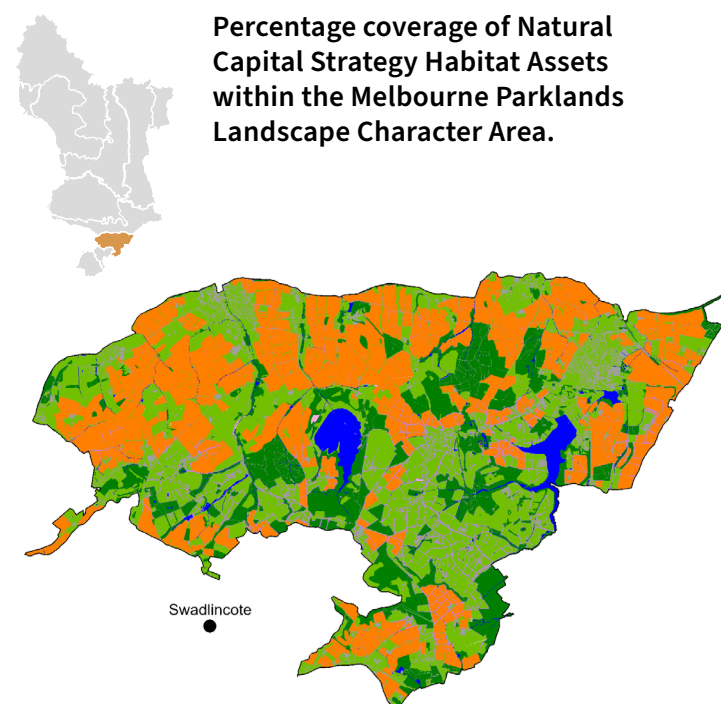
The Melbourne Parklands is an undulating mixed farming landscape on the southern side of the Trent Valley, with country houses, landscaped parks, and estate plantations to the north of Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire. Large areas are intensively farmed for arable crops with low, fragmented hedgerows and few hedgerow trees. A complex geology has resulted in an undulating landscape with many valleys, two of which have been dammed to create reservoirs at Foremark and Staunton Harold. Relative to the Trent Valley the area is elevated and allows for commanding views north and west to the landscapes beyond.

Most of the land is in agricultural use, predominantly arable but with some grassland over steeper slopes and, as a result, contains very few semi-natural habitats. Arable farming is set within a regular pattern of medium to large fields, enclosed by low hedges with few hedgerow trees. Woodland is well represented throughout the area although there is some local variation. Collectively the trees and woodland play an important role in emphasising estate character. Consequently, the main ecological value of the area comes from its many woodlands

and the many mature specimen trees set in parkland. Where the underlying geology is free draining then localised heathy conditions prevail, evidenced by the presence of gorse on steeper slopes, and bracken in the highway verges.

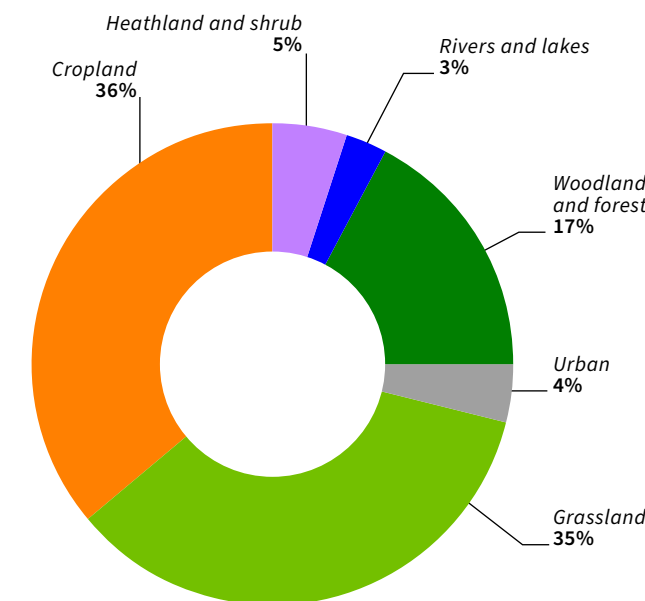
At the time of the Domesday Book the area was sparsely settled and today retains a distinctly rural character. Melbourne became an important post-conquest market and manorial town and is the largest settlement in the area. Monasteries, set within extensive parks, were established at Calke and Repton but with the dissolution of the monasteries, the land market allowed for the development of large country houses and landscaped parks that have become a key feature of the estate landscape. Calke Abbey is a fine example of a country house set in parkland, at the gates of which stand the largely unaltered estate villages of Ticknall and Calke.

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Cropland – arable farmland occupies 36% of land coverage comprising mainly of cereal crops and is more evident in the north of the area where the terrain is less steep and more gently rolling.

Grassland – grassland accounts for 35% of the land coverage and whilst most of this land use is improved, modified or down to intensive grass and clover leys, some is still recorded as neutral grassland with particular concentrations within and around the Calke parkland. Areas of unimproved pasture persist on the steepest slopes and on the wettest soils adjacent to the minor streams running through the area.

Woodland and forest – woodland is a key characteristic of the Melbourne Parklands covering 17% of the area. Woodlands tend to occur as small estate plantations, tree belts and small coverts formerly managed by the estates in the area, although some woodland such as Caulkley Wood and Repton Shrubs is recorded as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland or replanted woodland on an ancient woodland site. In other areas woodland tends to hug the upper, steeper slopes, often linear in shape and following the natural contours. Most of the area is also located within the National Forest.

Heathland and shrub – in this area this habitat type, comprising 5% of land coverage, relates exclusively to hedgerows that enclose this mixed farming landscape. Hedgerows contain a variety of species including holly and hazel and tend to enclose fields of varying shape and size depending on land-use and terrain.

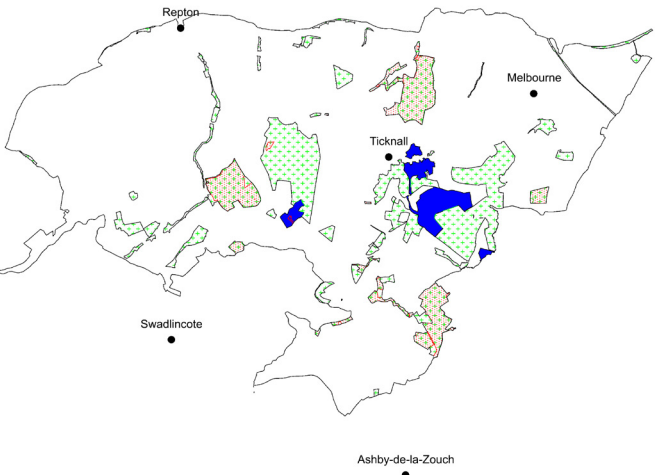
Rivers and lakes – water in the form of streams is not a prominent feature so this land-use type covering 3% of the area relates primarily to the two large reservoirs at Foremark and Staunton Harold. Both of these large waterbodies are important for their populations of resident and migratory wetland birds.



Image: Parkland trees and wood pasture

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Melbourne Parklands Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	2
Local Wildlife Sites	13
Irreplaceable Habitats	4
Combined Areas of Importance	15

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The Melbourne Parklands area already has moderate ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with 15% of the area being protected by national and local designations comprising statutory designations (2%), irreplaceable habitat (4%), and Local Wildlife Sites (13%).

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	5no individual sites	121.41 Ha	The largest SSSI in the area is Calke Park, which encompasses an ancient deer park supporting rich wood pasture, veteran trees and an exceptional deadwood invertebrate assemblage and other invertebrate interest. The nearby Ticknall Quarries SSSI supports semi-natural ash woodland, limestone grassland, open water and small flushes. Other SSSI's in the area support ancient woodland, acid grassland, and wetland habitats including marsh and carr.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	88.65 Ha	This NCA supports 10% of the county replanted ancient woodland resource, but just 3% of the lowland fen and ASNW (ancient and semi-natural woodlands) resource.
	Ancient Replanted Woodland	211.93 Ha	
	Lowland fens	6.05 Ha	
Local Nature Reserve	Calke Abbey	79.41 Ha	Extensive parkland associated with Calke Abbey.
Local Wildlife Sites	58no individual sites	989.46 Ha	The area is dominated by broadleaf woodland comprising 49% of all sites and including the large woodlands at Repton Shrubs, Robin Wood, Bryan's Coppice and South Wood. Open water and wetland habitat is also a prominent feature at Foremark and Staunton Harold reservoirs (21%), as is parkland at Calke Abbey. Unimproved neutral grassland occurs in isolated patches (25%) and the exposed rocks at Anchor Church provide important habitat for protected species.

Of the NCAs outside of the Peak District, the Melbourne Parklands contains one of the highest proportions of land designated as SSSI – but at just 1.6% of the land area, this is still a remarkably low figure. Despite the small number of SSSIs in this area, those sites nevertheless encompass a wide array of habitat types including ancient woodland, wood pasture and veteran trees, calcareous and acid grasslands, and a variety of wetland habitats.

This area also contains the highest figure for the percentage of land designated as Local Wildlife Sites – which at 13%, stands out as noticeably higher than any other area. This figure is largely explained by the presence of a small number of very large LWSs, including three over 100ha (Foremark Reservoir, Staunton Harold Reservoir and Calke Abbey Parkland (areas outside of the SSSI)), and three large ancient woodlands each of which is over 75Ha in size. Woodlands are the dominant habitat type in Local Wildlife Sites in this area, although wetland, grassland, and parkland habitats are also represented.

This NCA contains the highest proportion of land identified as ‘Areas of Importance for Biodiversity’ outside of Dark Peak and South-West Peak.

This area has few records for protected and notable species, although many of the records that do exist are clustered around Calke Abbey and Ticknall Quarries SSSIs, and the Local Wildlife Sites adjacent to them (Calke Abbey Parklands, Staunton Harold Reservoir and Pokers Lees and Jubilee Plantation). Records include white clawed crayfish, otter, great crested newts, common lizard, and water vole, although many of these records are historic, and those species may no longer be present.

This area also holds a significant number of records for ancient and veteran trees. Calke Abbey and Park is especially notable for the occurrence of a significant and diverse deadwood invertebrate assemblage, and for the presence of other invertebrates associated with ancient woodland and veteran trees. Hazel dormouse has been recently reintroduced into woodland near Calke Park.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Agriculture – a significant proportion of land in this NCA is Grade 2 in the agricultural land classification, particularly in the north of the area, supporting higher levels of agricultural productivity. Much of the existing ecological interest within the NCA lies on lower grade agricultural land, making it more challenging to create linkages between such sites, where land might be more favourable for agriculture.

Water supply – Staunton Harold and Foremark reservoirs are important for water supply within the East Midlands.

Recreation, leisure and tourism – this NCA benefits from a greater than average proportion of its land area being of ecological interest, but a number of large, core sites also provide public access, visitor experiences and recreation and leisure opportunities. Calke Abbey and Park (NT), Staunton Harold and Foremark Reservoirs (NT and STW), and Robin Wood (FE) are especially notable, providing health and wellbeing benefits through public access, whilst also offering opportunities to experience nature.

Carbon sequestration – Natural Capital Strategy mapping has identified parts of this NCA as functioning well for carbon sequestration – these principally relate to the larger areas of established woodland.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

This area retains its predominantly rural, undeveloped character, and is unlikely to be a focus for significant development pressure in the near future. Established areas of ecological value consist of large, recognised sites often under statutory protection, or under sympathetic ownership and management, giving those sites and the habitats they contain some security. Many of these sites are well used and appreciated by residents, providing further impetus for positive management. A significant proportion of this NCA falls within the National Forest area, focused on protecting and enhancing established woodlands, and supporting further woodland creation. Elsewhere, arable farming is having some impact on traditional pastoral land-use, weakening the existing hedgerow network.

The area is generally under limited pressure for negative change, whilst also benefiting from layers of protection, policy, and environmental initiatives likely to benefit the natural environment.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Melbourne Parklands

MP1 – Maintain, restore, enhance, and expand key habitats in this area – recognising the relatively high proportion of biodiversity-rich sites in this NCA, maintain and enhance existing sites of biodiversity interest, focussing on the core, large and strategically important sites in this area. Wood pasture parkland, lowland deciduous woodland, reservoirs, and ancient and veteran trees should be a particular focus for protection and enhancement.

MP2 – Woodlands and trees – plantation on ancient woodlands should be the focus of restoration replanting and structural diversification to improve their value for biodiversity. As well as supporting nature recovery, action in these areas should also seek to secure the wider environmental benefits provided by these habitats, particularly in terms of carbon sequestration as well as leisure, recreation, and tourism, together with water supply where appropriate.

Connectivity between woodland sites could be improved by creating new habitat adjacent to and in between existing sites, with a particular focus in the area surrounding the reservoirs at Foremark and Staunton Harold and historic parkland at Calke Abbey. Opportunities also exist to plant tree belts, wood pasture, coverts, and small woodlands in the wider landscape, introduce woodland edge planting, and restore and reinforce hedgerows. The planting of long-lived tree species should be promoted to help replace trees lost to ash dieback, provide continuity of veteran tree stock, and add to existing hedgerow trees.

The notable deadwood invertebrate populations found in this area will be entirely dependent upon conditions remaining suitable for them in their core ancient woodland sites, areas of wood pasture parkland, and clusters of veteran trees, and these sites

will need to be managed to retain that interest. However, many of these deadwood species are known to be poor colonisers of new sites, whilst such sites would take many years – possibly centuries – to develop habitats suitable for those species. Nevertheless, in the long term, these species will need suitable habitat to become available in the wider area, if they are to persist.

MP3 – Lowland heath – although not a common habitat type in this NCA, in certain localities conditions are potentially suitable to support lowland heath creation. This might particularly be associated with the areas around Ticknall, Bretby and northeast of Swadlincote.

MP4 – Farmland – conservation measures to improve the value of the farmed landscape for small mammals and bats, invertebrates including pollinators, arable plants, and bird species. Measures should encourage habitat recreation as well as field margins, hedgerow restoration, beetle and butterfly banks, etc.

3.13 Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfield

The Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfield covers an area of 2,820Ha.



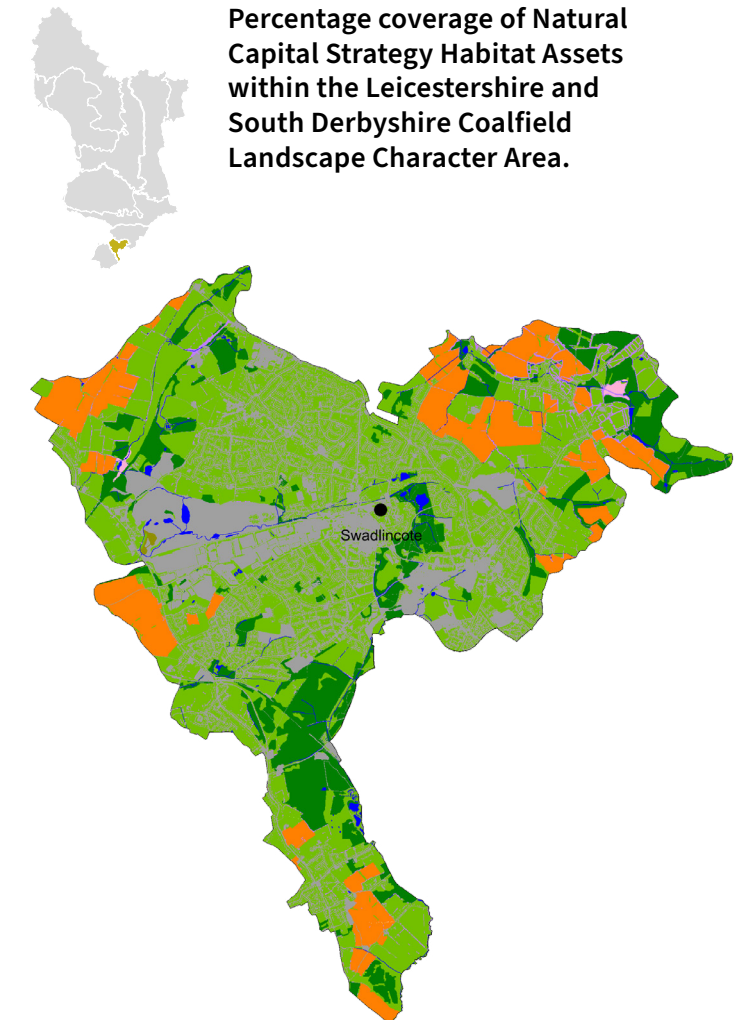
The Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfield is part of a much more extensive landscape that extends into north-west Leicestershire. It covers a relatively small area around Swadlincote extending from Hartshorne in the north to Overseal in the south. There has been extensive post-war development round Swadlincote, which now dominates the area. Like the Derbyshire coalfield in the north-east of the county, the underlying Coal Measures geology gives rise to an undulating landform with gentle ridges and shallow valleys.

