

Dear Members

### **Cabinet**

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Tuesday 17 February 2026** at **6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Governance

## **CABINET - 17 FEBRUARY 2026**

**Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey**

### **AGENDA**

- 1 Minutes of 22 January 2026 as circulated and published on 27 January 2026
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

#### **Page Nos**

#### **(a) RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

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| (i) Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026-27 | 3 - 15 |
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#### **(b) CLIMATE ACTION AND NATURE RECOVERY PORTFOLIO**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| (i) Biodiversity Duty Reporting: Stafford Borough Council's New Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2030 | 16 - 66 |
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### **Membership**

**Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| A T A Godfrey | - Leader  |
| R Kenney      | - Deputy Leader (Town Centres Regeneration Portfolio) |
| R P Cooke     | - Resources Portfolio                                 |
| I D Fordham   | - Environment Portfolio                               |
| J Hood        | - Community Portfolio                                 |
| G P K Pardesi | - Leisure Portfolio                                   |
| A N Pearce    | - Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio        |
| A F Reid      | - Economic Development and Planning Portfolio         |

**Agenda Item 4(a)i****Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026-27**

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 February
<b>Report of:</b>	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Resources

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**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To approve the proposed changes to the Council's Local Council Tax Reduction scheme with effect from 1 April 2026.
- 1.2 To recommend that Council formally adopts those changes at its meeting on 24 February 2026.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the report be noted.
- 2.2 That its meeting on 24 February 2026, Council be asked to adopt the changes to the scheme, explained in this, regarding:
  - Increases in Income Band Thresholds, in line with changes to Universal Credit to increase the standard allowance by more than inflation and to remove the 2-child limit.
  - Protection for disabled Universal Credit claimants, who receive other incomes in addition to Universal Credit.
  - Closing a potential loophole in respect of, usually self-employed, claimants who earn less than the minimum wage.
  - Disregarding certain payment types relating to LGBT compensation scheme for armed forces, in line with national benefits.
  - Extending the period of time for which a claimant can receive LCTR whilst temporarily away from home, in 'war-torn' areas.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2.3 The Council's LCTR scheme for working aged claimants has been a banded income discount scheme since 2020. In order to maintain the levels of support afforded to claimants of Universal Credit, it is important that the income thresholds contained in our scheme are increased each year in line with increases to Universal Credit payments. The methodology for annual uprating to Universal Credit payments is changing from 2026 and the 2-child cap is being removed. Our scheme will be similarly changed, to maintain LCTR awards at their current level for affected claimants.
- 2.4 Recent caselaw has determined that some of the circumstances in which Councils use their discretionary powers to protect disabled UC claimants is not appropriate and the protections must be written into the main, Council approved scheme.

## **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 The changes referred to above are operational changes to the detail of our scheme. Our scheme works well and provides support for almost 7,000 households of which 4,700 are of working age.
- 3.2 Since the changes that were made in 2024 to passport claims for non-working UC cases we are able to process 90% of the electronic notifications of UC entitlement and changes that we receive from DWP automatically, without manual intervention. Significant savings of resource are achieved and customers receive notifications of entitlement much quicker than would otherwise be the case. It is important that as well as keeping in line with developing law, we keep our scheme aligned with UC process in order to maintain the degree of automation.
- 3.3 The recommendations will maintain the current levels of LCTR for those Universal Credit claimants who will receive an increased amount from 2026 onwards.
- 3.4 Whilst there are no budgetary implications to the changes proposed, as changes to the wording of our scheme are required a Consultation process is required. This was undertaken and an analysis of the results of that process is attached at **APPENDIX 1** to this report.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Corporate Business Objective 4 is served by this response to the immediate financial needs of some of the poorest residents in the Stafford area.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 Prior to April 2013 the Council Tax Benefit scheme was a national, statutory scheme, which afforded a reduction of 100% to the Council Tax bills of those



residents on the lowest incomes. This scheme was abolished from 1 April 2013 when local authorities were required to implement local schemes.

- 5.2 This Council, in common with most others, introduced a scheme which stated that most working aged claimants could be granted LCTR of a maximum of 80% of their bill, meaning that they had to pay at least 20%. Exceptions to this rule were included for parents of children aged under 5 years, and disabled people in receipt of certain disability-based benefits, who could still qualify for up to 100%.
- 5.3 From 1 April 2020, this Council made changes to its scheme for working aged claimants by introducing a banded income discount scheme. This simplified the calculation of entitlement for working aged claimants and increased the number of claimants that could receive up to 100% reduction. The 80% cap remained a feature of the scheme and still affects most working aged claimants.
- 5.4 In 2024 the Council amended its scheme to simplify the processing of LCTR claims and changes relating to claimants of UC. Significant resource savings and improved processing times resulted. Continued alignment to UC processing rules is needed to continue to maintain these efficiencies.
- 5.5 Until now, UC payments have been increased each April in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) rates at the preceding September (3.8% in September 2025). Our schemes therefore also increase the income banding thresholds by September CPI so as to have a neutral impact on awards and scheme costs. In April 2026 UC will change by more than inflation. In April 2026 UC will rise by 6.2% for claimants aged over 25 (6.9% for under 25's) and the standard methodology will be repealed in favour of an individual decision each year. Therefore, in order to maintain alignment with UC, our scheme wording needs to change to remove reference to September CPI and instead include annual increases in line with UC awards. If we do not do this, some UC claimants will have to pay more Council Tax, thereby negating the effect of the extra income that the government will be giving to them.
- 5.6 A 2-child cap currently exists in Universal Credit whereby claimants with more than 2 children do not receive additional benefit for the 3<sup>rd</sup> child or subsequent children. This will be removed and parents of 3 and more children will receive more Universal Credit. Our scheme will be amended to preserve the current rate of LCTR for those parents.
- 5.7 There will potentially be a very small incidental cost as people who are not on Universal Credit (typically on disability benefits or in low paid employment) may get pay rises less than the Universal Credit increases and therefore potentially qualify for more LCTR. Assuming that these (estimated 61 according to the current caseload) claimants, get no pay increase at all next year, and the threshold increase moves them into the next LCTR bracket our scheme costs would rise by less than £20,000 which is affordable under current budgets. This hypothetical scenario is unlikely to materialise and so actual cost increase will be lower. Our annual expenditure on LCTR is a little over £8M.

- 5.8 Furthermore, the slight increases for some disabled people and working, low income, families helps to support the scheme's objectives.
- 5.9 The manner in which Universal Credit entitlement is affected when disabled claimants receive other incomes alongside their UC can cause anomalies within Councils' LCTR schemes resulting in lower entitlement to LCTR. Councils traditionally address such anomalies by use of their discretionary powers to increase awards of LCTR. Recent caselaw has stated that reliance on discretionary powers alone, which a local authority may withdraw, is not sufficient. The equitable treatment of the disabled claimants must be a feature of the main approved LCTR scheme, rather than being corrected by use of discretion outside of the scheme.
- 5.10 The changes made to our scheme in 2024, to 'passport' all non-working UC claims for LCTR prevents the anomaly from occurring in all but a very specific and atypical set of circumstances. We would currently use a discretionary payment in these circumstances but now must re-word our scheme to make the protection and entitlement within the main scheme.
- 5.11 A potential weakness exists in our scheme whereby a self-employed claimant could claim to be working full time hours (thereby enjoying enhancements with the scheme) but receiving little or no income. There are no instances of this having taken place. National benefits have been changed to assume that in these cases the claimant is earning the minimum wage for the hours they claim to work, up to 35 hours, for the purpose of calculating entitlement. This is known as a Minimum Income Floor (MIF).
- 5.12 In these circumstances we would similarly set our MIF at 35 hours at the National Minimum Wage rate one year after the claimant began to trade. Discretion will be retained to reduce the number of hours included where special circumstances apply. For example, if the claimant cannot work full time due to caring responsibilities.
- 5.13 No such cases currently exist in our area, but following the lead of DWP based benefits is accepted best practice.
- 5.14 Treatment of LGBT armed forces compensation payments and temporary absence in 'war-torn' region

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

The cost of the LCTR scheme is accounted for within the Council's Council Tax Base calculation. The changes recommended in this report do not significantly change the Tax Base and do not include significant cost.