There is an intimate mix of farmed, urban and derelict land in this landscape but where agriculture persists this tends to be mixed livestock farming with a mixture of improved pasture and feed crops. There is a wide variation in field size and shape reflecting both a diverse history of enclosure as well as a landscape affected by former mining including open cast coal extraction. Where historic boundaries persist then hedgerows will be mixed with species including holly, hawthorn, hazel, and field maple but in areas of later enclosure or in restored parts then the boundaries tend to be simple thorn hedgerows.

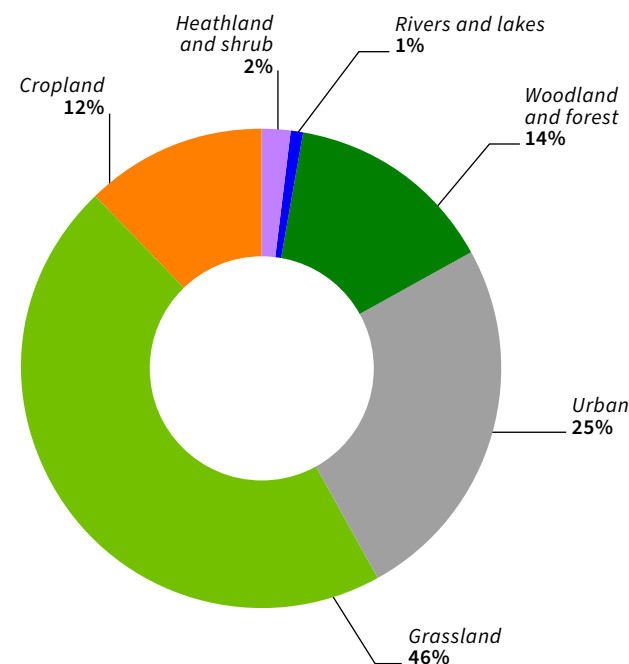
Although much of the landscape outside the settlements has been affected by past industrial activities or agricultural improvements, patches of neutral and acid grassland remain to provide some ecological value. In recent years, areas of new woodland have been created because of the National Forest initiative and this is now starting to become an important habitat type across the area.

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species

Percentage coverage of Natural Capital Strategy Habitat Assets within the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield Landscape Character Area.



Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Grassland – grassland continues to be the dominant land-use with 46% land coverage but in this intensively farmed area much of the grassland is modified primarily relating to that found within domestic gardens and urban green space. Beyond the urban areas grassland is also improved pasture for silage and haylage production with only isolated pockets of neutral grassland still remaining.

Cropland – intensive arable farmland, mostly cereals, only occupies 12% of land coverage, reflecting the generally poor quality of the soils.

Woodland – woodland is a prominent feature of this landscape covering 14% of the area. Most of this land-use relates to woodland created as part of the National Forest but there are pockets of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland such as that found at Hall Wood, as well as lines of trees along streams, comprising alder and willow.

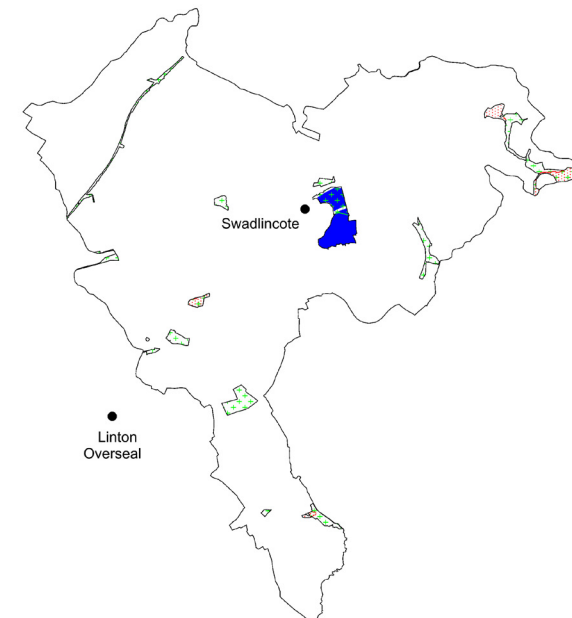
Heathland and shrub – in this area this habitat type, comprising 2% of land coverage, relates almost exclusively to hedgerows that enclose this mixed farming landscape. There are small amounts of scrub associated with former railway lines such as the Bretby branchline, although this accounts for a very small part of the total.

Rivers and lakes – open water is not a prominent characteristic (1% of land coverage) and is confined to small streams in the area and some localised ponds at Tetron Point created as part of the former Nadins opencast coal site.

Urban – urban land-use dominates the area accounting for 25% of total land coverage. Swadlincote is the main town located centrally but this has merged with the neighbouring areas of Newhall, Woodville, Church Gresley, and Castle Gresley to create a larger urban area. There are pockets of amenity green space within the urban area associated with town parks, playing fields, and a golf course, with Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park between Swadlincote and Woodville being of some interest to wildlife. Dingy skipper has been repeatedly recorded from sites within and around Swadlincote, within sparse vegetation associated with either former industrial sites, or open vegetation in recently planted woodlands. Grizzled skipper was formerly recorded in this area.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	1
Local Wildlife Sites	3
Irreplaceable Habitats	1
Combined Areas of Importance	4

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The South Derbyshire Coalfield area has very few existing 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' with 4% of the area being protected by national and local designations comprising statutory designations (1%), Local Wildlife Sites (3%), and irreplaceable habitat (1%).

Although this area is by far the smallest NCA in the county, it is unusual in that it supports no SSSIs or other sites covered by higher nature conservation designations. It also contains significantly below average proportions of irreplaceable habitats, and a comparatively low proportion of the area is designated as Local Wildlife Sites, a reflection of the generally despoiled nature of the landscape in this area because of its industrial legacy. However, such sites can be of value for wildlife, with great crested newts recorded frequently in this area, often associated with former and restored colliery sites, and grass snake recorded around Swadlincote and Overseal.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	11.45 Ha	This NCA supports 2.5% of the County lowland fen resource, and under 0.5% of it's ancient woodland.
	Lowland fens	5.44 Ha	
Local Nature Reserve	Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park	27.85 Ha	A large, accessible LNR, part of which is designated as a LWS, and which supports woodlands, wetlands and meadow on a former open cast site.
Local Wildlife Sites	19no individual sites	79.51 Ha	A small number of sites comprising a mix of secondary broadleaf woodland (37%), unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland (32%), areas of habitat mosaic associated with previously developed land (26%), and a couple of important wetland mosaic sites at Swadlincote Wetlands and Midway Fishponds.

The one LNR in this area is located close to the heart of Swadlincote and makes a significant contribution to local accessible semi-natural green space. Local Wildlife Sites in this area are dominated by broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland, and open mosaic habitats on previously developed land.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Given the small size and relatively urbanised nature of this NCA as well as the nature of the habitats in this area, it is not particularly visible in the Natural Capital Strategy for the ecosystem services it provides. Nevertheless, the populations within this area benefit from their ability to access semi-natural green spaces, including the LNR as well as other accessible spaces.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

The high levels of development and urbanisation already present within this NCA suggest that there will be ongoing pressure for urban growth and the continued redevelopment of former industrial sites. The National Forest will continue to incentivise new woodland planting and the creation of other habitats within this area.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Leicestershire & South Derbyshire Coalfield

SDC1 – Habitat creation – given the relative paucity of habitats and designated sites in this area, effort should be focused on enriching the area through the creation of new habitats including grasslands and wetlands, and particularly woodlands as part of the National Forest initiative. Habitat creation should take advantage of the opportunities provided by new development as well as seeking to introduce new habitat into existing urban areas, for example by increasing street tree numbers. Ideally, these habitats should aim to deliver additional benefits such as providing accessible semi-natural greenspace for local communities, providing replacement habitats for species such as dingy skipper or grass snake where these are at risk of being lost from urban areas, or by delivering ecological permeability through this otherwise impermeable landscape.

SDC2 – Management of existing woodlands – many existing woodlands in the area are of recent origin and would now benefit from positive management to diversify their structure and species composition, and to address ash dieback. Squirrel damage is a significant issue and could be addressed to ensure the long-term health of the young woodland resource many existing woodlands in the area are of recent origin and would now benefit from positive management to diversify their structure and species composition, and to address ash dieback. Squirrel damage is a significant issue and could be addressed to ensure the long-term health of the young woodland resource.

3.14 Mease/Sence Lowlands

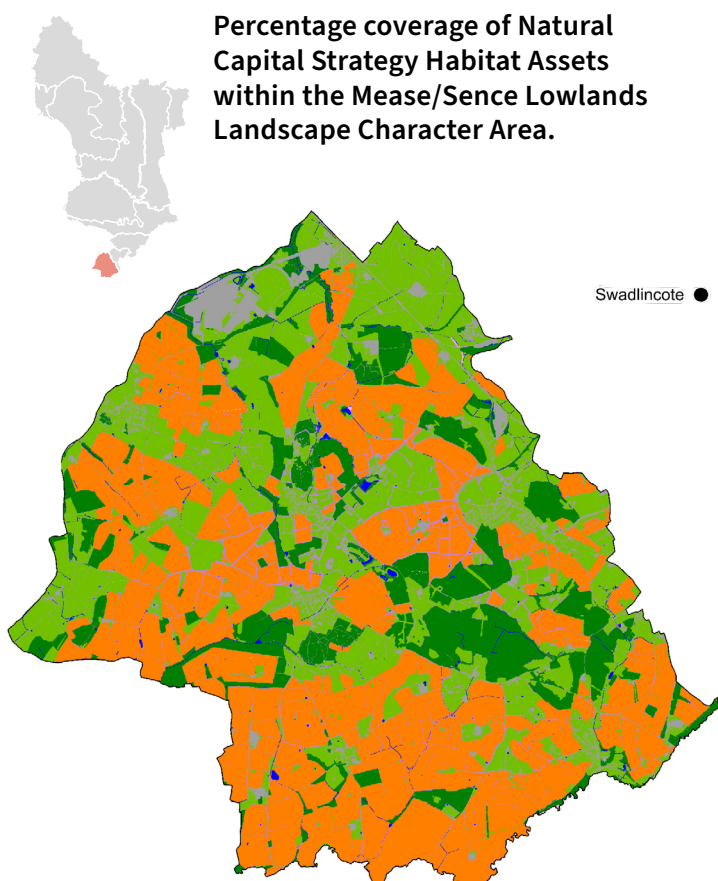
The Mease/Sence Lowlands covers an area of 5,920Ha within Derbyshire.



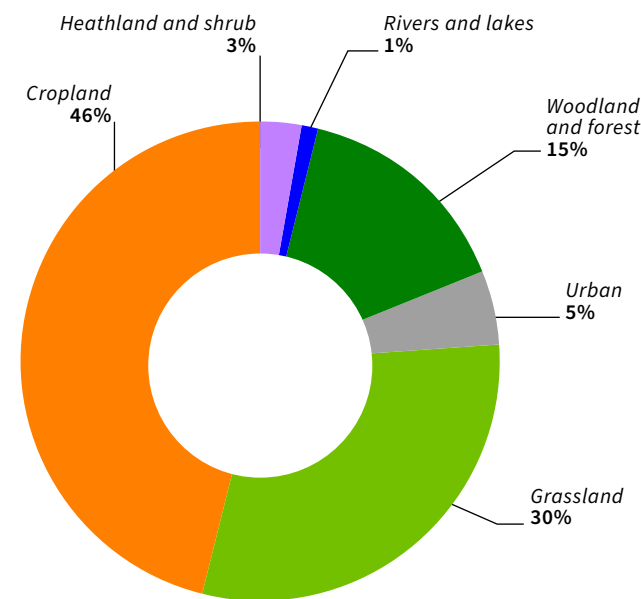
The Mease/Sence Lowlands lie at the southernmost limits of Derbyshire, being bordered to the west by the Trent Valley and to the north and east by the South Derbyshire Coalfield. It is an area underlain by Mercia mudstones geology giving rise to a rolling lowland becoming almost flat around the River Mease, which forms the County boundary to the south. The area is predominantly an open agricultural landscape with small copses and spinneys on ridges, and occasional trees scattered along watercourses. Villages punctuate the area and woodland is apparent in association with parkland scattered through the area.

Due to the productivity of the soils, most of the land is in intensive agricultural use and, as a result, contains very few semi-natural habitats, although several new woodlands and other habitats have been created through the National Forest initiative. Field enclosures are medium to large and regular in shape and contained by simple thorn hedgerows with a few sparsely scattered hedgerow trees. The main ecological value of the area comes from small and intermittent woodlands, comprising spinneys, copses, and game coverts, planted on ridges to create a well-treed character to some areas. Country house parks have been encroached upon and parkland trees, often in poor condition, can be seen within farmland. The ecological value of the River Mease is reflected in its status as a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

i. Land-use Mapping, Habitats and Species



Habitats covering less than 0.5% are not included



Habitat types

- Heathland and shrub
- Rivers and lakes
- Woodland and forest
- Urban
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Cropland
- Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats
- Sparsely vegetated land

Cropland – arable farming, mainly cereal crops, is the dominant land-use comprising 46% of total land coverage due to the gently rolling nature of the landform and generally base-rich soils.

Grassland – grassland covers 30% of the area with more than half associated with improved and modified grassland or temporary grass and clover leys. There are patches of neutral grassland which persist in the smaller field enclosures around villages such as Rosliston and Coton-in-the-Elms.

Woodland and forest – woodland cover is varied across the area although dominated by more recent planting undertaken as part of the National Forest initiative and now comprises 15% of total land coverage. However, the area retains an estate influence with small ornamental plantations including species like chestnut, lime, oak, and redwoods. In other areas there are remnants of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland such as that found at Catton Wood, Potters Wood, and Grange Wood.

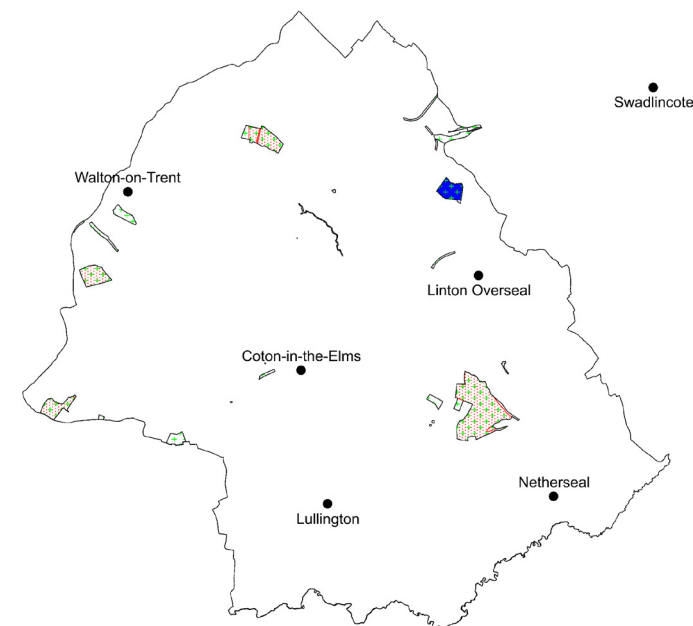
Heathland and shrub – in this area this habitat type, comprising 3% of land coverage, relates exclusively to hedgerows that enclose this mixed arable farmland. Hedgerows are generally simple thorn boundaries with occasional trees, mostly oak and ash, reflecting their creation as part of the late parliamentary enclosure acts. The hedgerow network is particularly strong in the central belt around the villages of Rosliston, Coton and Linton but more fragmented elsewhere as a result of agricultural intensification.

Rivers and lakes – open water is not a prominent feature (1% of land coverage) of this landscape but where it occurs and particularly along the River Mease forming the county boundary it is important for a range of aquatic plants and animals. The River Mease is especially important for its freshwater fish communities that include nationally and internationally important populations of spined loach and bullhead.

Urban – this is a settled landscape of small, evenly distributed, nucleated villages with occasional scattered farmsteads and country houses, but overall retains a rural character. Although the area has 5% urban land coverage this is specifically influenced by the redevelopment of Drakelow Park near Stapenhill; the site of the former Drakelow Power Station.

ii. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Mease/Sence Lowlands Landscape Character Area.



© Crown copyright 2025 OS AC0000805472.

Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	<0.5
Local Wildlife Sites	2
Irreplaceable Habitats	2
Combined Areas of Importance	2

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

The Mease/Sence Lowlands area has very few existing ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with 2% of the area being protected by international, national, and local designations comprising Local Wildlife Sites (2%), irreplaceable habitat (2%), a single Local Nature Reserve at Coton Park, and the River Mease SAC and SSSI along the county boundary.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
International - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	River Mease	2.64 Ha	Designated for the riverine habitat and vegetation present as well as the presence of spined loach, bullhead, white clawed crayfish and otter.
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	River Mease	2.64 Ha	The River Mease represents a lowland clay river supporting nationally significant populations of spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>) and bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>).
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	55.91 Ha	These figures represent just under 2% of the county ancient semi-natural and plantation ancient woodland resource, and under 0.5% of our lowland fen.
	Ancient Replanted Woodland	31.88 Ha	
	Lowland fens	1.04 Ha	
Local Nature Reserve	Badgers Hollow, Coton Park	9.94 Ha	Located in the east of the NCA, this site is closer to Castle Gresley and Swadlincote than to other settlements in this NCA.
Local Wildlife Sites	21no individual sites	132.51 Ha	Sites dominated by mixed deciduous woodland including some large ancient woodland sites at Grange Wood, Potters Wood, and Grove Wood (48%), some pockets of unimproved neutral grassland including wood pasture at Walton Hall (19%), a number of small ponds (24%), and a couple of habitat mosaic areas.

With just 2% of this NCA recorded as supporting sites or habitats of ecological interest, and less than 0.1% of the area covered by SSSI designation, this area records some of the lowest levels of recognised ecological interest in the county, despite its largely rural nature. However, this is also a relatively well wooded landscape with recent planting under the National Forest initiative supplementing existing woodland. Furthermore, the River Mease SAC is a rare example of an internationally important site lying outside of the Peak District.

iii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

Agriculture – farmland in this area is largely a mixture of grade 2 and grade 3 exhibiting moderate to high levels of agricultural productivity.

Carbon sequestration – carbon sequestration is variable across this NCA, with woodland habitats actively sequestering carbon, whilst parts of the farmed landscape are likely net emitters of carbon.

Leisure and recreation – populations across this area appear to be relatively well served with accessible semi-natural green space, although it should be noted that the sparse levels of settlement across this area means relatively few people receive this benefit.

iv. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

This largely rural area has previously experienced limited urban growth, and this lack of development pressure is likely to continue in the future. The obvious exception to this has been the redevelopment of the Drakelow power station site, although this sort of large-scale development is unlikely to be repeated in this area in the future, given the absence of previously developed land likely to come forward for redevelopment. Great care is being taken to ensure that housing growth within South Derbyshire District does not affect water quality within the River Mease SAC.

Arable farming and agricultural intensification have already affected some parts of the hedgerow network, although it is unclear whether this deterioration is continuing.

The National Forest initiative has been effective in promoting new woodland planting in this area, as well as providing new recreational and visitor opportunities, most notably at the Rosliston Forestry Centre.

v. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in the Mease/Sence Lowlands

MSL1 – Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses – the River Mease is the most valuable individual ecological receptor in this part of the county. The focus should be on protecting and enhancing this watercourse, including by continuing to tackle diffuse and point source pollution, and providing buffers such as riparian woodland between the river and adjacent farmland. This would improve water quality for the benefit of the species for which the site was designated. This is a trans-boundary site, which begins in Staffordshire, flows along the Derbyshire border and into Leicestershire. Effort should ensure the middle stretch, through Derbyshire, maintains functional linkages with the site both up and downstream sections. LNRS action for the River Mease should be coordinated with neighbouring LNRS RAs.

MSL2 – Woodland and trees – new woodland planting has bolstered the previous woodland resource, and further woodland planting could continue this trend. Many existing woodlands in the area are of recent origin and would now benefit from positive management to diversify their structure and species composition, and to address ash dieback. Squirrel damage is a significant issue and could be addressed to ensure the long-term health of the young woodland resource

MSL3 – Ecological connectivity – although parts of the hedgerow network remain robust, particularly around the villages of Rosliston and Coton in the Elms, the effort should be on restoring and reinstating hedgerows including hedgerow trees in the wider landscape. This would help promote connectivity between woodlands in the areas where new woodland planting is unlikely because of productive agricultural land-uses.

MSL4 – Farmland – conservation measures to improve the value of the farmed landscape for small mammals and bats, invertebrates including pollinators, arable plants, and bird species. Measures should encourage habitat recreation as well as field margins, hedgerow restoration, beetle and butterfly banks, etc.

3.15 The Urban Environment

As well as looking at these broad National Character Areas, it is important to consider the potential of the urban environment as a cross cutting, countywide theme.

Derbyshire has a network of urban land-use that sits across National Character Areas including the City of Derby, numerous towns, villages, and hamlets, scattered farmsteads, dwellings, and country houses connected by highways and other urban infrastructure. The expansion of urban areas is largely seen as a negative impact on the natural environment, but they are not without some value for nature as evidenced by the breeding peregrine falcons at Derby Cathedral and the many buildings across the county that provide roosts for our native bat species.

Where pockets of relict landscape persist within the urban fabric, allied to designed open space such as parks and cemeteries, these too can provide valuable spaces for wildlife. Domestic gardens support a range of common bird and insect species and small mammals such as hedgehogs. Urban ponds and wetlands, where they occur, are particularly valuable for amphibians and a variety of invertebrates such as dragonflies, damselflies, and butterflies. Even previously developed land if abandoned can create habitat mosaics that can become enriched by nature.

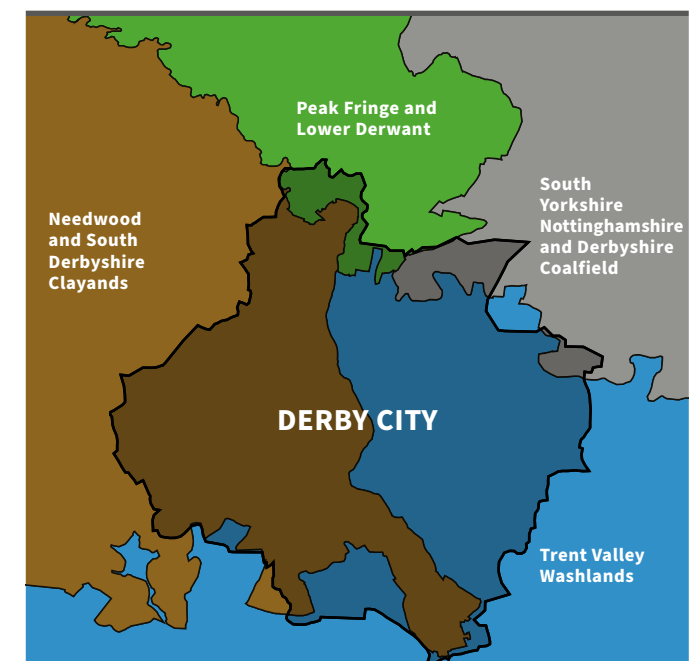
Across most of these National Character Areas, Derbyshire's towns and villages include a network of natural assets, important for nature and enabling connections for wildlife through our urban areas as well as benefitting people and the economy. Urban greening will be important in reinforcing this connectivity and providing additional benefits for our communities.

The main urban areas in the county include the city of Derby, Chesterfield, Glossop, Buxton, Matlock, Dronfield, Staveley, Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook, Alfreton, Ripley, Heanor, Ilkeston, Long Eaton and

Swadlincote. Most of these urban areas have green spaces, waterbodies, and other natural features, which can be described as “urban green and blue infrastructure” that help us understand the range of benefits these natural assets provide.

3.15.1 Derby City

Derby is the only city in Derbyshire and is the county town. As with many major cities, Derby sits astride several National Character Areas, historically benefitting from the resources that each of these areas would have provided.



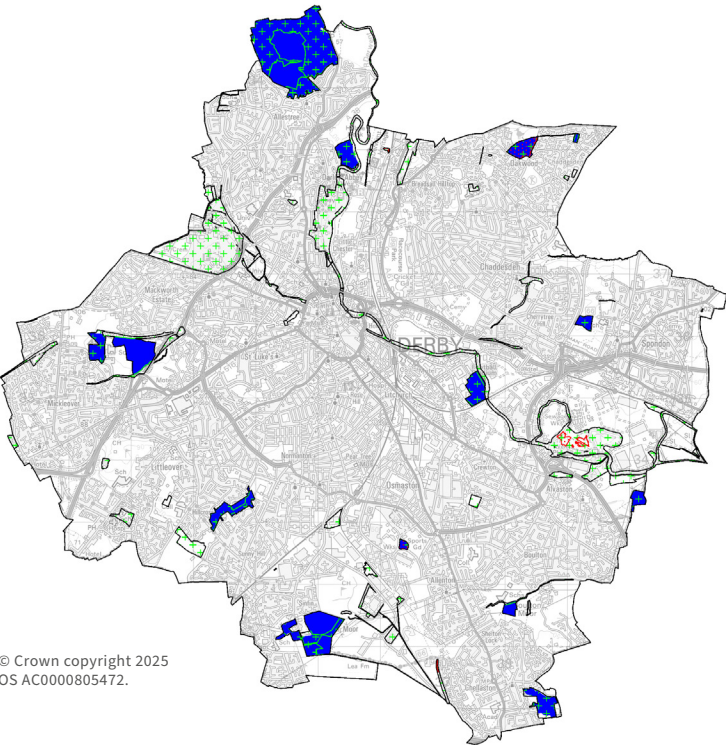
Derby developed over 2000 years ago as a settlement on the banks of the River Derwent initially as a Roman fort but later as a Saxon village centred on the area known as Little Chester. Today, the much-expanded city sits broadly across former farmland of the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands and the river terraces of the Trent Valley Washlands, which includes the lower reaches of the River Derwent. The northern suburb of Allestree including Allestree Park impinges on the Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent NCA, with the northern limits of Oakwood and Spondon extending into the Derbyshire Coalfield NCA, although

the southernmost part of this NCA is very similar in character to the South Derbyshire Claylands due to its underlying geology and soils. The landscape to the north-east of Derby has a distinct estate character influenced by the parkland areas at Locko Park and Risley Park with their associated estate farms, similar to the effects Kedleston Park and Meynell Langley have on the landscape to the north-west of the city. The much-expanded southern side of the city now relates quite specifically to the Trent Valley landscape.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, Derby quickly developed as a major industrial centre, firstly through the development of cotton mills along the Derwent Valley and later as a major centre for the rail industry. Today Derby still has a railway manufacturing presence in the city as well as the Rolls Royce factory at Raynesway. The importance of Derby as a pioneering industrial city is recognised in the designation of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site extending into Derby along the Derwent Valley to the north and including the Silk Mill.

i. Key Sites for Nature

Percentage coverage of Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity within the Derby City Urban Landscape Character Area.



Key sites for nature

- Statutory designations
- Local wildlife sites
- Irreplaceable habitats

Designation	Percentage of NCAs
Statutory Designations	3
Local Wildlife Sites	7
Irreplaceable Habitats	<0.5
Combined Areas of Importance	8

Combined areas of importance only counts overlapping areas once

Derby already has some identified ‘Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity’ with 7% of the area being protected by national and local designations comprising statutory designations (2%), Local Wildlife Sites (6%), and some small pockets of irreplaceable habitat relating to Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and Lowland Fen.

Designation Type & Status	Site Name	Size/Area	Key Interests
National - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Boulton Moor	3.9 Ha	An area protected primarily for its geomorphological interest.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	11.17 Ha	—
	Lowland fens	4.79 Ha	
Local Nature Reserve	11no individual sites	266.57 Ha	Several sizeable Local Nature Reserves dominated by Allestree Park to the north of the city.
Local Wildlife Sites	69no individual sites	526.62 Ha	An intimate mix of habitat types comprising semi-natural broadleaf woodland (24%), unimproved neutral grassland including wood pasture (24%), open water and wetlands (22%), and habitat mosaics associated with previously developed land (30%). Key sites for nature within the city include the River Derwent running through the city and its tributary streams (open water and wetland), Markeaton and Darley Parks (wood pasture), and Allestree Park (predominantly grassland habitat).

Within the Derby City administrative area there is a single SSSI at Boulton Moor that is designated for its geological interest being underlain by glacial deposits and river gravels from different time periods and of particular interest to academic study.

There are 11 Local Nature Reserves some of which are quite sizeable and form part of the green infrastructure network of the city. Allestree Park is the largest LNR in the Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent NCA and the largest LNR in Derby City. This is publicly accessible land that is slowly being encouraged to ‘re-wild’ to bring nature back to the city. It is notable for the number of records for veteran trees.

There is a network of smaller Local Wildlife Sites (6% of the city area) that protect a range of habitat types including woodland, grassland, and wetland, as well as habitat mosaics often associated with previously developed land, although these are often located around the periphery of the city or along the river corridors. The wetland habitat provides a strongly connected habitat corridor associated with the River Derwent and the Markeaton Brook system extending out towards Kedleston Park. The largest LWS is Markeaton Park that provides important

parkland habitat with wood pasture and allows for that connection between Derby and the estate landscape to the west of the city.

The River Derwent is a notable ecological corridor into and through the city, to habitats beyond. As well as supporting coarse fish species, Atlantic salmon have recently returned to the River Derwent, migrating up the River Trent, along the River Derwent, and through Derby City to reach spawning ground higher up the River Derwent and in its tributaries. Migratory fish species will continue to benefit from work to remove barriers to fish migration on the Rivers Trent and Derwent. Otter have been found within River Derwent corridor through the city, especially from Little Chester south eastwards to Borrowash and beyond. Markeaton Brook is another important ecological corridor into and through the city. The brook supports water voles, and previously white clawed crayfish within Markeaton Brook and Park, although it is understood that this population is now severely threatened by the presence of signal crayfish, which look highly likely to advance upstream to Kedleston Park where they will impact on that population. White clawed crayfish have also previously been recorded from

parts of the River Derwent. There are records for bats from across the city, reflecting the relationship between bats and buildings, and the ease with which bats can be seen in flight in urban areas on light summer evenings, whilst the peregrine falcons which nest on Derby Cathedral are a much-loved example of wildlife in the heart of the city.

A key element of Derby's GI network is the 13 Green Wedges. These are areas of predominantly open land that penetrate the city from the surrounding countryside, providing separation between the different neighbourhoods and land uses within the city. While the primary function of all of the wedges is to define and enhance the urban structure of the city, they do provide a valuable GI resource, providing an uninterrupted link to the open countryside surrounding Derby. It is notable that there is very little recognised biodiversity interest within inner city areas although there are urban parks, playing fields, allotments, and gardens that could all be potentially enhanced to contribute to nature's recovery.

ii. Natural Capital and Key Ecosystem Services Provided by Nature

The predominantly urban character of Derby City means that in general, the city does not perform strongly for ecosystem services. However, larger green spaces including habitats along the River Derwent corridor, within the larger parks and local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, and within the green wedges that extend into the city, do offer some ecosystem services function, for example for natural flood management or carbon sequestration, depending upon the land use.

However, probably the largest ecosystem service provided by green space within the city is the benefit it offers for public access, sport and recreation and the promotion of health and wellbeing. While the city has a range of greenspace, ranging from Green Wedges, wildlife sites and a hierarchy of parks, there are still some areas of the city which have low levels of accessible greenspace when assessed using ANGSt (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards) size criteria.

iii. Land use pressures, constraints and other factors affecting nature recovery

The Derby city area is, by definition, a highly developed and urbanised area, with a population of over 261,000 residents. Consequently, the greenspaces within and around the city are already somewhat constrained by built development – very heavily so in places – and those spaces experience significant pressure both from recreational demands, and more generally due to their urban location and the impacts (development pressure, pollution etc) this entails.