**6.2 Legal**

The scheme and process for amendment are prescribed in Section 13A of Local Government Finance act 1992 and subsequent regulations.

**6.3 Human Resources**

None

**6.4 Risk Management**

None

**6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

The changes within this report have a positive impact upon the support for disabled claimants, families and those in low paid employment, by maintaining their current levels of LCTR.

**6.6 Health**

None

**6.7 Climate Change**

None

**7 Appendices**

None

**8 Previous Consideration**

The current LCTR scheme was approved by Council on 27 February 2024.

**9 Background Papers**

None

**Contact Officer:** Rob Wolfe - Local Taxation and Benefits Manager

**Telephone Number:** 01543 46 4397



**Ward Interest:** No

**Report Track:** Cabinet 17 February 2026 and Council 24 February 2026




**Key Decision:** No

# Stafford Borough Council - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27 Consultation

## 1. Background to the Consultation

1. I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme: This question must be answered before you can continue.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		96.43%	27
2	No		3.57%	1
			answered	28
			skipped	0

## 2. Option 1 - To enhance the scheme to allow for additional dependants (currently limited to two) in line with the changes to Universal Credit

2. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		41.18%	7
2	No		35.29%	6
3	Don't Know		23.53%	4
			answered	17
			skipped	11




3. If you disagree what alternative would you propose?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	7
1	00			
2	I do not believe that lifting the child benefit cap was a sensible approach to lift children out of poverty and think this will compound that while further rewarding those irresponsible when planning families they can afford.			
3	Keep it at the current levels			
4	Option 2			
5	I would expect to see more financial help for the disabled. We have had to struggle for 3 years on one income due to not being able to work because my partners wage is over the threshold. I'm the one with the disabilities, I'm the one who lost the second income, I had to enter an IVA because I couldn't afford payments. This is not my partners problem it's mine, do not penalise partners of disabled people			

### 3. If you disagree what alternative would you propose?

6	The cost of rising bills are becoming a major burden for many households. Therefore, I do not think it is fair to only make allowances for households who have more than two children, as those households with only two children are also struggling. I think an increase to the income levels in each band would be a more fairer way of ensuring equality for all.		
7	I would expect to see more financial help for the disabled. We have had to struggle for 3 years on one income due to not being able to work because my partners wage is over the threshold. I'm the one with the disabilities, I'm the one who lost the second income, I had to enter an IVA because I couldn't afford payments. This is not my partners problem it's mine, do not penalise partners of disabled people		
		answered	7
		skipped	21

3. Option 2 - To allow the Council to increase the income levels for each discount band by an appropriate amount to account for changes in benefit levels




### 4. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		69.23%	9
2	No		7.69%	1
3	Don't Know		23.08%	3
			answered	13
			skipped	15

### 5. If you disagree what alternative would you propose?




Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	1
	1	00		
			answered	1
			skipped	27

4. Option 3 - To disregard all elements in Universal Credit which relate to disability or caring

6. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		25.00%	3
2	No		41.67%	5
3	Don't Know		33.33%	4
			answered	12
			skipped	16




7. If you disagree what alternative would you propose?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	3
	1	00		
	2	I disapprove of any measure that will increase the tax burden that is already unsustainable.		
	3	I think raising the income thresholds for each banding would be fairer.		
			answered	3
			skipped	25

5. Option 4 - To introduce a Minimum Income Floor (MIF) for self employed and directors of Ltd companies.

8. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		36.36%	4
2	No		27.27%	3
3	Don't Know		36.36%	4
			answered	11
			skipped	17

9. If you disagree what alternative would you propose?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4
1	00		
2	I feel this method is open to abuse so would not like to see it implemented.		
3	Option 2 seems fairest and most balanced.		
4	This is the first we have heard of this and it closes tomorrow Is that fair No time to read and understand it Typical council, last at giving out important info first on to balif if payment late		
		answered	4
		skipped	24

6. Option 5 - To disregard payments made under the LGBT Compensation scheme and the Miscarriage of Justice Compensation Scheme when assessing any support

10. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	27.27%	3
2	No 	27.27%	3
3	Don't Know 	45.45%	5
		answered	11
		skipped	17

11. If you disagree what alternative would you propose?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4
1	00		
2	I feel these elements should be included in the tax summary.		
3	Option 2 Seems fairest and most balanced		
4	Never heard of this before		
		answered	4
		skipped	24

## 7. Alternatives to changing the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

### 12. Please use this space to make any other comments on the proposed scheme.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	6
1	00		
2	The level of savings needs increasing,£6k is low		
3	Thank you for consulting us on this matter.		
4	<p>Any person who has had to relocate and rehouse due to domestic violence should be exempt from any council tax for 12 months from the move in date to the new property.</p> <p>This will help the most vulnerable in the community who often have to relocate through no choice of their own get back on their feet and it will also encourage those that feel trapped in an unsafe abusive relationship due to finances to understand that they do have options and they can afford to leave with the right channels of support.</p> <p>I had to relocate twice in two years with three children, whilst completing a full time nursing degree. At one point because of a miscalculation through no fault of my own I was receiving less than 300 per month in universal credit ... that's it. However my course had finished and I was eligible to pay council tax ... two years later I'm still trying to recover financially!</p>		
5	Won't benefit us whatever you do		
6	<p>We will still be disadvantaged by whatever you do as I am only entitled to pip and esa</p> <p>Nothing else</p> <p>We have had to borrow money to pay bills how is that fair</p>		
		answered	6
		skipped	22

### 13. Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options (please state).

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4
1	00		
2	Remove the discount and use the offset to avoid raising the council tax at a maximum 5% which will again be above inflation making all poorer, this would break the mould nationally, give the tax payers a reprieve, and be a vote winner.		
3	<p>I believe Staffordshire county council have an opportunity to lead by example and be the first county in the country to review council tax as a whole and not just the schemes in relations to benefits and income.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in housing. Some social, some private with the majority of the roads being unadapted by the council. I believe there should be a fair reduction element that is not means tested for any household that stands on a road that the council do not plan to adopt. This will not only support benefit tenants, it will also support owners and landlords. Overall, because the council tax would reduce it would in turn reduce the cost of the council tax schemes and bridge a gap between the support that benefit claimants receive in comparison to private owners.</p>		
4	Consider the disabled and their unpaid carers who still have to work a full time job and don't get any help		
		answered	4





13. Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options (please state).




skipped 24

## 8. About You





14. Are you, or someone in your household, getting a Council Tax Reduction at this time?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		42.86%	3
2	No		57.14%	4
3	Don't Know		0.00%	0
			answered	7
			skipped	21

15. What is your sex?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		42.86%	3
2	Female		42.86%	3
3	Prefer not to say		14.29%	1
			answered	7
			skipped	21