Historically, urban growth and development pressure has generally been focussed on existing settlements and built-up areas. Whilst urban growth has been accommodated within and around Derby, it is understood that in more recent years, this demand has been too great to accommodate solely within the city and urban expansion has been channelled generally southwards, including into adjacent areas. As a large city – one of the 20 largest urban areas in the country – Derby City now faces intense pressure to continue to deliver urban growth and respond to demands for significant levels of new housing, together with associated employment land use. This will presumably exert pressure on undeveloped land both within or around the city, with the potential to impinge on some of the remaining habitats in this area, or at least on some of the remaining green space.

Once established, communities may add to the recreational pressure on the remaining green infrastructure and open spaces.

iv. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in Derby City

DE1 – Protection, conservation, and enhancement of existing high-quality sites – focussing on the most valuable areas of habitat. Within the Derby City context, this would mean existing LNRs, large or strategically located parks and Local Wildlife Sites, areas of interconnected habitats along the river corridors and other core green infrastructure assets should be prioritised for protection, conservation, and enhancement to improve their biodiversity value.

Consideration should be given to how to retain an open mosaic habitat resource to compensate for brownfield sites lost to development.

DE2 – Rivers, streams, and watercourses – the River Derwent corridor is a stand-out ecological feature within the city, supporting many interconnected sites of ecological value. These sites support numerous protected and notable species and provide probably the greatest level of ecological connectivity through the city, from Allestree Park in the north, to Alvaston/Spondon in the city and beyond to Borrowash and Elvaston in the southeast. This ecological function and connectivity could be protected and enhanced through positive management and expansion of complementary habitats, and by taking opportunities to reconnect the floodplain, set back embankments, and de-culvert and restore channels in smaller urban watercourses.

DE3 – Accessible semi-natural greenspaces – despite the presence of a significant number of Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, recreational spaces and other green infrastructure sites, many communities across this area are poorly serviced with accessible semi-natural green spaces. Such spaces could make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of these communities. Habitat creation and enhancement should therefore seek to maximise both nature recovery and public access benefit wherever possible or be strategically directed towards areas of disadvantage and green infrastructure deficit. Biodiversity Net Gain could be used to secure environmental enhancements in this area.

DE4 – Ecological connectivity – even in the built-up areas of the city, ecological connectivity and permeability, as well as other ecosystem services, could be enhanced through measures which support biodiversity in parks and in other green infrastructure assets such as cemeteries and other green spaces, as well as in residential gardens. Greening the city centre offers significant opportunities to create new connections, enhance biodiversity and reduce the impacts of climate change. The potential to provide significant and strategically located

ecological enhancement of Green Wedges should also be carefully considered. In more confined areas, solutions such as green roofs and living walls can also be considered.

DE5 – Street trees – street trees are an important feature that can introduce nature into the urban environment and provide ecological connectivity even through heavily developed areas. In addition, their public benefits and ecosystem services – for shading and urban cooling, the removal of pollution and contribution to clean air – cannot be overlooked.

DE6 – Species – the city provides many opportunities to conserve and enhance populations of protected and notable species, including by ensuring that they can both persist within and migrate through the city. Work should also focus on species which are associated with urban environments, including swifts, bats, and in Derby's case, peregrines.

3.15.2 Other Urban Areas

Derbyshire remains an essentially rural landscape and the level of urbanisation is very varied across the county, with most of the population being located in the east of the county. Within the Peak District National Park built development has been largely limited by the statutory controls imposed by the landscape designation. Across much of the White Peak and Dark Peak settlement still tends to be in the form of small villages, hamlets and scattered dwellings and farmsteads with an intimate connection to their surrounding landscape. The main impacts in this area are associated with those settlements that lie just outside the National Park such as the settlements of Glossop, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Buxton, and Matlock.

In other parts of the county such as the East Derbyshire coalfield, development pressures have been much greater particularly following the demise of the coal industry. Here many former pit villages have grown very quickly in recent years and are targeted for more growth in current Local Plans. In some areas this has led to urbanisation of the coalfield landscape with the coalescence of some settlements such as that seen around Chesterfield, Brimington, and Staveley but also around Alfreton and Somercotes, and Ripley to Ilkeston.

The Southern Magnesian Limestone NCA in Derbyshire has also experienced significant growth of former pit villages such as that seen at Barlborough, Clowne, Bolsover, and Shirebrook. Although these towns still retain their nucleated settlement pattern set within arable farmland, further expansion has the potential to impact further on features of existing biodiversity value. Conversely, there is also the potential to deliver more biodiversity through this development as part of a sensitively designed green infrastructure network and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

The Trent Valley Washlands NCA has also experienced significant urbanisation particularly in those villages such as Hatton, Hilton and Etwall that have become satellite settlements to Derby and Burton. The Trent Valley has also been impacted because of sand and gravel extraction required to service this voracious growth in housing and leading to the loss of large areas of farmland year on year. These quarries now provide significant opportunities to deliver biodiversity and other environmental and social benefits as part of their long-term restoration strategies and connect to the local communities in these expanding towns across the valley through a framework of accessible green infrastructure.

Swadlincote is the largest town in the south of the county located within the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield NCA. The town primarily evolved because of the coal and clay reserves in the area that led to urbanisation, as collieries, brickworks, and potteries developed. Again, the demise of these industries has led to further development of new businesses attracted to the area as part of regeneration strategies.

Larger settlements such as Sheffield in the north, Greater Manchester in the north-west, and Burton-on-Trent have also seen significant growth and expansion in recent times and their settlement edges now extend up to the county boundary, placing Derbyshire within their urban fringe, and putting pressure on the landscape and its habitats in these areas.

i. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery in other urban areas

Urban areas do not exist in isolation across Derbyshire but sit within the wider landscape. The NCA in which the urban area is located will give a strong indication of the nature recovery opportunities for that town or village, as it will share its topography, geology and general environmental context with the surrounding landscape. Nature recovery action in urban areas will likely be most successful if it matches the potential of the area in which it sits and facilitates ecological connectivity through the urban area itself. However, there will be ecological considerations and opportunities that may apply generally within urban areas:

U1 – Protection, conservation, and enhancement of existing high-quality sites – these should focus on the most valuable areas of habitat within that urban area. These won't necessarily be statutorily designated sites, but are more likely to include LNRs, large or strategically located parks and Local Wildlife Sites, areas of interconnected habitats that extend through the urban area, and other core green infrastructure assets. Consideration should be given to how to retain an open mosaic habitat resource to compensate for brownfield sites lost to development.

U2 – Rivers, streams, and watercourses – many urban areas were built up to and around rivers, streams, and watercourses, which they have now encroached upon, or even built over. Those watercourses and riparian corridors can provide key ecological linkages through urban areas, supporting protected and notable species as they do so. Improvements to rivers and watercourses should focus on strengthening the function and connectivity of these habitats through the urban area and beyond.

U3 – Accessible semi-natural green spaces – despite the presence of Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, recreational spaces and other green infrastructure sites, many urban communities lack access to semi-natural green spaces. This can be the case even in rural towns and villages, where the surrounding green spaces and open countryside may

not be accessible due to land ownership, or lack of infrastructure such as footpaths or pavements. Chesterfield is relatively well-served in terms of access to smaller areas of greenspace, although opportunities should be sought to increase access into greenspace in the east of the town.

High quality urban green spaces make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities, and habitat creation and enhancement should seek to maximise both nature recovery and public access wherever possible or be strategically directed towards areas of disadvantage and green infrastructure deficit. Biodiversity Net Gain could be used to secure environmental enhancements in and around urban areas.

U4 – Ecological connectivity – even in the built-up areas, ecological connectivity and permeability could be enhanced through measures which support biodiversity in parks and in other green infrastructure assets such as cemeteries and green spaces, as well as in residential gardens. In more built-up areas, solutions such as green roofs and living walls can also be considered.

U5 – Street trees – street trees are an important feature that can introduce nature into the urban environment and provide ecological connectivity even through heavily developed areas. In addition, their public benefits and ecosystem services – for shading and urban cooling, the removal of pollution and contribution to clean air – cannot be overlooked.

U6 – Species – urban areas provide opportunities to conserve and enhance populations of protected and notable species, including by ensuring that they can both persist within and migrate through the area. Work should also focus on species which are associated with urban environments, including swifts and bats.

3.15.3 Highway and Transport Infrastructure

Derbyshire is criss-crossed by several important strategic road and railway corridors all of which over time have impacted on our natural environment, either directly through historic habitat loss or indirectly through habitat severance.

The M1 motorway and the Midland Mainline railway both run north to south through the east of the county and now pose a significant obstacle for east to west habitat connectivity such as those impacts seen at Hardwick Park and along the Erewash Valley.

Similar impacts can be seen along the A50, which runs parallel to the Trent Valley. This route not only severs the landscape but also separates communities to the north from the River Trent landscape to the south.

Other important strategic roads through the county include the A38 running north to south through Derby, the A6 and A52 connecting Derby to the Peak District in a generally south-east to north-west orientation, and the A628 and A57 crossing through some of the most sensitive moorland landscape in the north of the county. The A6 (Wye Dale) and the A5012 (Via Gellia) also run through two of our most sensitive limestone dales protected by international and national designations.

However, in landscapes of intensive agriculture such as the White Peak and Magnesian Limestone plateau, road verges could contribute to the habitat network and connectivity through the sympathetic management of these areas. Furthermore, former railway corridors can be enhanced as green infrastructure assets that provide for public access alongside nature conservation and habitat connectivity. Indeed, many former railway lines are now designated as SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites because of the habitats they support.

i. Description of potential opportunities for nature recovery across the transport and highway network

T1 – Ecological connectivity – major transport infrastructure, particularly dual carriageways and motorways can cause significant habitat severance and prevent the movement of species, particularly terrestrial species, and species with poor capability of dispersal. Identifying and addressing ecological severance caused by those routes, for example through wildlife tunnels and bridges, offers great potential to reconnect species across landscapes.

On the other hand, road verges and other land alongside road and transport infrastructure offers significant potential to enable ecological connectivity across landscapes and within urban areas. In many circumstances this could be achieved by modifying existing management practices such as mowing regimes to enable biodiversity to recover. Positive vegetation management along transport corridors could also contribute to other nature-based solutions such as natural flood management, for example by tackling localised run-off issues.

T2 – Creation of new habits – new development, either the development of new transport infrastructure, roads and railways, or new urban development, offers opportunities to create verges and other land which will benefit biodiversity. This can be most successful if both ecological connectivity and future management requirements are considered and planned in at the outset.

3.16 References

Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1. Available at:

<http://www.ukhab.org/>

Defra. (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 First revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>

Defra. (2023). Local nature recovery statutory guidance. What a local nature recovery strategy should contain. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategy-what-to-include>

Defra (May 2023) Local nature recovery strategies: Advice on governance and working with partners

Defra (August 2023) Species Recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Advice for Responsible Authorities

Defra (October 2023). Engaging the land management sector in Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Advice for Responsible Authorities

Defra (November 2023). Identifying and agreeing priorities and potential measures within Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Advice for Responsible Authorities

Defra (February 2024). Data standards for Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Advice for Responsible Authorities

Defra (March 2024). Mapping potential measures in Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Advice for Responsible Authorities

Derbyshire County Council. (2022) Derbyshire's Natural Capital Strategy. Available at:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/environment/conservation/local-nature-recovery/local-nature-recovery.aspx>

Derbyshire County Council. (2014) The Landscape Character of Derbyshire. Available at:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/landscape-character.aspx>

Derbyshire Derwent Catchment Partnership. Catchment Management Plan. Available at:

<https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/Catchment%20Management%20Plan.pdf>

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. (2023) Bolsover District Council Local Nature Recovery Action Plan 2023. Available at:

<https://www.bolsover.gov.uk/services/p/planning-policy/local-nature-recovery>

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. (2023) High Peak Borough Council: A Plan for Nature. Available at:

<https://democracy.highpeak.gov.uk/documents/s37174/PFN%20Nov%202023%20Revised%20Version.pdf>

Don, Dearne & Rother Network, Catchment Plan for the Don and Rother Catchment 2021 – 2026. Available at:

<https://dondearnerother.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Catchment-Plan-2020-FINAL.pdf>

Dove Catchment Partnership. Dove Catchment Plan (2024). Available at:

<https://www.trentrivertrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Dove-CMP-23-28-FINAL.pdf>

Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/341/made>

Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Report of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot. Available at:

https://gmgreencity.com/resource_library/local-nature-recovery-strategy/

Lawton, J.H., Brotherton, P.N.M., Brown, V.K., Elphick, C., Fitter, A.H., Forshaw, J., Haddow, R.W., Hilborner, S.,

Leafé, R.N., Mace, G.M., Southgate, M.P., Sutherland, W.J., Tew, T.E., Varley, J. and Wynne, G.R. (2010) Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological networks. Report to Defra.

Lower Trent & Erewash Catchment Partnership. Lower Trent & Erewash Catchment Management Plan 2019. Available at:

<https://www.trentrivertrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Lower-Trent-Erewash-Catchment-Management-Plan-Final.pdf>

Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership (2011), Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Available at:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/ecology/lowland-derbyshire-biodiversity-action-plan/lowland-derbyshire-biodiversity-action-plan-lbap-2011-2020.pdf>

Natural England (2012). National Character Area Profile 51. Dark Peak. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3684793?category=587130>

Natural England (2014). National Character Area 50. Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5048261324832768?category=587130>

Natural England (2012). National Character Area Profile 71. Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5901717832990720?category=587130>

Natural England (2013). National Character Area Profile 72. Mease/Sence Lowlands. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5925431?category=587130>

Natural England (2012). National Character Area Profile 70. Melbourne Parklands. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4110272?category=587130>

Natural England (2013). National Character Area 68.

Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands.

Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4492587?category=587130>

Natural England (2012). National Character Area 38. Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield.

Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4743624?category=587130>

Natural England (2013). National Character Area 30. Southern Magnesian Limestone. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5733629942562816?category=587130>

Natural England (2013). National Character Area Profile 53. South-West Peak. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/12392045?category=587130>

Natural England (2013). National Character Area Profile 69. Trent Valley Washlands. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5447860266991616?category=587130>

Natural England (2014). National Character Area 52. White Peak. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6364771410509824?category=587130>

Natural England. (2023) Re-evaluating the sensitivity of habitats to climate change. Available at:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6095916432621568#:~:text=Large%20differences%20in%20the%20sensitivity,coastal%20squeeze%20affecting%20coastal%20habitats>

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. Catchment Management Plan for Idle Catchment (2023).

Available at:

https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CaBACatchmentManagementPlan_Idle2023-final.pdf

Peak District National Park Authority. (2009) Landscape Strategy and Action Plan. No longer available online – superseded by The Peak District Landscape Strategy 2022-31, Available at:

<https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/landscape-strategy>

Peak District National Park Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2020, (2011). Peak District Biodiversity Partnership. No longer available online – superseded by The Peak District Nature Recovery Plan, available at

<https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/nature/action-for-wildlife>

Peak District National Park. (2022) Wooded Landscapes Plan (Final Draft). Available at:

https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0036/99594/Wooded-Landscapes-Plan-Appendix-2.pdf

Peak District National Park Authority. (2024) Peak Park Nature Recovery Plan. Available at:

<https://reports.peakdistrict.gov.uk/naturerecovery/docs/the-peak-district/the-peak-district.html#one-plan-for-the-place>

State of Nature Partnership. (2019). State of Nature. Available at:

<https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports>

Tame, Anker And Mease Partnership. Tame, Anker And Mease Catchment Action Management Plan 2020-2025 (2020). Available at:

<https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/TAM-catchment-action-plan-2020.pdf>

The Environment Act (2021) chapter 20. Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

Upper Mersey Catchment Partnership. Upper Mersey Catchment Plan (2023). Available at:

https://www.merseyrivers.org/images/Catchment_Partnership_Docs/formatted_revised_plan_march_2023_v3.pdf

Section 4

Identification of Priorities (Outcomes) and Measures (Actions)



4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The selection process

Section 3 has drawn upon all the relevant environmental information available, to describe, explore and understand the natural environment in Derbyshire. Environmental plans, strategies, and existing nature recovery projects were appraised and reviewed, to identify the existing priorities for nature recovery and to understand what work was currently underway to deliver against them. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted, to understand their priorities and perspectives on nature recovery in Derbyshire, and to acquire their knowledge and understanding of the issues across the county. The challenges and forces affecting biodiversity and the wider environment in each part of the county were examined to understand where the natural environment was facing pressures or threats, and finally this information was used to identify and describe a broad range of nature recovery opportunities within each part of the strategy area.