16. Age

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	18-24		0.00%	0
2	25-34		28.57%	2
3	35-44		28.57%	2
4	45-54		14.29%	1
5	55-64		14.29%	1
6	65-74		0.00%	0
7	75-84		0.00%	0
8	85+		0.00%	0

## 16. Age

9	Prefer not to say		14.29%	1
			answered	7
			skipped	21

## 17. Disability: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		42.86%	3
2	No		57.14%	4
3	Don't know		0.00%	0
4	Prefer not to say		0.00%	0
			answered	7
			skipped	21

## 18. Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?Select each that apply.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Prefer not to say		28.57%	2
2	White British		71.43%	5
3	White Irish		0.00%	0
4	White Gypsy or Irish Traveller		0.00%	0
5	Any other White background		0.00%	0
6	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black African		0.00%	0
7	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black Caribbean		0.00%	0
8	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Asian		0.00%	0
9	Any other multi mixed background		0.00%	0
10	Asian or Asian British Pakistani		0.00%	0
11	Asian or Asian British Indian		0.00%	0

### 18. Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group? Select each that apply.

12	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi		0.00%	0
13	Asian or Asian British Chinese		0.00%	0
14	Any other Asian background		0.00%	0
15	Black African		0.00%	0
16	British Caribbean		0.00%	0
17	Black British		0.00%	0
18	Any other Black background		0.00%	0
			answered	7
			skipped	21

### 19. Other Ethnic Group

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	0.00%	0
No answers found.			
		answered	0
		skipped	28

**Agenda Item 4(b)i**

# **Biodiversity Duty Reporting: Stafford Borough Council's New Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2030 and Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 February 2026
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Operations
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Climate Change and Nature Recovery Portfolio

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## **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to approve the Council's response to the statutory biodiversity duty. The Biodiversity Duty reporting requirements are set out within the revised Biodiversity Strategy - **APPENDIX 1**.
- 1.2 Staffordshire County Council has now released the draft version of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the pre-consultation requires delegated authority to approve it.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the revised biodiversity strategy is approved by Cabinet.
- 2.2 That delegated authority to approve the LNRS is granted.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2.3 The Council has a statutory duty to consider how it can conserve and enhance biodiversity and this must be reported on by March 2026.
- 2.4 The duty requires all public authorities that have any functions exercisable in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions. Authorities must determine policies and specific objectives for taking action as soon as practicable and then take that action. Under the duty, public authorities must review the actions they can take to further conserve and enhance biodiversity at least every 5 years.

- 2.5 As set out within section 106(5) of the Environment Act 2021, Staffordshire County Council (the 'Responsible Authority') has prepared a draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- 2.6 The timescales for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy's pre-consultation, and subsequent public consultation period of 28 days each, requires delegated authority to approve.

### **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened duty on public authorities in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

This means that, as public authorities, we must:

- (1) Consider what actions we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
  - (2) Agree policies and specific objectives based on those considerations.
  - (3) Act to deliver the policies and achieve the objectives.
  - (4) Report on the actions taken to comply with the Biodiversity Duty, by 26 March 2026.
- 3.2 A new biodiversity strategy is an appropriate means to provide the required information, in a well presented, publicly accessible document.
- 3.3 The Council's current Biodiversity Strategy was produced over four years ago and is now due for revision.
- 3.4 The new revised strategy, which forms an appendix to this report, takes into consideration developments in legislation, good practice and new national policies and includes several new sections.
- 3.5 For the County Council to proceed to public consultation for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, they require all supporting authorities to confirm in writing that they are content for the public consultation to proceed. They will proceed to public consultation if no response is received after the permitted 28 days have expired, and/or, if no objections were received in that time.

### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities, notably priority 3, Climate Change, Nature Recovery and the Environment, and supports priority 2, Communities and Wellbeing.
- 4.2 It also accords with the Council's "Nature Recovery Declaration".

## 5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Council's original Biodiversity Strategy was produced in 2000. It aimed to protect and enhance where appropriate the biodiversity in Stafford Borough.
- 5.2 At that time, the Council were required to comply with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which was introduced to promote the proactive management of the natural environment.
- 5.3 Up to this juncture the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 offered a legislative framework and was based on the premise that much more could and should be done about conserving wildlife and natural habitats and rare species. This was further strengthened by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation in 2010. The revised Habitat Regulations of 2017 (and amended in 2023 post Brexit) set out clear guidance to local planning authorities to widen their guidance on the protection of habitats when considering planning applications for Housing developments.
- 5.4 By the time the Government had introduced The Natural Environment Act 2021 there was an acceptance that the planning system in the UK had not been consistent in applying these regulations and the Act set out targets that Local Authorities must take to address the decline in the Natural environment and the loss of habitats over the last 25 years.
- 5.5 The Environment Act also placed a duty to publish monitoring reports on the intended actions to address the conservation and enhancement of Biodiversity not only at a policy level but also how land is managed for Biodiversity. This included all local authorities and public agencies who manage canals, rivers, and public rights of way.
- 5.6 Local Authorities are now required to report on the actions taken to comply with the new Biodiversity Duty, by 26 March 2026.
- 5.7 The Biodiversity Duty, strengthened by the Environment Act, applies to the revised Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2023), stating that Local Authorities, *"from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective"*.
- 5.8 The revised biodiversity strategy takes into consideration new developments in legislation, good practice and new national policies, including new sections on the Biodiversity Duty, Biodiversity Net Gain, and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (introduced in the Environment Act 2021). It also features new information on a Pollinator Strategy and works done to make Stafford "Bee Friendly".
- 5.9 The appropriate Services within the Authority have been consulted over the proposed strategy.

- 5.10 The delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is being managed by Staffordshire County Council as the responsible authority for the county.
- 5.11 Each local nature recovery strategy will be specific and tailored to its area. The responsible authorities and people involved in preparing a strategy can choose how they want it to look, but every strategy must contain:
- A local habitat map.
  - A written statement of biodiversity priorities.
- 5.12 Staffordshire County Council has notified us of its intent to proceed to public consultation on the draft strategy of the LNRS and, in accordance with the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, are providing a pre-consultation draft of the strategy for comment on. In accordance with the above regulations, Supporting Authorities are provided with 28 days to respond to this notification starting on 2 February 2026 and ending on 2 March 2026.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

The implementation will be completed from within existing allocated budgets.

### **6.2 Legal**

If the Council fails to report on the actions it is taking for biodiversity, it will be in breach of the Environment Act by failing to assist in meeting the government's commitment to national targets.

### **6.3 Human Resources**

None

### **6.4 Risk Management**

None

### **6.5 Equalities and Diversity**

None

### **6.6 Health**

Our focus is to constantly improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean and attractive place for residents to live and work. A greener, more wildlife rich environment will help support these aims and it is expected that the Biodiversity Strategy will provide a structure to help achieve these objectives.

## **6.7 Climate Change**

Supports the Council's Climate Change and Green Recovery priorities, and the policies in the Delivery Plan, including, Objective CC4: Continue to implement our green recovery objectives.

## **7 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Stafford Borough Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2028.

## **8 Previous Consideration**

None

## **9 Background Papers**

None

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Bill Waller
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	07800619676
<b>Ward Interest:</b>	No
<b>Report Track:</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes



# Stafford Borough Council's **Biodiversity Strategy** 2026 to 2030





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# Foreword

**Nature in the UK and across the World is in crisis. The number of wild creatures and plants of almost every sort is in decline – some to the point where species are becoming extinct. The causes are many but include climate change, engineering and development of all sorts, population increase, exploitation of natural resources, ‘factory’ farming and waste**

As a council, we have recognised this emergency and are working with partners to try and stem the decline. This plan sets out a picture of where we have been making progress and what actions we can take to ensure we continue to do so.

Resources are limited, so what has been achieved reflects credit on those involved. We have been pleased to work with The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The Stafford Brooks Project has been an excellent example of this joint working.

We are especially grateful to the volunteer groups that have become established in various parts of the Borough which are working to make a real difference for wildlife in their local areas.

The Staffordshire Nature Recovery Strategy will identify those species and habitats which are most in need of support. We look forward to working with other councils and agencies to help make the vision a reality.

This updated strategy, reflecting recent national policy developments, includes information on new initiatives and ideas such as Biodiversity Net Gain, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and a new Pollinator Strategy.

There is also information on new core areas including Health and Wellbeing, a factor now recognised as having significant connections with access to nature. The One-Team approach of the Council is reflected in a shared responsibility with Operations in maintaining our greenspaces and engaging with communities.

Nature recovery can play a key role in slowing the pace and combatting the effects of climate change.

**Councillor Anthony Pearce,  
Cabinet Member for Climate Action  
and Nature Recovery**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Pearce".

# The Situation

The UK's State of Nature Report 2023 states that, despite some progress, the UK's nature and wider environment continues to decline and degrade.

England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.

Only through coordinated policy and action will we halt these losses. It is now more important than ever that we work to reverse this decline on a landscape scale.

The Environment Act 2021 (Section 102) includes a new requirement to enhance biodiversity by strengthening Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). This requires local authorities to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity (the Biodiversity Duty). This means that, as a public authority, the Council must:

1. Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on those considerations.

3. Act to deliver the policies and achieve the objectives.

The Council must complete a report of what actions are being taken for biodiversity by January 2026. We must agree our policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and report on our actions every 5 years.

Our report must include:

- A summary of the action we've taken to comply with the biodiversity duty
- How we plan to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period
- Any other information we consider appropriate.

This updated strategy will aid the Council in fulfilling its Biodiversity Duty and providing further information on guidance, policies and actions.



## Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a word that means 'the variety of living things'.

It indicates not just the vast array of life but also its inter-connectedness. It includes all species of animals, plants, fungi and bacteria and the natural systems that support them.

It is therefore not just about rare or threatened species, but also local wildlife familiar to us all. Protecting biodiversity is important because:

- There is a moral argument for preserving that which exists for its own right.
- It provides us with what is known as Natural Capital - for example, food, fresh air, clean water, and insects that pollinate our crops,
- It helps address the impacts of Climate Change,
- It is known that a green and healthy environment is good for our wellbeing, both physically and mentally.
- It is a legal duty



# Our Strategy

The Council, in conjunction with its partners, will work towards maintaining and restoring habitats across the borough to create a place for nature's recovery.

This will comply with the new Biodiversity Duty that all public authorities must have regard to. Our strategy is also reflected in Stafford Borough's Nature Recovery Declaration (2022). The full text can be found in the appendix.







# Our Aim

Stafford Borough will have a rich natural environment which is resilient to the effects of climate change, is well managed and enhanced with more people enjoying the area as a place to live in, work in and visit.

Our high-quality nature recovery network and accessible green spaces, waterways and landscapes will enhance our local distinctiveness and heritage, making the Borough an exceptional place for wildlife and communities - now and in the future.



# Our Objectives

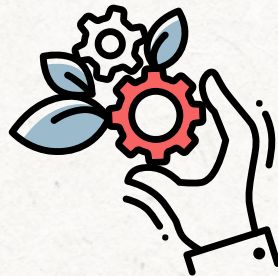
Our objectives relate to four key areas:



**1.**

## **Land Management**

To halt the loss of biodiversity and to work with partners to reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitat enhancement and creation.



**2.**

## **Integration and Co-ordination**

To encourage the consideration of biodiversity both in policy and practice across the Council's services.



**3.**

## **Awareness**

To increase understanding and access to biodiversity and to engage more people in its conservation and enhancement.



**4.**

## **Legislation**

To comply with the Environment Act 2021, and the strengthened Biodiversity Duty.

Employment, a safe and attractive environment, good quality housing, community safety and an active population all play a huge part in achieving a prosperous and thriving local economy, as well as being vital to good health and wellbeing and protecting our natural environment.







# Biodiversity in Stafford Borough

**Stafford Borough is a mainly rural area with a wide range of habitats that include many sites of local, national and some of international importance.**

There are three rivers, the Penk, Sow and Trent that eventually meet to the west of Stafford.

In the northwest are the woodlands of Hanchurch and Bishop's Wood.

To the southeast is the heathland of Cannock Chase, designated a National Landscape.

As part of the Meres and Mosses landscape, there are a variety of wetlands in the west of the Borough such as Cop Mere, Loynton Moss and Aqualate Mere.

To the east of Stafford is Chartley Moss, Britain's largest example of a Floating Bog. On the southern border of the Borough is Motte Meadows, one of the best-preserved floodplain meadows in the country.

In total there are 15 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), two of which are National Nature Reserves.

The "Natura 2000 network" consists of sites that are of exceptional importance for the protection of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within Europe. These sites comprise of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Government guidance also extends the protection to "Ramsar sites" of international importance for wetland habitats.

Cannock Chase, Pasturefields Saltmarsh, Motte Meadows and Chartley Moss are all designated as SACs. Additionally, Chartley Moss along with Cop Mere and Aqualate Mere are designated as Ramsar Sites.

There are also many Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) that are of county significance for their habitats and wildlife. Key species in the Borough include: otter, barn owl, great crested newt, small pearl-bordered fritillary, farmland birds, reptiles and bats.





# Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy

**Climate change refers to a change in the climate which is caused by human activity. Caused by the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the impacts of climate change are now experienced around the globe.**

From rising sea levels to an increase in the occurrence of extreme weather events, the disruption caused by climate change is far-reaching and devastating. Preventing the impacts of climate change from worsening requires the collective efforts of all. It is for this reason that in 2019, Stafford Borough Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to become a carbon neutral authority by 2040.

It is not just humans who suffer because of climate change, global wildlife populations are also negatively affected. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) states that climate change poses a serious threat to species conservation and identifies climate change as the biggest potential threat to natural World Heritage sites. Therefore, to give global biodiversity the best chance of future survival, climate change must be addressed.

Climate change affects biodiversity in many ways. For example, extreme weather events, the frequency and intensity of which are increasing due to climate change, can destroy habitats,

displacing species. Increasing temperatures can alter the environmental conditions of an ecosystem, resulting in species which previously thrived in an area becoming locally extinct. The impacts of climate change on biodiversity are so severe that climate change is now considered one of the main causes of biodiversity loss worldwide.

However, one of the solutions to the climate crisis is biodiversity itself. Known as nature-based solutions, working to restore and create new habitats has a wide range of benefits, including mitigating and adapting to climate change. Take tree planting, for example. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Therefore, in areas where tree cover is greater, there is likely to be less carbon in the air. Not only this, but trees provide important habitats for a wide range of species. By planting more trees, not only do we help to increase biodiversity levels, but we also help to reduce the level of carbon. Nature based solutions can range from small-scale measures, such as planting a tree,

to large-scale measures such as the restoration of flood plain meadows within a river corridor. Using them wherever possible is one of the most effective ways in which we can prevent the worst impacts of climate change from being experienced.