The next step in the LNRS is to identify the 'Priorities' (outcomes) for nature recovery and the 'Measures' (practical actions) required to deliver those outcomes.

The priorities that emerged are the result of a long period of development, iteration and refinement. The data and information provided was considered alongside the aims and objectives of existing environmental plans, strategies and projects, to produce a draft list of nature recovery priorities for Derbyshire. These were repeatedly reviewed and refined by the Steering Group, Supporting Authorities and other partners and stakeholders throughout the engagement process. This work was enriched by stakeholders involved in workshops, where people were encouraged to identify their own Priorities for nature recovery, based upon the evidence and their own knowledge. This iterative approach produced the final list of priorities and measures listed below.

The tables that follow set out those priorities (outcomes) that will guide nature recovery into the future across Derbyshire and the measures (actions) that will be needed to achieve these outcomes. These have been set out under broad habitat themes, or under cross-cutting themes that are relevant to all or most parts of the county, with species priorities below these.

4.1.2 What are 'mapped measures'?

The purpose of an LNRS is to identify locations that would provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment through targeted actions for habitat recovery and investment. We do this by mapping areas which we believe 'could become of particular importance for biodiversity' or 'where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits'. These areas are collectively referred to as 'areas that could become of particular importance'.

To map these areas, the Measures that have the potential to make the greatest contribution to our Strategy's priorities, and to nature recovery, have been identified. These measures typically focus on delivery 'on the ground' – particularly the safeguarding, restoration or enhancement of existing habitats, and the creation of new habitats. Those measures selected for inclusion on our Local Habitat Map are known as 'mapped measures' and the mapping shows the locations that have the greatest potential to deliver against a particular measure. However, these are not the only places where those measures could be implemented – simply the locations likely to deliver the greatest benefits.

We have then worked with partners to assess data and evidence and find those locations that could have the greatest value for nature, if measures are implemented there. To secure the greatest gains for nature, our measures, and our mapping aim to deliver sites for nature recovery that follow the 'Lawton principles' – that sites need to be:

- Bigger – that nature conservation sites must be bigger, to support more diversity and to be more robust
- Better – that existing habitats need to be in better condition, and better managed, to support more nature
- More – that we simply need more sites, and more land available for nature and biodiversity
- More joined up – habitats must be better connected, with more 'stepping stones' and ecological permeability through the landscape, to allow species to move between sites and colonise new areas

A detailed description of how priorities and measures were defined and mapped is included in Appendix 8.

4.1.3 Important notes about 'mapped measures'

The 'mapped measures', and the 'areas that could become of importance for biodiversity', are the areas most likely to have the greatest potential for nature recovery and to become important for biodiversity. The mapping of measures to an area indicates an opportunity in that area, **but the mapping of measures on land does not oblige or compel the landowner to undertake the measures identified.** However, it is hoped that this could result in funding becoming available to support and encourage appropriate nature recovery action in those areas.

The mapping of measures accords with guidance provided by Natural England. The guidance makes clear that Responsible Authorities should not ordinarily map measures within statutorily designated sites such as SSSIs, because those sites are already the focus of legal protection, conservation action, monitoring and investment.

Accordingly, measures are not generally mapped within SSSIs at the present time. However, with the agreement of Natural England, we do have a single measure (measure MH-3-006) which is mapped within designated sites, because it relates to underlying processes and ecosystem services.

A key principle of nature recovery is that no landscape should be dominated by a single habitat type but should ideally support a mosaic of locally appropriate habitat types. Where a habitat mosaic is the desired outcome, for example around our moorland fringes then 'mosaic measures' are specifically encouraged to create areas of upland heath, blanket bog with associated grassland, wetland, scrub, and trees. The expectation is that the implementation of the LNRS will draw upon good practice principles to create ecotones and transitional areas.

Mapped measures have been designed to avoid conflicts. Where more than one measure is proposed for an area, these will often be complementary to each other – for example measures relating to the creation or management of specific habitats like woodland, within a wider site such to be managed for biodiversity and environmental benefits, such as a Local Nature Reserve. In some situations, we have proposed two seemingly conflicting measures for the same land where this offers more options to achieve similar benefits – for example woodland creation, or hedgerow creation, to improve connectivity between existing woodlands. Where we have done so, we have indicated which measure is preferred, typically favouring the one that is likely to offer the greatest nature recovery benefits. In other cases, an overlap between seemingly conflicting measures (such as the creation of species rich grassland or woodland) indicates that both habitat types are equally desirable. In such circumstances it could be appropriate to create either habitat, or a mosaic of both, taking account of the context of the site and following good landscape design principles.

Finally, the mapping of measures involves a combination of site knowledge and data modelling, to indicate the areas that have the greatest potential for nature recovery. Habitat modelling only indicates a potential area for habitat action but where a measure is mapped over land that is clearly unsuitable for conversion such as a housing or urban development, road, or reservoir then a common-sense interpretation is required. Similarly, whilst every effort has been made to avoid mapping measures on to land of existing ecological value, some discretion will be needed when delivering any measure to a specific site. An ecological assessment or site survey will likely be required wherever land use change or habitat creation or enhancement is proposed,

to identify the most appropriate option for the site, and to confirm that the change proposed will not harm existing interest on the site. You should also take care to ensure that proposals will not conflict with infrastructure such as drainage or underground pipes and cables. The historic environment is also an important consideration, and proposals should aim to avoid any harm in designated areas such as the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site, or to historic environment features and archaeology – see the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (<https://her.derbyshire.gov.uk/>) for further information.

4.1.4 What measures are not mapped?

The Local Habitat Map shows the areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity, by mapping the Measures that have the potential to make the greatest contribution to our Strategy's priorities.

However, all the measures included in this strategy have an important contribution to make to nature recovery across Derbyshire. Where measures have **not** been mapped, this is because:

1. The measure does not relate to or support habitat creation or improvement
2. The measure would be similarly beneficial over wide areas – e.g. urban tree planting is likely to be similarly beneficial across all urban areas – so priority areas have not been identified
3. The measure, on its own, would be unlikely to raise the biodiversity value of the land to enable it to become 'of importance for biodiversity' – many measures lead to general biodiversity or nature recovery benefits, but significant gains are required for land to be considered to have the potential to be an 'area that could become of importance'
4. It was not possible to find a suitable location to carry out the measure

In the tables below, measures are clearly identified as either mapped, or unmapped. Where a measure is unmapped, it is identified (in parentheses) which of the four criteria above apply.

A small number of species measures have also been mapped, but in many instances, this has not been possible, typically because the priority for that species is to improve our state of knowledge, including of their distribution and location of key sites. Some species require action over large areas and thus it is not practical to map all these areas, nor to identify locations that are more favourable than others. In some instances, it is recognised that certain species are at risk of disturbance or persecution, and it is therefore not appropriate to advertise their locations.

4.1.5 What does the Local Habitat Map show?

A Local Nature Recovery Strategy consists of two parts: the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities – the written document including the description of the strategy area, and the lists of priorities and measures; and the Local Habitat Map. The Local Habitat Map includes:

- The Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity – our existing areas of significant value for biodiversity, mapped at Step 1 of the LNRS process. This includes sites of recognised ecological value and areas of especially noteworthy habitat, including:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
 - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
 - National Nature Reserves (NNRs)
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
 - Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
 - Irreplaceable habitats (ancient woodland, lowland fen, blanket bog, limestone pavement)

- The Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance – those areas which have the greatest potential to become of value for biodiversity or other environmental benefits, as set out in 4.1.2 above, if our 'mapped measures' are implemented at those locations.

4.1.6 Linking the Measures to the Key Opportunities identified in the Step 3 analysis

In section 4.1.1 above, we explain the development of the strategy, starting with the baseline data and information, analysis of existing strategies and plans, the analysis of threats to biodiversity and the natural environment, and the engagement work undertaken, which all informed the description of the strategy area (Section 3), and the identification of nature recovery opportunities that arise in each National Character Area. Priorities and measures were then developed to respond to and help address the opportunities identified in Section 3. These priorities and measures were then subject to extensive testing though further stakeholder consultation, to help check and refine them, to ensure the best outcomes for nature recovery.

The tables of priorities and measures set out below help illustrate that development, through the column titled 'Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity', which references back to each of the opportunities identified in each National Character Area, to identify those that have helped inform the development of that measure. Those priorities and measures identified within the People and Wildlife theme follow a different approach, as these were derived from opportunities identified through wider stakeholder engagement, rather than through the spatial analysis. Our approach to the identification of species priorities and measures is set out in detail in Appendix 7.

4.1.7 What are National Environmental Objectives (NEOs)?

The LNRS has been developed in accordance with guidance provided by the government, which sets out what responsible authorities should include in their local nature recovery strategy. In addition, the government has set out advice about the specific National Environmental Objectives that they expect local nature recovery strategies to contribute to. These National Environmental Objectives (NEOs) are drawn from the Environment Act, and the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, which provides a more comprehensive overview of national environmental objectives. Under each theme, for each measure proposed, we identify which NEOs that action will contribute to, using a reference number such as NEO2, NEO8 etc. The National Environmental Objectives are set out below.

Reference	Objective
NEO2	Biodiversity on land – halt the decline of species abundance by 2030. Ensure that species abundance in 2042 is greater than in 2022, and at least 10% greater than 2030
NEO3	Biodiversity on land – reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022
NEO4	Woodland cover – increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050
NEO5	Improve water quality and availability – reduce nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline
NEO6	Work to ensure that everyone in England lives within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space
NEO7	Restore approximately 280,000 hectares of peatland in England by 2050
NEO8	Restore 75% of our water bodies to good ecological status

Reference	Objective
NEO9	Protect 30% of land and of sea in the UK for nature's recovery by 2030
NEO10	Support farmers to create or restore 30,000 miles of hedgerows by 2037 and 45,000 miles of hedgerows by 2050
NEO11	Manage our woodlands for biodiversity, climate and sustainable forestry
NEO12	Restore 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest to favourable condition by 2042. By 31 January 2028 50% of SSSIs will have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.
NEO13	Ensure delivery & management of actions & policies that contribute towards our 25YEP goals are suitable & adaptive to a changing climate
NEO14	Make sure LNRs include proposals for Nature-based Solutions which improve flood risk management where appropriate
NEO15	Achieve Good Environmental Status for our seas
NEO16	Reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 73% and ammonia by 16% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels
NEO17	Reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of invasive non-native species by at least 50%, by 2030

4.2 Upland Moorland and Lowland Heath

The Peak District peatlands are perhaps our most important ecosystem because of the range of ecosystem services they provide. The deep peaty soils not only provide protected blanket bog and heathland habitats supporting several specialist bird species, and recognised internationally for their importance, but are also vital for other essential services such as carbon capture and storage, water management, as well as recreational space for local communities and the tourist economy.

The focus on continued protection, restoration and enhancement of these areas is essential given that the opportunities for expansion are more limited because of the exacting physical conditions needed for delivering habitat of this type, but there will be opportunities for creating complimentary habitats around the moorland fringe to assist in their protection whilst providing other benefits and ecosystem services.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
MH-1	Safeguard and improve the condition of upland moorland habitats (including a mosaic of upland heath, blanket bog and associated grassland, wetland, scrub and trees) and its transitional fringe, including for the benefit of associated breeding birds and other dependent species.	001	Ensure appropriate management is implemented including rewetting, gully blocking, sphagnum reintroduction, controlling grazing, ensuring a diversity of heathland structure, controlling invasive non-native species, and managing fire risk. Visitor pressure should be monitored and managed to avoid harm to both habitats and species.	DSP1, DSP5	NEO2, NEO12, NEO13	Mapped
MH-2	Expand the upland moorland habitats (including a mosaic of upland heath, blanket bog and associated grassland, wetland, scrub and trees) and its transitional fringe, into appropriate areas where conditions allow, providing expanded habitat for breeding birds and other dependent species (upland heath assemblage).	002	Restore the blanket bog resource in areas with suitable substrate, hydrology and other conditions.	DSP1, DSP5	NEO1, NEO7, NEO13	Unmapped (4)
		003	Create and restore upland heathland (and associated grasslands, scrub and trees) by identifying areas with suitable substrate, manage to ensure nutrient status is appropriate and use heathland establishment (seeding, brash etc) measures, ideally using local sources.	DSP1, DSP2, DSP3, DSP5	NEO1, NEO7, NEO12	Mapped
		004	Expand and diversify moorland fringe and transitional habitat areas to provide a mosaic of grassland, heathland, scrub, trees and woodland	DSP2, DSP3, DSP5	NEO2, NEO7	Mapped
		005	Create, manage, and identify new opportunities for clough woodland, integrated with other high quality moorland habitats, supporting slope stabilisation, carbon sequestration and natural flood management.	DSP2, DSP5	NEO2, NEO4, NEO7, NEO14	Mapped
MH-3	Improve the condition of upland peatland to support ecological functionality and increase carbon sequestration, natural flood management and water quality benefits.	006	Improve the condition and function of peatlands through appropriate measures to re-wet habitats, to revegetate bare peat, to establish appropriate vegetation, and to stabilise areas of erosion, reducing carbon emissions and creating conditions for future peat formation, carbon sequestration and improved natural flood management.	DSP1, DSP5	NEO7, NEO12, NEO13	Mapped
MH-4	Lowland heathland in Derbyshire is safeguarded and well managed, and the resource is expanded wherever appropriate.	007	Existing lowland heathland sites are identified and prioritised for management, restoration and enhancement to address bracken and scrub dominance and improve heathland structure.	WP1, PF5, CL5, MP3	NEO2	Mapped
		008	Identify existing lowland heathland sites to be buffered, extended and connected, ideally with new heathland but alternatively with complementary habitats.	WP1, PF5, CL5, MP4	NEO1, NEO2	Mapped
		009	Create new heathland sites, particularly those which can be delivered through quarry working and restoration, new development, or reversion of conifer plantations over suitable soils (using the Open Habitats Policy decision framework).	PF5, CL5, MP5	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2)