Climate Change is happening, and Stafford Borough is impacted by it. Therefore, the time to increase the number of nature-based solutions being delivered is now. Stafford Borough Council is committed to increasing green recovery efforts made within the area and are actively identifying opportunities to deliver nature-based solutions for climate change. This recently saw the designation of a site in Stafford as a Local Nature Reserve. As part of this designation, we have committed to habitat enhancement works on site. These works will have both climate and biodiversity benefits. For example, as part of the habitat enhancement works, trees will be planted, and former floodplain meadows will be restored. This will lead to an increase in the amount of carbon absorbed from the



atmosphere and will increase the floodwater storage capacity on site, reducing the impacts of flooding in the local area. At the same time, enhanced habitats will mean that biodiversity levels in the area will increase.

It is through projects such as the above that we can contribute to climate change efforts made in the area. To ensure that the nature-based solutions are as beneficial to both the climate and biodiversity as possible, we will:

1.  
**Develop Blue and Green Infrastructure Networks and Public Realm**
2.  
**Link Habitat Corridors**
3.  
**Improve Habitat Management to Increase Carbon Sequestration**
4.  
**Enhance Urban Greening and Biodiversity Enhancement**
5.  
**Facilitate Stakeholder Collaboration and Capacity Building**
6.  
**Integrate Nature-Based Solutions into Climate Adaptation Planning**

By implementing these detailed actions, we aim to create a robust framework for delivering nature-based solutions that effectively address

the dual challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss while fostering sustainable and resilient communities in Stafford Borough.



*Scarlet elfcup at Loynton Moss wetland SSSI, Near Woodseaves*





*Great Burnet can be found at Goodall Meadow LNR, Stafford*

# UK Legislation

## 25 Year Environment Plan and Environmental Improvement Plan

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In 2018, the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) set out goals for improving the environment. Its overarching ambition is to,

*“leave our environment in a better state than we found it and to pass on to the next generation a natural environment protected and enhanced for the future”.*

The Environmental Improvement Plan is the Government's first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the framework and vision of the 25YEP, setting out a plan for delivery. At the heart of the plan is halting the decline in biodiversity. The plan also makes clear that it is not possible to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate without nature-based solutions. It's ten goals are:

- 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- 2: Clean air
- 3: Clean and plentiful water
- 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste
- 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change

8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards

9: Enhancing biosecurity

10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment.

## The Environment Act

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The Environment Act (2021) introduced a mandatory requirement for new development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity as part of the planning system. Developers in England are required to deliver 10% BNG, so that there is a positive benefit for nature. It came into force from February 2024 for developments in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (unless exempt), and for small sites from April 2024. Further information can be found at -

### [Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](#)

The Act also introduced a statutory requirement for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to be produced by Staffordshire County Council. LNRS will support the Borough's Nature Recovery Network as a spatial plan to protect and restore wildlife. It is expected that BNG will contribute to this ambition through off-site agreements.

The Environment Act 2021 (Section 102) also includes a new requirement to enhance biodiversity by strengthening Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). This requires local authorities to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity (the Biodiversity Duty).

## Additional UK law and guidance documents

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- The Habitats Directive (EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)
- The Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- Making Space for Nature (2010)
- UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA)
- Green Infrastructure Framework (2023)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
- Planning and Infrastructure Act (2025)



# Planning

Planning can contribute in many ways to the conservation of biodiversity. Development Management must consider protected species, habitats, designated sites and Biodiversity Net Gain. Strategic Placemaking, or Forward Planning, pays regard to the future spatial provision of green infrastructure, land use and future development.

## Development Management

The Planning Authority has a duty to consider the conservation of biodiversity when determining a planning application; this includes having regard to the safeguard of species protected under law.

Natural England now provides standing advice, which gives guidance on when to survey for protected species. Further guidance is also provided in British Standards 42020: "Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development". This gives recommendations for a consistent approach to ecological information in the planning application process.

In accordance with the local authority's duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act, proposals are encouraged that will enhance, restore or add to features or habitats used by protected species. Government guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework, Section 15, also makes clear that developments should build in features beneficial for wildlife as part of the overall design. These enhancements should

be proportionate to the scale of the development proposed and could range from the installation of nest boxes or bat bricks in a small-scale development through to the creation of areas of habitat for larger applications.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

The Council has provided guidance for developers on Biodiversity Net Gain -

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-net-gain](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-net-gain)

The guidance includes an agreed scale of monitoring fees that will help ensure that the 30-year agreements stay on track. The Council will report every five years to Government with a summary of each new biodiversity gain plan arising from new development.

Using an up-to-date metric, and following the mitigation hierarchy, habitats will be assigned a measurable value, ensuring that post development a 10% gain in habitat value is achieved, either on-site, off-site or in combination. As part of the Biodiversity Net Gain plan, newly created or

enhanced habitats will need to be maintained for a minimum of 30 years.

Development projects that create, enhance or recover habitat in locations which are mapped in a Local Nature Recovery Strategy will get a higher biodiversity value in the biodiversity metric than they would in other locations. This will incentivise projects to make changes that meet local priorities for nature recovery.



# Local Nature Recovery Strategy

**All public authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and must “have regard” to relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in the process.**

All public authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and must “have regard” to relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in the process.

Nature recovery strategies are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act. Each strategy must:

- Agree priorities for nature’s recovery
- Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- Map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals

Establishing a Local Nature Recovery Network:

- Enhances, restores and expands existing wildlife sites
- Complements and connects sites through wildlife corridors and stepping-stones, buffering zones of sustainably managed land
- Provides ecosystem benefits such as carbon capture, climate resilience, flood management, improved air and water quality, pollination, sustainable resources

- Enables access to and enjoyment of nature - benefitting health and wellbeing

In Staffordshire, the County Council is the Responsible Authority with the duty of preparing the strategy, along with the role of Stafford Borough as a Supporting Authority.

The Council’s role as a Supporting Authority is:

- To make sure LNRS dovetail with the planning system
- LNRS will identify areas for nature recovery for Local Plans; Local Plans will help LNRS understand which areas of land are earmarked for other uses
- So that the LNRS reflects local requirements on delivery of BNG
- To provide a different point of view and constructive challenge

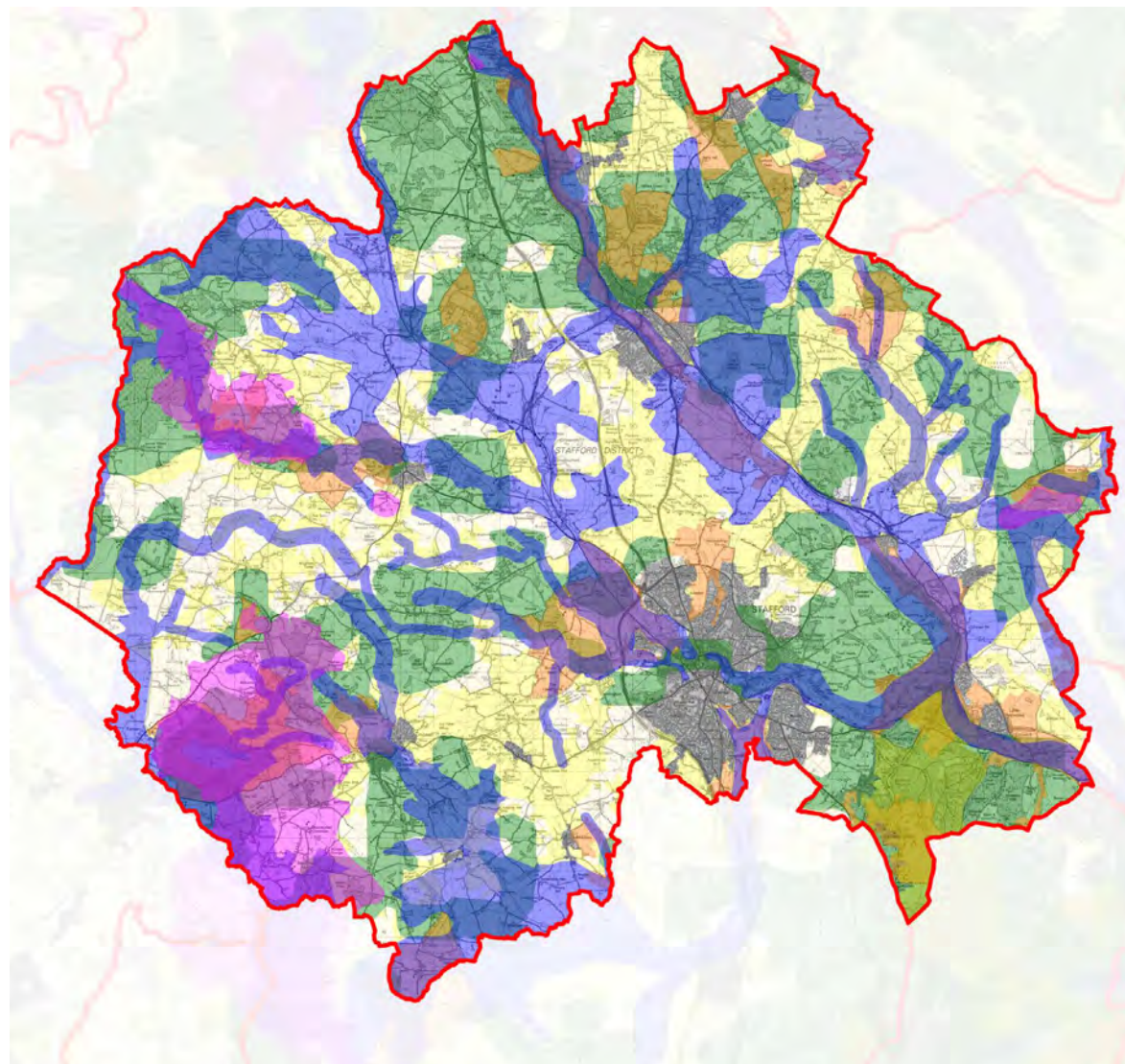
In Stafford Borough, mapping habitats and designated sites has been supported by work carried out by the Wildlife Trust. This mapping exercise has created a Nature Recovery Network for the Borough. The map also indicates opportunity areas where targeted works would help create larger, connected areas of suitable habitat.



*Heron, Essex Bridge, Great Haywood*




# Stafford Borough Nature Recovery Network




## Legend

 Stafford Borough Boundary

## Opportunity Area

 Meres and Mosses

 Wetland

 Heathland

 Grassland

 Woodland

 Urban Fabric

## Pasture and Arable Land Opportunity Area

 Pastures

 Arable



# Strategic Placemaking

Strategic Planning and Placemaking is responsible for Planning Policy in the Borough and the preparation of the new Local Plan.

The new Plan sets out the development strategy to 2031 as well as the policies that will be used to assess planning applications. The Plan will help deliver national planning policy, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that local authorities should aim to:

- maintain, enhance, restore or achieve a gain in biodiversity
- base decisions on up-to-date information
- adopt a strategic approach to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity incorporate biodiversity within the design of new developments and
- support development schemes that contribute to local biodiversity.

Local Plans should also set out policies that will aim to prevent harm to biodiversity, through consideration of alternative development sites and requiring adequate mitigation or compensation.

The adoption of such a proactive approach to the conservation of biodiversity interests through the new Local Plan is consistent with the biodiversity duty placed upon local authorities. The most effective implementation of these policy areas is likely to be achieved through

collaboration or partnership working with other agencies and organizations, such as Natural England and the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

The Plan for Stafford Borough includes a specific Policy N4, The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure (GI), as well as a definition of Green Infrastructure:

“A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits to local communities.”

These networks will be enhanced and created to protect the setting of the landscape, heritage and natural assets, reverse habitat fragmentation, provide recreational opportunities for new and existing communities and protect strategic green spaces within settlements.

GI will also enable sustainable commuting to take place by providing attractive cycling and walking links. The network can also aid in alleviating the effects of climate change through sustainable drainage systems and support biodiversity by allowing species movements within green links.

Stafford Borough Council have a Green Infrastructure Strategy that sets out the

framework for developing the Borough's green infrastructure now and in the future. More information can be found at -

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/green-infrastructure](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/green-infrastructure)



# Reconnecting with Nature

Research has shown that the conditions of modern life have disconnected us from Nature, which can be seen as something separate and perhaps not necessarily valid or important. If we are to properly address both the Climate Change crisis and the Biodiversity Crisis, then there will need to be a change in how we value and interact with Nature.

*“There is now a solid body of evidence from dozens of studies that have shown having a strong sense of connection to nature helps people feel good and function well. The effect is powerful; a population survey found the strength of a person’s sense of connection to nature was four times more important than socio-economic status in explaining their sense that life is worthwhile.”*

[The Nature Connection Handbook - nature-connection-handbook.pdf](#)

Whilst access to Nature is important, it has been found that a deeper sense of interaction has the most impact, so for example, dog-walking may be the focus of the activity and Nature is just seen as the backdrop. What is required are any behaviours that make us stop and take in the natural world, i.e. watching birds in the garden, noticing the bees and butterflies, or taking a minute to photograph a wildflower. These actions place us in Nature rather than just observing, and it is this deeper sense of connection that provides measurable wellbeing.

The Council’s Local Nature Reserves feature information signage that helps visitor identify key species or habitats. The role of the LNRs is to be

not just good places for wildlife but also for people to benefit from. It is hoped that they function as local oases of nature connection.





# Local Nature Reserves in Stafford Borough

Stafford Borough Council manages eight Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and assist with Stone Town Council's 'Crown Meadow' making nine in total across the Borough.

LNRs are designated by local authorities under the Natural Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They are places that support a rich variety of wildlife and are important to local people, by enabling contact with the natural world.

The reserves include examples of marsh, heath, reedbed, woodland and meadow. Many different plants, insects and animals live in these different habitats. Each site has its own five-year Management Plan, which can be viewed on our website. We are always looking at ways to improve our management and undertake an annual programme of maintenance work.