4.3 Woodlands and Trees

Woodlands and trees provide another important habitat type across Derbyshire that supports a rich diversity of species, as well as important ecosystem services around carbon capture and storage, natural flood management, improved air quality, timber production, and recreational opportunities. Parts of the county such as the Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent area are particularly rich in irreplaceable ancient semi-natural woodland, whilst areas to the

south of the county are becoming more wooded due to the work of the National Forest project. Derbyshire’s Heartwood Community Forest initiative will further this trend in the east of the county. The protection, management, enhancement, and expansion of woodland, scrub and tree habitats are all a strong focus of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, helping to address the impacts of climate change and enhance the wellbeing of residents through the provision of more accessible green space.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
WT-1	Ancient woodland, historic wood pasture parkland and veteran trees are safeguarded, managed and in good ecological condition.	010	Sites are identified and in positive management to maximise their biodiversity value and ensure their longevity.	DSP2, WP1, PF1, DC2, ML1	NEO2, NEO11, NEO12	Mapped
		011	Specialist tree management techniques are used to extend the life of veteran and ancient trees, and near veterans are identified and recorded.	DSP2, PF1, PF2, DC2, CL3, MP2	NEO2, NEO12	Unmapped (2)
		012	Restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland sites to native, locally appropriate species.	DSP2, PF1, DC2, ML1, MP2	NEO2, NEO11	Mapped
		013	Species assemblages associated with ancient woodland, veteran trees and historic wood pasture parkland - saproxylic invertebrates and fungi, lichen, bats etc - should be carefully considered, and their populations enhanced including through specific interventions where necessary.	DSP2, PF1, PF2, ML1, CL1, MP2	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
WT-2	Existing woodland is well managed and better for wildlife.	014	Introduce woodland management plans, bringing woodlands into active management to accord with UK Forestry Standards (UKFS), to promote biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change, and maximise wider environmental benefits such as natural flood management or carbon sequestration.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO11	Unmapped (2)
		015	Manage and control invasive non-native woodland species, pests and diseases including rhododendron, grey squirrel, and ash die-back.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO11, NEO17	Unmapped (2, 3)
		016	Promote partnership working to develop and implement a landscape scale integrated deer management and control strategy.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO11, NEO17	Unmapped (1)
		017	Create and improve woodland structure and species diversity through appropriate management actions including through active management, harvesting and timber, planting, and the use of natural processes.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO11	Unmapped (2)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
WT-3	New woodland creation delivers more, bigger and better connected woodland, maximising ecosystem service benefits.	018	Where ash dieback is present, diversify species composition and implement tailored interventions at each site to promote recovery and increase future resilience.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO2, NEO11	Unmapped (2)
		019	Create new UKFS compliant woodland with a preference for semi-natural native woodland, including wet woodland, following sound ecological principles and bring into positive management.	DSP2, PF1, DC2, TV5, MP2, SDC1, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
		020	Buffer existing woodland sites with new woodland creation and by expanding tree cover, to safeguard core sites from impact, extend their benefit and provide edge habitats.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Mapped
		021	Increase transitional habitats around and between woodlands to increase ecotones and establish wildlife rich dynamic mosaics.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		022	Identify areas for new woodland creation and/or management of existing woodlands specifically to improve connectivity between woodlands - particularly existing ancient woodlands and core sites - at the landscape scale.	DSP2, PF1, DC2, TV5, MP2, SDC1, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Mapped
		023	New woodland creation prioritises habitat creation whilst additionally delivering nature-based solutions and ecosystem services, such as Natural Flood Management and/or public access.	DSP2, PF4, DC2, TV3, SDC1	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4, NEO11	Mapped
		024	Allow new woodlands to generate naturally where possible (for example, adjacent to or close to existing high value woodland) or use planting or mixed techniques where needed.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2, DE3, U3	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
		025	Planting should use locally appropriate species and a mixture of local provenance and/or climate resilient stock.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2, DE3, U3	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4, NEO13	Unmapped (2)
		026	Take opportunities to create new woodlands for example around new residential developments, new employment land use, and mineral extraction sites, as part of managed change to improve the area for people and wildlife.	WP7, DC4, ML4, TV6, SDC1, DE3, U3	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		027	Target wood pasture parkland restoration to historic, neglected and relict wood pasture parkland sites, planting replacement parkland trees and bringing into active management to ensure their survival and longevity.	DSP2, PF1, PF2, ML1, CL1, MP2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4, NEO11	Mapped

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
WT-4	Increase trees in the wider landscape, including field trees, fruit trees, hedgerow trees and watercourse trees, agroforestry, and wood/scrub pasture especially where they can reinforce the local character as well as contributing to biodiversity.	028	Safeguard and manage existing boundary trees to support their retention and longevity, and plant locally appropriate hedgerow and in-field trees to diversify hedgerows, provide future mature trees in the farmed landscape, and reinforce the wooded character of suitable landscapes.	PF2, DC2, CL3, TV5, MP2, MSL2	NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
		029	Encourage trees along watercourses where appropriate to provide multiple benefits including habitat, shade/ watercourse cooling, water quality improvements, bank stabilisation and Natural Flood Management (NFM).	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2, DE3, U3	NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
		030	Introduce appropriate agroforestry options to increase tree cover in farmed landscapes whilst increasing resilience to climate change, improving soil fertility and carbon sequestration. Where mapped, Measures 20 and 22 are considered priority.	DSP2, WP3, DC5, CL3, MP2, SDC1	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Mapped
		031	Identify and restore existing and derelict traditional orchards and create new community orchards where appropriate.	DSP2, WP3, PF1, DC2, ML1, CL3, TV5, MP2, SDC2, MSL2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Mapped
WT-5	Trees in the wider landscape are positively managed, and ancient and veteran trees are safeguarded.	032	Trees in the wider landscape are managed to ensure their longevity, promote biodiversity, improve their condition, and maintain safety, and to increase their resilience to climate change.	DSP2, PF2, DC2, CL3, TV5, MP2, MSL2	NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
		033	Ancient and veteran trees in the wider landscape are safeguarded and managed, including considering fencing or root protection measures, to support their retention and longevity.	DSP2, PF2, DC2, CL3, TV5, MP2, MSL2	NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
WT-6	Urban trees become more common throughout towns and cities, for amenity, urban shading and air quality benefits as well as biodiversity.	034	Existing street trees are managed positively to promote their longevity and are replaced at the end of their life.	DE5, U5	NEO2, NEO13	Unmapped (2)
		035	Incorporate trees into street scene, open spaces, amenity areas, gardens and public open spaces in new developments and existing urban areas.	DE5, U5	NEO2, NEO4, NEO13	Unmapped (2)

4.4 Grassland

Whilst Derbyshire remains an essentially pastoral County, many grasslands have been lost to modern, more productive agricultural practices meaning that remaining unimproved and species-rich grassland habitat is often fragmented and isolated in the landscape. Grasslands are important for a range of plant and animal species, some of which are now becoming endangered. Protecting and enhancing

the best areas and expanding and creating more diverse and species-rich grassland habitat to develop a more connected network will boost biodiversity. Simultaneously, additional species-rich and semi-natural grassland habitat will provide wider benefits such as increasing pollinator numbers, improving soil health, and buffering the effects of diffuse pollution, contributing to the diversity of habitats that make beautiful landscapes that people visit and enjoy, and helping promote cultural connections to the land.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
GL-1	Safeguard and enhance high quality and species rich grassland habitats including unimproved grassland, species rich grassland and meadows, and calaminarian grassland (grassland on lead spoil).	036	Sites are identified and in positive management to maximise their biodiversity value as grasslands and for their associated species.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, CL1, SDC1	NEO2, NEO12	Mapped
GL-2	Existing grasslands are managed, restored and enhanced to increase biodiversity (including pollinators and other invertebrates), improve resilience to climate change, and maximise wider environmental benefits such as natural flood management or carbon sequestration.	037	Existing moderate quality and neglected sites are enhanced through appropriate management to improve their species and structural diversity.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, CL1, SDC1	NEO1, NEO2	Mapped
		038	Species poor semi-natural grasslands are restored and diversified, and are subsequently managed to maintain and enhance their species richness and structural diversity.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, CL1, SDC1	NEO1, NEO2	Mapped
		039	Encourage fire planning and preventative measures in grassland areas.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, CL1, SDC1	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (1, 2, 3)
GL-3	There is more species-rich and semi-natural grassland, which is more diverse, larger and better connected.	040	Take opportunities to create new species rich grasslands for example around new development, through enhanced green infrastructure.	DSP3, WP2, WP7, PF3, DC3, ML1, TV6, SDC1, DE3, U3, T2	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		041	Create high quality, species rich grasslands (calcareous, acidic, neutral and wet grasslands as appropriate) through the targeted restoration of mineral extraction sites.	WP7, TV6	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		042	Target species rich grassland creation and grassland enhancement to locations adjacent to existing high-quality grasslands sites.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, CL1, SDC1	NEO1, NEO2	Mapped
		043	Target species rich grassland creation and grassland enhancement to locations where they can contribute to or enhance connectivity within the grassland network.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, CL1, SDC1, T2	NEO1, NEO2	Mapped

4.5 Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses

Rivers, river corridors and other watercourses, including reservoirs and canals, are vital in supporting aquatic habitats and species, as well as providing clean water for human consumption. Riverside habitats play a key role in natural flood management and water purification, often intertwined with productive farmland. In recent years flooding

has been a major issue within the county particularly within the Derwent Valley and along the River Trent, with several major flood events. The overarching aim of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to improve rivers along their length by removing barriers to species migration and better connect watercourses to their wider catchment to improve their resilience to flooding, diversify habitats, improve water quality, and enhance recreational opportunities.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
RW-1	Improve and restore connectivity of river corridors to restore natural processes and support the free movement of in-channel and riparian species.	044	Create in-channel features that promote flow variation and expose spawning gravels including the re-meandering of rivers where required.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO2, NEO3, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		045	Identify and remove redundant weirs and in-channel structures, allowing the free movement of fish and the restoring natural river processes.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U3	NEO8, NEO14	Mapped
		046	Address barriers to species movement including by the creation of targeted fish passage for all species (coarse, salmonid and eels), the installation of otter ledges and other measures.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U4	NEO8, NEO14	Mapped
		047	Develop the River Derwent as a stronghold for native riparian mammals including beaver, water vole and otter through habitat management, improved connectivity, and other conservation measures as appropriate.	DSP4, PF6, DE2	NEO2, NEO3, NEO5, NEO8, NEO12	Unmapped (2)
		048	Identify and remove redundant culverts, reopening new stretches of watercourses which are available and accessible to people and wildlife.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U4	NEO6, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2, 3, 4)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
RW-2	Improve connectivity between watercourses and their floodplains to restore dynamic natural processes, reduce flood risk and create high quality semi-natural riparian habitats.	049	Reduce the height and profile of berms and banks where rivers have been over-deepened to allow rivers to spread out into their previously disconnected floodplains.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U5	NEO1, NEO2, NEO14	Unmapped (2, 4)
		050	Allow natural revegetation of buffer zones next to watercourses to provide space for native species to live and forage.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U6	NEO1, NEO2, NEO5, NEO8	Mapped
		051	Introduce new backwater and wetland features including ponds, and support the creation and restoration of floodplain meadows and associated habitats to add diversity to riparian areas and store water.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U7	NEO1, NEO2, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		052	Increase the extent of tree and/or woodland alongside watercourses and within floodplains, including wet woodland, particularly where they contribute to natural flood management.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U8	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4, NEO14	Mapped
		053	Improve the condition of wet woodland / riverside trees by promoting a varied age structure and species diversity.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U8	NEO1, NEO2, NEO4	Unmapped (2)
		054	Explore and respond to the opportunities presented by sand and gravel extraction in the Trent and Dove Valleys to help restore wetland habitat and connect the river to these sites through reduced bank heights, linking wetlands to the river, creating braided channels, etc.	TV6	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		055	Implement catchment-based approaches to the control and eradication of invasive non-native species that are having an adverse effect on the riverine system.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U8	NEO2, NEO3, NEO17	Unmapped (2)
RW-3	Improve and increase the biodiversity value of reservoirs and canals, their associated habitats and surrounding land, whilst safeguarding their role in water supply, transport and recreation.	056	Identify and remove redundant hard engineering along riverbanks, giving rivers space to move.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, ML2, CL2, TV3, MSL1, DE2, U8	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2)
		057	Enhance and manage reservoirs, their margins, and the surrounding land to increase biodiversity, including ornithological interest.	DSP4, PF4, MP1, MP2	NEO2, NEO3, NEO5	Unmapped (2)
		058	Reduce disturbance and other impacts to wildlife whilst increasing access and enjoyment of reservoirs and surrounding land through visitor management, the creation of appropriate public access routes, and other measures.	DSP4, PF4, DC4, TV3, MP1, MP2	NEO6	Unmapped (1, 2, 3)
		059	Restore derelict canals and reinstate missing sections to create additional habitat, improve ecological connectivity, and relieve recreational pressure from other sites.	PF4, DC1, TV3, U2	NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		060	Manage existing canals and their margins to maximise their biodiversity value whilst retaining and enhancing their value for other uses.	PF4, DC1, TV3, U2	NEO2, NEO6, NEO8	Unmapped (2)
RW-4	Improve the water quality of rivers and watercourses.	061	Identify and address point and diffuse sources of pollution, including sources of silt and agricultural run-off.	WP5, PF4, DC1, TV3, MSL1	NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 4)
		062	Create and maintain wetland habitats in strategic locations that are able to intercept and filter pollutants before they enter rivers and watercourses.	WP5, PF4, DC1, TV3, MSL1	NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 4)

4.6 Farmland

Derbyshire is still a rural county and retains large areas of highly productive farmland with stock rearing prevalent within the Peak District and its fringes, and mixed arable farmland more noticeable to the east and south of the county. Agricultural habitats can still support a range of wildlife particularly when managed alongside sustainable farming practices, to increase

food security and provide economic benefits to local communities. Protecting, enhancing, and connecting these habitats makes farmland more permeable to wildlife, creates more space for nature, and improves soil quality and supports pollinators essential for crop productivity.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
FL-1	Improve ecological connectivity through the farmed landscape.	063	Existing hedgerows are brought into good ecological management, including gapping up to improve connectivity, and the maintenance and introduction of hedgerow trees.	PF2, ML2, CL2, CL4, MP4, MSL3, MSL4	NEO2, NEO10	Mapped
		064	Replant hedgerows on former hedgerow alignments, or create new native, locally appropriate hedgerows in hedged landscapes, to improve connectivity and contribute to natural flood management.	PF2, ML2, CL2, CL4, MP4, MSL3, MSL4	NEO1, NEO10	Mapped
		065	Encourage the maintenance and appropriate management of dry-stone walls, particularly where these link up other key habitats, or will benefit key species such as great crested newt or bats.	DSP3, WP4, ML3	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (2, 3)
		066	Field margins, buffer strips, and ditches and watercourses are used to improve habitat connectivity and landscape permeability for species	WP2, ML2, ML3, CL2, MP4, MSL4	NEO1, NEO2	Mapped
FL-2	The farmed landscape is more favourable and permeable to wildlife, particularly plants, pollinators and invertebrates, and farmland birds.	067	Where an area is mapped for measure 043 or 083 and that measure cannot be delivered, improve the farmed landscape for pollinators, including through the establishment of herbal leys, flower-rich grass margins, in-field strips, nectar strips, or leaving unsprayed areas in arable fields.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, ML2, ML3, CL4, MP4, MSL4	NEO2, NEO3	Mapped
		068	Establish beetle banks and other areas for natural predators within arable farming.	ML3, CL4, MP4, MSL4	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
		069	Deliver interventions for the benefit of farmland birds including skylark plots, sowing of wild bird seed mix for winter cover crop, leaving stubble on cropped fields.	DSP3, DC5, ML3, MP4, MSL4	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
		070	Recognise the value and potential of semi-improved grasslands and seek to deliver further improvements for biodiversity.	DSP3, WP2, PF3, DC3, ML1, CL4	NEO2, NEO3, (NEO13, NEO14)	Unmapped (2, 3)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
FL-3	Land use practices are modified to avoid adverse impacts on the wider environment, including freshwater habitats, air quality, and soil health.	071	Farming practices reduce agricultural run-off, particularly to watercourses, especially where they are affecting habitats downstream.	WP5, PF4, DC1, CL4, TV3, MSL1	NEO1, NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 3)
		072	Where grazing occurs on land adjacent to streams and rivers, access by animals is controlled to prevent sediment entering the watercourse.	DSP4, WP5, PF4, DC1, CL4, TV3, MSL1	NEO1, NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 3)
		073	Where evidence demonstrates agricultural land is at risk of becoming a net emitter of carbon, practices are modified to deliver greater carbon sequestration.	DSP1, WP1, WP2, PF3, DC5, ML3, CL4, MP4, MSL4	NEO1, NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 3)
		074	Implement regenerative and organic farming practices such as permanent pasture, no till/minimum tillage practices, reducing the use of artificial inputs, and the planting of deep-rooted leys, in order to improve soil condition, carbon sequestration, natural flood management and biodiversity.	DSP1, WP1, WP2, PF3, DC5, ML3, CL4, MP4, MSL4	NEO1, NEO5, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2, 3)
		075	Reduce and prevent harm to nearby habitats by reducing diffuse pollution and emissions to air and water, particularly ammonia from agricultural activities.	WP1, WP5, CL4, MSL1	NEO1, NEO16	Unmapped (2, 3)

4.7 Wetlands

Beyond the wet blanket bogs of the Peak District, Derbyshire has other wetland habitat associated with ponds, lowland fen, swamp, marsh and reedbeds, especially evident in the coalfield landscapes, often associated with former colliery lagoons or subsidence flashes caused by past underground coal mining, and along the Trent Valley because of sand and gravel extraction. Many of these wetlands can be isolated

but continue to provide valuable habitat in often fragmented landscapes. The focus is on protecting and enhancing existing sites, buffering them from further harm, creating new wetlands where possible to connect the wetland network, particularly using sustainable urban drainage schemes as part of new urban development.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
WL-1	Safeguard and enhance wetland habitats including ponds, lowland fen, swamp, marsh, reedbed etc.	076	Sites are identified and in positive management to maximise their biodiversity value as wetlands and for their associated species.	DSP1, DSP4, WP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO2, NEO8, NEO12	Mapped
WL-2	Existing wetlands are managed and enhanced to support greater levels of biodiversity, for example for amphibians and invertebrates.	077	Existing moderate quality and neglected ponds and wetlands are restored and enhanced through biodiversity-focussed management including dew ponds in the White Peak.	DSP1, DSP4, WP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		078	Investigate and improve water quality (for example through use of buffer strips) where this is having a detrimental effect on the condition of wetlands.	WP5, PF4, DC1, TV3, MSL1	NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		079	Control and eradicate invasive non-native species within wetland habitats, and promote good biosecurity practices to restrict their spread.	DSP1, DSP4, WP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO2, NEO3, NEO17	Unmapped (2)
WL-3	The wetland resource is increased, connected, and existing sites are extended and buffered through the creation of new semi-natural wetlands.	080	Create new ponds and wetlands for example around new development, through enhanced green infrastructure or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).	DSP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE3, U3	NEO1, NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		081	Create new field ponds in appropriate locations and in areas of complementary habitat.	DSP4, PF4, DC6, CL4, TV1, MSL1	NEO1, NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		082	Target new pond and wetland creation to locations adjacent to existing high-quality wetland sites.	DSP1, DSP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Mapped
		083	Buffer and protect existing and new pond and wetland sites, through the creation and enhancement of complementary habitats (grasslands, rough margins, tree planting) to make space for water, improve water quality and help ensure wetlands can function naturally.	DSP1, DSP4, WP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Mapped
		084	Target wetland creation and enhancement to locations where they can contribute to or enhance connectivity within the wetland or riparian networks.	DSP1, DSP4, PF4, DC6, TV1, MSL1, DE2, U2	NEO1, NEO2, NEO8, NEO14	Mapped

4.8 Urban Environment and Infrastructure

Although largely a rural county, Derbyshire is home to around 800,000 people predominantly located in the former coalfield communities to the east of the county and in Derby, the only city. Protecting, enhancing, and linking urban habitats can contribute to nature recovery and help connect urban areas to their surrounding countryside for the benefit of its residents. These public health benefits can be secured through greater access to natural green space including woodlands, wetlands, parks, canals, and rivers, which also contribute to climate resilience through better natural flood management

and by reducing the urban heat effects. Existing environmental initiatives such as the National Forest and Heartwood Community Forest will be key mechanisms for connecting people with nature.

The urban environment also includes the road and other transport networks that criss-cross the county sometimes creating barriers to habitat and species connectivity whilst conversely providing opportunities to increase these connections, especially when applied alongside other measures in the wider landscape.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
UE-1	Urban environments become more biodiverse and permeable to wildlife.	085	Within urban settings, the most valuable habitat areas and sites for biodiversity are safeguarded and enhanced as reservoirs for wildlife in the area.	DE1, U1	NEO2	Mapped
		086	Habitat creation in urban areas should use native, locally appropriate species.	DE1, DE4, U1, U4	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		087	In redeveloping brownfield land, maintain a viable resource of open mosaic habitats, and retain the most valuable sites, for the species that depend on them.	DE1, DE4, U1, U5	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2)
		088	Urban green spaces, parks, allotments, cemeteries etc are managed with biodiversity in mind, to increase their value for wildlife.	DE1, DE3, U1, U3	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Mapped
		089	Maximise biodiversity and appropriate public access into publicly owned sites such as country parks, Local Nature Reserves, and greenways and multi-user trails.	DE3, U3	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Mapped
		090	Restore and improve the biodiversity value and functionality of rivers and watercourses through urban areas, address impacts from pollution and drainage, and improve visibility and accessibility to people.	DE2, DE4, U2, U4	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6, NEO8, NEO14	Unmapped (2)
		091	Residents are encouraged to make gardens more wildlife friendly, to increase biodiversity and habitat connectivity through urban areas.	DE6, U6	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		092	Deliver new, strategic biodiversity enhancement and green infrastructure, including through land use change and habitat creation within green wedges.	DE3, DE4, U3, U4, T1	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Mapped
		093	Where new developments are proposed that include underground watercourses, these sections are opened up and incorporated into the new development.	DE2, DE4, U2, U4	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
UE-1	Urban environments become more biodiverse and permeable to wildlife.	094	Urban biodiversity features including green/brown roofs and living walls are implemented in the most urban areas where other opportunities are limited.	DE4, U4	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		095	Identify and control invasive non-native species in urban areas e.g. Japanese knotweed, working collaboratively to develop schemes for their eradication and to prevent their spread.	DE1, U1	NEO2, NEO3, NEO17	Unmapped (2)
		096	Increase the use of sustainable alternatives to chemical herbicides, pesticides, insecticides etc where evidence demonstrates they are effective but less harmful to the environment.	DE1, U1	NEO2, NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 3)
UE-2	Urban wildlife species are supported, particularly where those species are in need of conservation action.	097	Watercourses and green spaces are managed with bats in mind, with lighting carefully considered to avoid impacts.	DE2, DE4, U2, U4	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
		098	Sustainable, permanent bat roosting features, or bat boxes, are incorporated into locations where they can be managed but otherwise remain undisturbed.	DE6, U6	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
		099	Nesting peregrine falcons in urban areas are supported and public engagement encouraged.	DE6	NEO2	Unmapped (2, 3)
		100	Wildlife friendly measures for example bat boxes, measures to support urban birds, hedgehog friendly neighbourhoods, ponds, and wildlife friendly planting are incorporated into new and existing development, facilitated through planning policy, urban design guidance or local projects as appropriate.	DE4, DE6, U4, U6	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
		101	Provide for pollinators throughout urban areas through pollinator friendly planting in parks, gardens, and other amenity areas.	DE4, U4, T1	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (2, 3)
		102	Where watercourses are present, they are afforded a minimum 10m buffer managed to ensure there is suitable cover available for water vole and other species.	DE2, U2	NEO2, NEO3, NEO5, NEO8	Unmapped (2, 3)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Reference to Section 3 key nature recovery opportunity	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
UE-3	Habitat creation and enhancement delivers for nature recovery and wildlife whilst maximising opportunities to deliver an improved network of locally appropriate, accessible, multifunctional green spaces, for the benefit of people.	103	Target nature recovery action, particularly habitat creation and enhancement, in areas of green belt and/or near to communities, to improve public access to nature, biodiversity, and environmental benefits.	DE3, U3	NEO2, NEO6	Mapped
		104	Target nature recovery action to locations adjacent to existing sites of biodiversity value to create larger, more robust and more resilient multifunctional blue and green spaces, which are better connected for people and wildlife.	DE1, DE4, U1, U4	NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		105	Biodiversity Net Gain and other nature recovery measures associated with development also deliver other social and environmental benefits (public access, Natural Flood Management etc), enabled through local planning policy and/or urban design guidance as appropriate.	DE3, U3	NEO1, NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		106	Local Authorities seek to identify additional sites to declare as Local Nature Reserves.	DE1, U1	NEO2, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
UE-4	Roads and other transport networks contribute positively to biodiversity.	107	Verges (and other vegetation) along existing roads, railways, greenways, and other transport corridors are managed positively, to promote biodiversity and improve connectivity across the landscape, and contribute to natural flood management.	DE4, U4, T1	NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		108	Biodiversity friendly measures are built into new roads, other transport routes, and developments and include wildflower rich verges, hedgerows, native tree planting, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and more.	T2	NEO1	Unmapped (2)
		109	Where major roads currently cause habitat severance and breaks in strategic ecological networks, reconnect habitats through green bridges, 'undergrounding' of routes, etc.	DE4, U4, T1	NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		110	New roads and transport infrastructure should avoid habitat severance through careful routing and design, and by building in wildlife underpasses etc. These should be retrofitted to roads where feasible and where significant habitat severance can be evidenced.	T1, T2	NEO2	Unmapped (2)
		111	Road and rail bridges over water should allow space to accommodate wildlife passage even in times of flood, and otter ledges etc should be fitted as required.	T1	NEO2	Unmapped (2)

4.9 People and Wildlife

Many of the opportunities identified by our partners lay beyond simply safeguarding, enhancing, and connecting existing habitats and species but recognised the critical role that people have to play in successful nature recovery. Priorities and measures have been developed to include better education, developing more opportunities for people to access and engage with wildlife, and to work collaboratively

with other sectors such as farmers and landowners to create partnerships, share best practice, and provide the necessary advice needed to allow these benefits to be delivered. In each case, the purpose of the measure is to deliver better outcomes for nature recovery – through supporting people to understand and care about their natural environment, therefore generating more conservation action and enabling people to be increasingly involved in nature recovery.

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
PW-1	People across Derbyshire are better informed about and more engaged with the natural environment, through education and awareness raising activities for the benefit of nature.	112	Environmental education equips children with knowledge to be able to understand the natural environment and care about local issues.	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
		113	Create and increase opportunities for training and development, including through apprenticeships, placements and taught courses, covering land management, ecological surveying and other nature-based skills.	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
		114	Use education and engagement to promote the sustainable and appropriate use of and access to the natural environment to help safeguard environmental assets.	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
		115	Install information boards (and/or online and remotely accessed resources) at accessible or visitor focussed sites explaining the biodiversity interest, nature recovery value and ecosystem service delivery of habitats on site – to ensure that site use is appropriate, supportive of nature and avoids harm.	NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
PW-2	People have more opportunities to actively engage with the natural environment, supporting and delivering nature recovery in their area.	116	Conservation volunteering opportunities increase, and there are more people engaged with local green spaces.	NEO6	Unmapped (1)
		117	Communities are engaged to support nature recovery in their area, through 'friends of' groups, community tree planting, 'clean up' events, community wildlife gardens and allotments, community farming, etc.	NEO1, NEO6	Unmapped (2)
		118	More people are enabled to support and facilitate nature recovery through species recording, habitat survey, citizen science, etc.	NEO1, NEO6	Unmapped (1)
		119	Create opportunities for children and young people to actively participate in nature recovery projects and to engage with the natural environment through initiatives like Forest Schools.	NEO1, NEO2	Unmapped (1)
		120	Deliver new and improved opportunities for appropriate public access to, enjoyment of and understanding of nature and wildlife sites, to foster appropriate stewardship and use of the natural environment.	NEO6	Unmapped (1)
		121	People are enabled and empowered to develop and implement community-led projects for nature recovery.	NEO1, NEO6	Unmapped (2)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Delivery of National Environmental Objective	Mapped/unmapped
PW-3	Promote the sharing of knowledge, information, and best practice to enable better stewardship and effective nature recovery.	122	Promote cooperation and collaboration between landowners/managers and other practitioners to achieve shared goals or contribute to larger environmental gains.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
		123	Share best practice to enable more effective implementation of conservation action across wider areas, towards common goals.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
		124	Increase knowledge and understanding of nature recovery requirements and the natural environment through increased habitat and species surveying.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1, 2)
		125	Coordinate action for controlling invasive non-native species, including facilitating collaboration, developing communications and engagement, and sharing best practice.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3, NEO17	Unmapped (1, 2)
		126	Develop an advisory and coordinating service to support farmers and landowners including to access funding to deliver LNRS Priorities and Measures.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1, 2)
		127	Develop nature recovery projects involving a broad range of other sympathetic and aligned user groups for example ramblers, horse riders, canoeists, anglers, shooting groups, etc. to maximise their impact and success and deliver better outcomes for nature.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3, NEO6	Unmapped (1, 2)
		128	Businesses and industry are supported to understand how their operation affects the natural environment, and how they can positively deliver nature recovery, including for the benefit of business.	NEO1, NEO2, NEO3	Unmapped (1)
PW-4	Safeguard high quality habitats and sensitive species by reducing the impact from people and managing visitor pressure.	129	Develop a market for green finance and payment for ecosystem services, to generate investment in nature recovery and natural capital in Derbyshire.	NEO2, NEO3, NEO13	Unmapped (1)
		130	Where impacts on high quality habitat and sensitive species are known to exist, develop strategies to reduce and mitigate visitor pressures.	NEO2, NEO3, NEO13	Unmapped (1)
		131	Promote public access and divert visitor pressure towards more local and less sensitive locations to reduce harm to more valuable habitats and species.	NEO2, NEO4, NEO13	Unmapped (1)

4.10 Species and Species Assemblages

The priorities and measures set out above will help deliver a network of more, bigger, better, and better-connected habitat across Derbyshire. Many species will benefit from this improved habitat network, supporting species recovery and resilience. This will help to halt the decline in species abundance and should deliver increased species abundance over time.

However, where species are at risk of extinction within England, we need to take additional action to halt their decline and promote their recovery. The species priorities set out below have been identified following the Natural England advice and methodology for addressing species recovery in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as discussed in section 2.7 of the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

This methodology resulted in the identification of a shortlist of 199 potential priority species for which Derbyshire could play an important role in supporting their recovery. Those species were initially assigned to 20 potential priority assemblages, leaving a further 15 species that didn't fit into assemblages because they require bespoke conservation action. Those potential priority species and assemblages were then assessed to identify the highest priorities for inclusion in the LNRS, and those final priority species and assemblages are set out below. Details of the LNRS species long list and priority species shortlist are included as appendix 7.

Each priority species, reintroduction priority species, and priority assemblage is accompanied by measures which will support their recovery. It must be noted that the species priorities and measures below must be read in conjunction with the habitat-based priorities and measures set out above. Many of these species below will already benefit from some of the measures identified for the habitat in which they can be found. The measures set out below are those additional actions which are required to safeguard the recovery of these species.

A small number of species measures have also been mapped, but in many instances, this has not been possible. There are many reasons for this – for example, many species measures relate to the need to improve our state of knowledge, improving our understanding of the range or distribution of those species. In many instances, species recovery could be supported over a large area, or action would be similarly beneficial over large areas, and thus it is not practical to map all these areas, nor to identify locations that are more favourable than others. Finally, in some instances, it is recognised that some species are at risk of disturbance or persecution, and it is therefore not appropriate to advertise the locations of their core sites.

In the table below, you will find measures clearly identified as either mapped, or unmapped. Where a measure is unmapped, we have identified (in parentheses) the reason why the measure is unmapped, mirroring the criteria used for the habitat measures above:

1. The measure does not relate to or support habitat creation or improvement, or is not tied to a location
2. The measure would be similarly beneficial over wide areas – for example action for hedgehog or water vole could take place in suitable habitat across the county and be similarly beneficial, and so priority areas have not been identified
3. The measure, on its own, would be unlikely to raise the biodiversity value of the land to enable it to become 'of importance for biodiversity' or have significant gains for that species – some measures support the recovery of a species, rather than being critical to it.
4. It was not possible to find a suitable location to carry out the measure
5. Other – locations not mapped for other reasons, for example concerns about disclosing location increasing risks of disturbance or persecution, or if mapping actions is dependent upon mapping species distribution or core sites first (*see appendix 8 for further explanation*).