More information on our LNRs can be found on the Council website

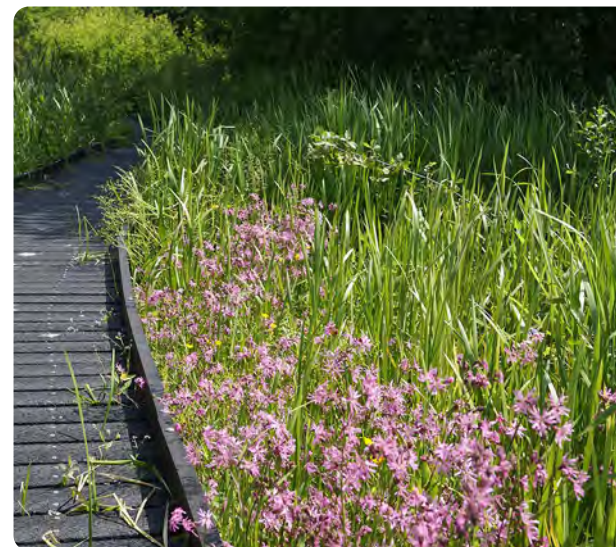
[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation)

The LNRs are:



## Astonfields Balancing Lakes

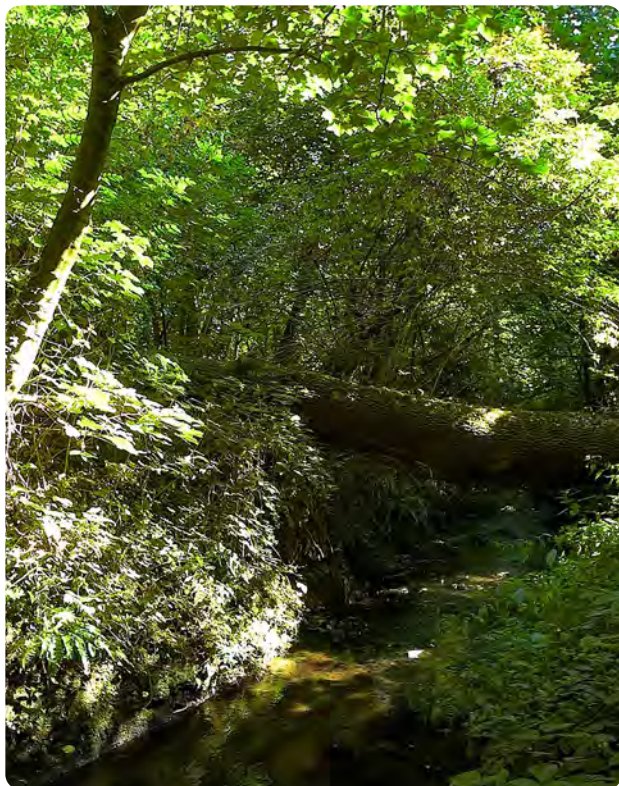
Astonfields has a great diversity of habitats to discover including reedbed, open water, hedgerows and woodland. It is a good site for birdwatching with a good variety of birds including Water Rail, Reed Warbler, Teal and Kingfisher. It is the only LNR in the country to feature an area of saltmarsh, rare in an inland county like Staffordshire.



## Kingsmead Marsh

Near the centre of town this marsh is home to many species of wetland plants such as reed grasses, sedges, Purple Loosestrife and Gipsywort. Management includes control of willow growth to maintain the open marsh. A short boardwalk allows public access to a section of the reserve.





## Kingston Pool Covert (South)

This wet woodland site has many species of woodland bird including Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Green Woodpecker. Seven species of fern are found on site as well as many woodland plants. The site has required extensive tree works for safety reasons.



## Goodall Meadow

Formerly agricultural fields with little biodiversity interest, the site is currently being restored to species-rich floodplain meadow. The tree-lined edges along the river will be planted with new hedgerows. Ponds and scrapes have been added - along with re-profiling of sections of the riverbank.



## Southern Meadow

The sister site to Goodall Meadow, situated further east along the Trent corridor. Meadow restoration is being undertaken to return the site to species-rich floodplain meadow. An area of wet woodland runs along the southern boundary.

## Crown Meadow

Managed by Stone Town Council, this site has wetland scrapes, pathways and footbridge. The management aims are to enhance the scrapes and create a flower rich hay meadow.





## Ferndown

A popular site, this reserve offers created flower rich meadows, scrub and small areas of woodland. Recent works include a new playground and wetland marsh area. Four species of orchid have been recorded growing on site.



## Barlaston and Rough Close Common

Barlaston and Rough Close Common is 21ha of heathland and is the largest of the Borough's LNRs. External funding allowed the lower common to be fenced to carry out conservation grazing and had a positive effect of restoring habitats. We are planning on the reinstatement of grazing. The site features many typical plants such as heather, bilberry and cowberry.



## Riverside LNR

Riverside is the most recent of the Council's LNRs, declared in 2021 and one of the largest. It features 17ha of floodplain grazing marsh, with areas of meadow and wet woodland. Site management will aim to restore these habitats over the next ten years and has been funded by the Stafford Brooks project, a partnership with the Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, National Highways and the Council.





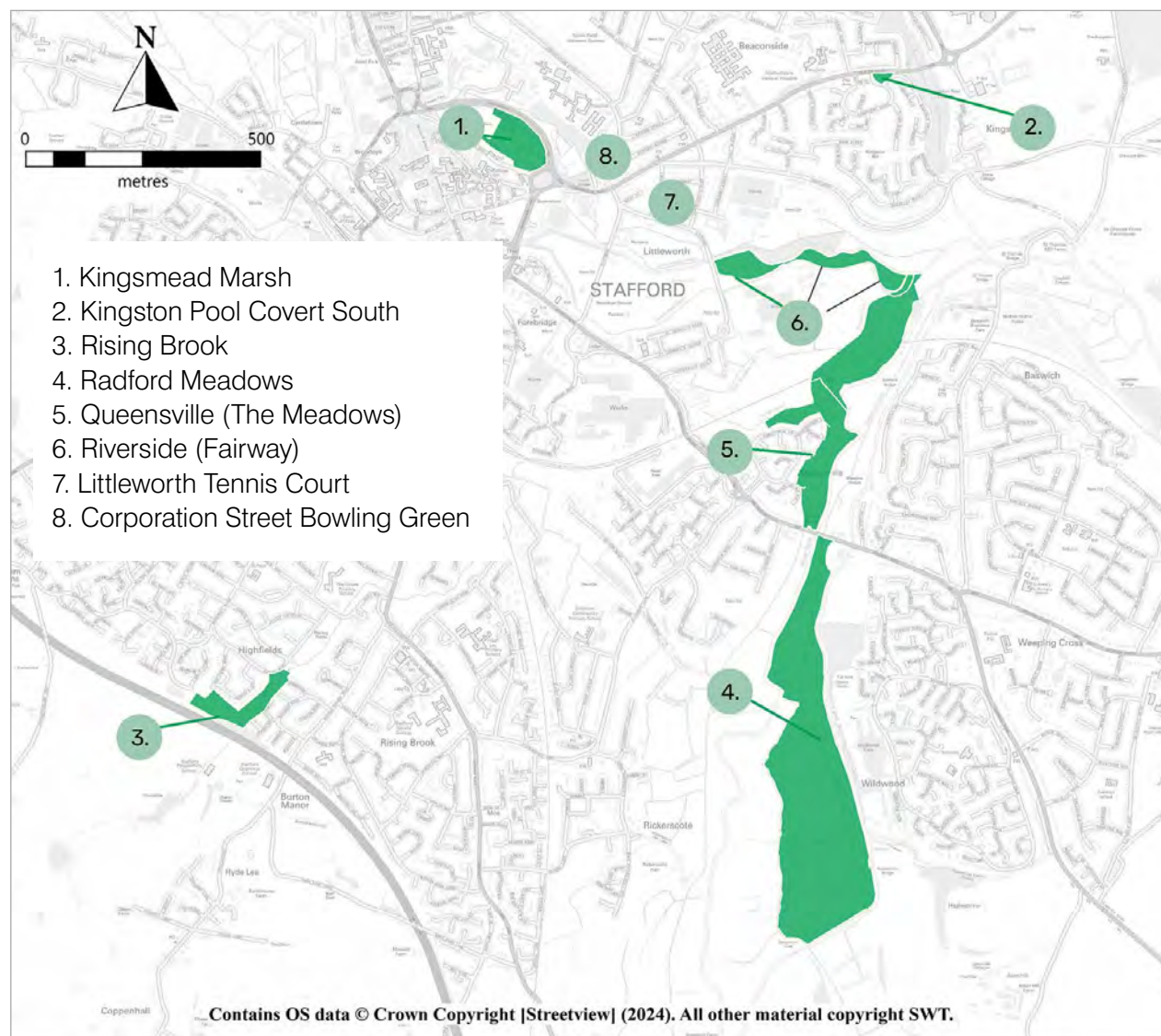


# Stafford Brooks

The Stafford Brooks project is a partnership between the Council, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and National Highways, who provided the designated funding for the scheme.