Priority Species

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SP-1	Adder (<i>Vipera berus</i>)	001	Ensure core sites are sympathetically managed for adder.	Unmapped (5)
		002	Identify and safeguard key basking sites, maternal birthing sites and summer foraging areas.	Unmapped (5)
		003	Identify areas where adder could expand or disperse to and manage and enhance key habitat corridors to increase resilience and create sustainable populations.	Unmapped (5)
		004	Use controlled reintroduction from healthy populations to establish adders in previously occupied sites as necessary.	Unmapped (5)
		005	Raise awareness about threats to adders.	Unmapped (5)
		006	Reduce and manage disturbance to adder from recreation, grazing and other damaging management activities.	Unmapped (5)
		007	Identify measures to reduce the threat of fire.	Unmapped (5)
SP-2	Black-poplar (<i>Populus nigra</i> ssp. <i>Betulifolia</i>)	008	Identify, safeguard and monitor existing trees, bringing them into positive management, including control of pests and diseases.	Mapped
		009	Increase planting of black poplar in suitable locations, predominantly within the Trent Valley Washlands NCA, using locally appropriate source stock, whilst seeking to improve the genetic variability in newly planted trees.	Unmapped (2)
		010	Register black poplar stands on Forest Reproductive Materials (FRM) register.	Unmapped (1)
		011	Establish tree nurseries for the provision of local provenance trees taken from registered Forest Reproductive Materials (FRM) sites.	Unmapped (1)
		012	Identify and map breeding ponds and toad road crossing points.	Unmapped (1)
SP-3	Common Toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>)	013	Improve signage for toad crossings and support volunteer groups/toad crossing groups.	Unmapped (5)
		014	Ensure new development include measures such as dropped kerbs, amphibian ladders, toad tunnels and fencing for mitigating impacts on toads.	Unmapped (2, 5)
		015	Ensure new ponds are created to meet the needs of toads.	Unmapped (2, 5)
		016	Enhance habitat and connectivity around key ponds.	Unmapped (5)
		017	Biosecurity to minimise and address risks of disease.	Unmapped (5)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SP-4	Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	018	Create hedgehog highways that connect green space and gardens within urban areas and include gaps or holes in fences and other boundaries to improve connectivity for hedgehogs through gardens, including through new gardens in residential developments.	Unmapped (2)
		019	Undertake surveys to identify viable hedgehog populations and undertake targeted habitat improvement including restoring and planting new hedgerows, providing suitable scrub and grassland, and leaving field margins and headlands.	Unmapped (2)
		020	Encourage installation of hibernacula in gardens.	Unmapped (2)
		021	Reduce or eliminate pesticide use in gardens and green spaces	Unmapped (2)
		022	Identify barriers to movement and population interaction and install mitigation such as wildlife tunnels under roads	Unmapped (2)
SP-5	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	023	Support action to halt illegal persecution.	Unmapped (2)
SP-6	Leisler's Bat (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)	024	Install and monitor specified bat boxes in known locations to mitigate and encourage roost sites in across strategic areas.	Unmapped (4)
		025	Avoid felling mature trees, especially parkland trees where roosting opportunities are present.	Unmapped (2)
		026	Map distribution and roosts.	Unmapped (1)
		027	Reducing disturbance and recreational pressure.	Unmapped (4)
SP-7	Ring Ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>)	028	Create moorland edge mosaics by increasing scrub and small tree cover including berry bearing rowan and bilberry.	Mapped
		029	Provide grassy foraging areas managed through extensive mixed grazing with cattle and ponies to promote a more varied vegetation structure.	Unmapped (2)
		030	Identification, monitoring and safeguarding of key remaining population strongholds and breeding areas.	Unmapped (1)
		031	Manage recreational pressure on nesting sites by, for example, voluntary climbing exclusion zones during the breeding season.	Unmapped (2)
SP-8	Water Vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>)	032	Reduce and where possible eradicate pressure from introduced predators (e.g. Mink).	Unmapped (2)
		033	Manage riverside banks, canals, ditches, and watercourses to create areas of sunny shallow water margins with bankside vegetation but avoid overshadowing of the water from scrub or trees.	Unmapped (2)
		034	Restore more natural riverbanks, in appropriate locations, and reduce invasive non-native species.	Unmapped (2)
		035	Avoid trampling and intensive grazing along the watercourse edge and reduce disturbance, particularly from dogs entering the watercourse.	Unmapped (2)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SP-9	White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)	036	Survey watercourses to identify extant populations of White Clawed Crayfish and assess threats and options.	Unmapped (1)
		037	Manage and monitor ARK (safe haven) sites to ensure translocated populations are maintained	Unmapped (5)
		038	Protect in-situ populations and prioritise their habitat needs by achieving consistent, steady flows of good or very good quality water.	Unmapped (5)
		039	Manage riverbanks to offer numerous natural or artificial 'refuges' which offer opportunities to hide from predators.	Unmapped (2)
		040	Take suitable effective actions to exclude American Signal Crayfish if effective techniques emerge.	Unmapped (2)
		041	Identify new ARK sites and translocate WCC to new ARK sites.	Unmapped (2, 4)
		042	Implement biosecurity measures, particularly for anglers and other people and equipment that enters the water.	Unmapped (2)
SP-10	White-letter Hairstreak (<i>Satyrus w-album</i>)	043	Identify suitable locations for the planting of disease resistant elm trees suited to the needs of White-letter Hairstreak, with a focus on sites close to existing populations.	Unmapped (2)
		044	Identify and safeguard existing populations of White-letter Hairstreak.	Unmapped (1)
		045	Establish nursery for disease resistant elm trees	Unmapped (1)
		046	Monitor the use of disease resistant elm trees by the butterflies to ensure colonies can be sustained throughout the lifecycle.	Unmapped (2)
		047	Retain existing elm trees and do not fell where possible and allow elm suckers to grow where they appear.	Unmapped (2)
		048	Identify surviving or potentially Dutch elm disease resistant elm trees and assess their suitability for supporting White-letter Hairstreak.	Unmapped (2)
		049	In areas where scrub or woods show evidence of Dutch elm disease, coppice elms on a 7 – 14-year cycle.	Unmapped (2)
		050	Manage hedgerow shelterbelts that contain elm and avoid cutting edges where new elm suckers appear.	Unmapped (2)
		051	Connect habitats with hedgerows containing Wych Elm (<i>Ulmus glabra</i>) as a hedging plant and disease resistant elms as hedgerow trees.	Unmapped (2)
SP-11	Willow Tit (<i>Poecile montanus</i>)	052	Restore and create wet woodlands with young birch, elder, willow and alder with a focus on sites close to existing/recent populations.	Unmapped (2)
		053	Retain and create a supply of deadwood, such as tall snags, stumps, fallen trees, within and around wet woodland and scrub.	Unmapped (2)
		054	Create structural diversity and promote dense scrub growth near Willow Tit nesting sites through selective felling or the reintroduction of coppicing within damp woodlands.	Unmapped (2)
		055	To improve the stability of Willow Tit populations, link up suitable habitats by creating or retaining scrub lined river corridors and mature hedgerows.	Unmapped (2)

Species Reintroductions

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SR-1	Beaver (<i>Castor fiber</i>)	056	Undertake feasibility studies into the reintroduction of beaver to Trent/Derwent and other catchments.	Unmapped (1)
		057	Raise awareness about the benefits of beaver reintroduction.	Unmapped (1)
		058	Develop a plan for addressing concerns and negative impacts from beaver.	Unmapped (1)
		059	Reintroduce beaver to the wild once Government approved.	Unmapped (4)
SR-2	Pine marten (<i>Martes martes</i>)	060	Undertake a feasibility study into the reintroduction of pine marten in Derbyshire.	Unmapped (1)
		061	Establish a network of partners and landowner supporters and stakeholders.	Unmapped (1)
		062	Develop a reintroduction program for pine marten	Unmapped (1)
		063	Raise awareness about the benefits of pine marten reintroduction.	Unmapped (1)
		064	Reintroduce pine marten to suitable areas within 5 years if feasible.	Unmapped (4)
SR-3	Black grouse (<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>)	065	Undertake a feasibility study into the reintroduction of black grouse in Derbyshire.	Unmapped (1)
		066	Establish a network of partners and landowner supporters and stakeholders.	Unmapped (1)
		067	Develop a reintroduction program for black grouse.	Unmapped (1)
		068	Reintroduce black grouse to suitable areas within 5 years if feasible.	Unmapped (4)
SR-4	Red-backed shrike (<i>Lanius collurio</i>)	069	Undertake a feasibility study into the reintroduction of red-backed shrike in Derbyshire.	Unmapped (1)
		070	Establish a network of partners and landowner supporters and stakeholders.	Unmapped (1)
		071	Develop a reintroduction program for red-backed shrike.	Unmapped (1)
		072	Reintroduce red-backed shrike to suitable areas within 5 years if feasible.	Unmapped (4)

Species Assemblages

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SA-1	Deadwood species assemblage (16 species)	073	Survey key sites to establish an up-to-date baseline of species occurrence and range.	Unmapped (4)
		074	Identify key features for deadwood invertebrates, fungi and lichens at key sites/landscapes.	Unmapped (2)
		075	Retain mature and over-mature trees, standing and fallen deadwood within the key sites and in the surrounding countryside.	Unmapped (2)
		076	Create artificial rot holes to increase breeding opportunities for insects.	Unmapped (2)
		077	Increase floristic diversity within parks and wood-pastures.	Unmapped (2)
		078	Ensure supply of deadwood through tree regeneration, ring-barking younger trees where suitable.	Unmapped (2)
SA-2	Grassland fungi (20 species)	079	Identification, safeguarding and monitoring of important remaining sites.	Unmapped (1)
		080	Landowner and land manager engagement and support.	Unmapped (2)
		081	Enhance and appropriately manage remaining semi-natural grasslands with fungi assemblages including ensuring appropriate soil hydrology.	Unmapped (2)
		082	Avoid use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers.	Unmapped (2)
		083	Graze sites extensively but ensure short thatch free swards by autumn.	Unmapped (2)
SA-3	Threatened grassland flora and fauna (35 species)	084	Showcase successful grassland management and encourage awareness of the value of grassland fungi.	Unmapped (2)
		085	Identify and map extant locations for all threatened plants and insects.	Unmapped (1)
		086	Ensure sympathetic habitat management at these locations.	Unmapped (2)
		087	Identify threats.	Unmapped (2)
		088	Seek opportunities to expand and increase abundance and range of species along corridors, stepping stone sites and newly created/enhanced sites.	Unmapped (2)
		089	Reintroduce plant species where appropriate e.g. Maiden Pink.	Unmapped (2)
		090	Monitor species assemblage.	Unmapped (2)
SA-4	Threatened wetland flora and fauna (22 species)	091	Confirm current distribution and abundance for wetland species.	Unmapped (1)
		092	Ensure monitoring is in place for key species.	Unmapped (2)
		093	Create new wetlands in strategic locations to benefit these species.	Unmapped (2)
		094	Improve/protect water quality and habitat to benefit key species (stonefly, mayfly, crane fly).	Unmapped (2)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SA-5	Farmland wader assemblage <i>(curlew, snipe, lapwing, redshank)</i>	095	Encourage extensive grazing and appropriate rush management, avoiding cutting and grazing during the breeding season.	Unmapped (2)
		096	Encourage habitat heterogeneity for moorland edge and grassland and restore ditches and wet features including creating scrapes within fields.	Unmapped (2)
		097	Discourage intensification and drainage to retain wet grassland and rush pasture.	Unmapped (2)
		098	Targeted predator control undertaken as part of an integrated strategy to reduce pressures upon priority species.	Mapped
SA-6	Mixed farming bird and plant assemblage <i>(24 species)</i>	099	Supplementary feeding stations over the winter.	Unmapped (2)
		100	Ensure late autumn, winter and early spring seed sources are available.	Unmapped (2)
		101	Avoid mowing or crop harvesting during periods where nests will be impacted.	Unmapped (2)
		102	Grow and maintain multi-species cover crops, and cut later in the year, to provide food and cover over the winter.	Unmapped (2)
		103	Avoid / minimise use of insecticides on grassland and crops.	Unmapped (2)
		104	Set aside dedicated patches of unmanaged or uncropped areas with tall grasses, along field boundaries and margins, field corners or less productive areas, particularly where they will connect.	Unmapped (2)
		105	Leave arable margins.	Unmapped (2)
		106	Encourage organic and regenerative farming methods.	Unmapped (2)
		107	Install nestboxes for target species.	Unmapped (2)
		108	Restore / create native hedgerow / scrub habitat.	Unmapped (2)
SA-7	Urban bird assemblage <i>(4 species)</i>	110	Identify, monitor and safeguard nesting and roosting sites and seek to identify hotspots for urban bird species within this assemblage.	Unmapped (2)
		111	Incorporate universal nest bricks for swift, starling and house sparrow, as well as house martin nesting cups, into new development, and retrofit these into existing buildings.	Unmapped (2)
		112	Increase awareness and education about urban bird species and the importance of the built environment as habitat for these species.	Unmapped (2)
		113	Support local action groups to undertake surveys, and to engage with householders/landlords and local tradespeople to increase awareness of swift nests and help them avoid destroying access holes when undertaking repairs to buildings.	Unmapped (2)

ID	Priority	Ref	Measure	Mapped/ unmapped
SA-8	Landscape mosaic assemblage <i>(18 species)</i>	114	Identify and record areas that are or have the potential to function as landscape mosaic sites.	Unmapped (2)
		115	Maintain and enhance existing areas of mosaic habitats through a combination of grazing and natural processes.	Unmapped (2)
		116	Create large areas of scrub, open grassland and wetlands and manage through naturalistic grazing and natural processes to benefit existing species and encourage colonisation from outside the County.	Unmapped (2)

Acknowledgements

The preparation of Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been a truly collaborative endeavour, made possible only through the generous contributions of time, expertise and enthusiasm from individuals and organisations across the county. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported and contributed to this work over the last two years.

Governance and Leadership

Our sincere thanks go to the members of our three core governance groups, whose guidance, oversight and input have been invaluable:

Supporting Authorities Group representatives from: Amber Valley Borough Council, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derby City Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, East Midlands Combined County Authority, Erewash Borough Council, High Peak Borough Council, Natural England, North East Derbyshire District Council, Peak District National Park Authority, and South Derbyshire District Council. Special thanks to the chair and vice-chairs of the Supporting Authorities Group for their additional input into the development and coordination of the LNRS.acknowledgments

Steering Group representatives from: Country Land and Business Association, Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire's district and borough councils, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Harworth Group, The National Trust, The National Farmers Union, Peak District National Park Authority, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Devonshire Group, The Institute of Quarrying, and University of Derby. Thank you to the chair of the group for steering forward our discussions and plans so that we have been able to develop a consensus whilst respecting and reflecting different perspectives.

Advisory Board members, including political and officer representatives from Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority, supported and advised by Natural England, and the chairs of the Steering Group and Supporting Authorities Group. Thank you to the chair for facilitating our discussions and supporting the work of the LNRS core team.

Specialist Working Groups

We extend our appreciation to the experts who contributed to our three specialist working groups:

Priorities and Measures Group: Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Eastern Moors Partnership, Environment Agency, National Farmers Union, Peak District National Park Authority, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and University of Derby.

Mapping Group: Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, National Forest, Natural England, and Peak District National Park Authority. Thank you to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for work on mapping

Species Technical Group: Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society, Derbyshire Bat Group, Derbyshire Biological Records Centre, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Flora Recorder, Derbyshire Ornithological Society, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, East Midlands Butterfly Conservation, mammal, fungi and lower plant experts, Natural England, Peak District National Park, and Sorby Natural History Society. Thank you to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre for leading the assessment of species priorities.

Project Partners

Our project partners provided essential specialist support and expertise throughout the development process: The University of Derby, The Young Foundation, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Jacobs, Diva Creative Ltd, and Designing Dialogue CIC. We are also grateful for the hard work and dedication of colleagues within Derbyshire County Council who coordinated and authored the strategy, drawing together the wealth of contributions to develop the LNRS.

Community Engagement

This strategy has been enriched by the contributions of hundreds of individuals, stakeholders and representatives of organisations who participated in our engagement activities:

- The **120 delegates** who attended our launch conference in January 2024, joining us in this work from the very beginning.
- The **67 individuals representing 43 partner organisations and key stakeholders** who took part in our preliminary dialogue workshops and meetings, co-creating the guiding principles that underpin this strategy and providing early direction and consensus on the priorities for the LNRS.
- The **151 participants representing over 60 stakeholder organisations** who attended our place-based engagement events across the county and our themed online sessions, sharing their local knowledge, detailed insight and expertise, and providing invaluable feedback on the emerging strategy.
- The **more than 1,000 residents** who responded to our public survey, providing crucial insights into public attitudes towards nature and priorities for recovery.
- The **158 farmers, landowners and land managers** who participated in our sector-specific survey and engagement activities, sharing their practical expertise and unique perspectives on land management in Derbyshire's landscapes.
- The **683 individuals** who took the time to review our draft strategy documents and respond to our public consultation survey, as well as those who submitted responses by email or who commented on the drafts of the LNRS mapping.

Wider Community

We also wish to thank the many farmers, landowners, community groups, environmental organisations, businesses, residents, and visitors to Derbyshire who engaged with us through workshops, consultations, surveys, and through informal conversations. Your collective voice has been central to ensuring this strategy truly reflects what matters most to our communities, for biodiversity, and for nature recovery and the function of our natural environments. The development of this Local Nature Recovery Strategy demonstrates what can be achieved when people come together with a shared commitment to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. We look forward to continuing this collaboration as we work together to implement the vision and priorities set out in this strategy.

Thank you all for making this strategy possible
Derbyshire County Council
September 2025