The project has delivered environmental enhancements to nature reserves and greenspace locations across Stafford, improving connectivity between habitats to create a nature recovery network for the town. It will allow local communities better opportunities to engage with nature. The following map shows the location of the works.

Local Nature Reserves in Stafford benefitted from enhancements to their habitats. The greatest amount of work took place on the largest and newest of the sites, Riverside LNR, with extensive areas of new scrapes and pools, plus re-seeding of meadow areas. Kingsmead Marsh has four new dragonfly ponds. As an extension to the original funding, Kingston Pool Covert has been re-wetted, with new riffles in the channel of the Kingston Brook and new channels and pools.









# Local Wildlife Sites

**In Stafford Borough Local Wildlife Sites consist of two tiers of sites designated for their wildlife value. These are known as Sites of Biological Importance - sites considered to be of County value, and Biodiversity Alert Sites, considered to have local value.**

These sites have a wide variety of good quality habitats and species. They provide the backbone to Stafford Borough's rich natural environment. The Government report, "Making space for Nature" (2010) highlighted the importance of Local Wildlife Sites for providing refuges for wildlife and acting as, "stepping-stones and corridors to link and protect nationally and internationally designated sites."

LWS's provide services not just for nature but also for social, economic and health benefits such as green infrastructure, tourism, recreation, water and air quality and climate change adaptation. Sites are assessed against set criteria by a panel belonging to Staffordshire Wildlife Sites Partnership, comprised of members of relevant organisations and hosted by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

From 2012, a new programme of re-surveying the Borough's SBI's has been undertaken by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and funded by the Council.

This is enabling us to get crucial up-to-date information on the condition of these sites and discern what long-term management is required to maintain and enhance them.

Additionally, 23 new sites have been added to the inventory, many of which are Ancient Woodlands that have never been surveyed before.



## Case Study

### Moss Farm

As part of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust re-surveying programme, they visited Moss Farm located west of Eccleshall. This was previously recorded as a historical SBI but had very little surviving information about what was actually there.

The site was discovered to be approximately 5 ha of rare Lowland Raised Bog habitat that contains a variety of special bog and heathland plants. Species discovered include cross-leaved heath and adder's-tongue, which are both uncommon in Staffordshire, and cranberry and round-leaved sundew, which are both rare in the county.

In addition to this, Moss Farm has been mentioned in the national report, The Status of England's Local Wildlife Sites 2014 and Secret Spaces pamphlet, both of which are written by The Wildlife Trusts. The site is mentioned in the reports as it is a positive case study, due to appropriate conservation management being secured on the site by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust through agricultural stewardship.





*Sherbrook Valley, Cannock Chase*



# Cannock Chase

## Cannock Chase National Landscape

Cannock Chase was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958 because of its beautiful landscape, its wildlife and its history. In November 2023 the AONB became officially renamed Cannock Chase National Landscape.

Cannock Chase is the largest surviving area of lowland heathland in the Midlands. Lowland heath is an internationally scarce and threatened wildlife habitat. The National Landscape also has extensive areas of forest and woodland along with areas of designed parkland, sand and gravel quarrying and mixed agriculture. A large northern section of the area lies within the Stafford Borough boundary.

Stafford Borough Council along with Natural England and four other local authorities (Cannock Chase Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council and Staffordshire County Council) fund and support the work of the Cannock Chase National Landscape Unit and implementation of the Cannock Chase Management Plan through the Joint Committee and Officer Working Group. Additional work on specific projects is carried out by a range of partners.

## Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnership

Occupying part of Cannock Chase National Landscape, the Cannock Chase SAC is one of the best examples in the UK for European dry heathland and is the most extensive in the Midlands region.

An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out with regard to the Plan for Stafford Borough. The evidence from this assessment shows that any development within 15km of the Cannock Chase SAC may have a significant impact on the site.

The Council is part of a SAC Partnership, which works together to prevent damage to the SAC.

The Council must ensure that decisions made on planning applications will not have a negative impact on Cannock Chase SAC, in line with Policy N6 of the Plan for Stafford Borough. If there are any potential negative impacts, the Council must either refuse development, or ensure there are appropriate mitigation measures in place.



*Pony trekking on Cannock Chase*

# Parks and Open Spaces

Stafford Borough Council manages just over 316 hectares of open space land.

These sites range from the formal parks of Victoria Park, (Stafford) and Stonefield Park, (Stone), to large areas of public open space such as the Meadows, Castlefields and Creswell Manor Farm, to grass verges, rough grass land, trees and flower beds.

Our site's contributions to biodiversity include varied trees, areas of long grass, wildflowers and flowering shrubs and habitat for animals such as badger, water vole, otter, birds, bats and bees.

## Flowers and Shrubs

Every year the Council plants summer and winter bedding plants. These plants provide food for insects and in turn birds and bats, as well as keeping our parks and town centres brightly decorated. Along with the seasonal bedding plants our parks contain a range of plants and shrubs that provide food in terms of nectar and berries throughout the year.

## Rivers and Ponds

Across the Borough, the Council manages numerous ponds, ditches and sections of the River Sow. These water bodies provide habitat for fish, insects, birds, amphibians along with nesting sites for wildfowl and the graceful Mute swan.

The River Sow, which runs through the heart of Stafford, is managed by the Council along the section that runs from Sainsbury's and up to and including Victoria Park. The river contains water lilies, Purple Loosestrife, Yellow Iris, along with some regionally rare aquatic plant species. The river links directly with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Doxey and Tillington Marshes Reserve and acts as a significant wildlife corridor.

Some people prefer to see rivers with no aquatic channel vegetation. To undertake a programme of removal however would reduce the biodiversity of the river by removing natural spawning and shelter sites, reducing the insect, bird and fish populations.

◀ *Purple loosestrife in the River Sow, Victoria Park, Stafford*





## Trees

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Across its sites, the Council manages thousands of trees covering newly planted trees and whips to veteran trees including Oak, Ash, Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Horse Chestnut. Our policy is to only fell a tree when it is absolutely necessary in terms of safety or when the tree is proven to be causing damage and there is no other management option. Where trees are felled the Council replaces these trees in suitable locations across the Borough. By adopting this approach, we ensure that trees are planted in the most appropriate location, spreading the tree cover across the Borough.

The species chosen for replanting varies depending upon the site and where possible native trees are planted. In more formal areas exotic ornamental trees are mixed in to provide variation and landmarks. Victoria Park contains no less than 41 different species of tree.

Many of the UK's traditional trees are at risk from the changing climate and warmer wetter winters. As a result, Horse Chestnut, Elm and London Plane are coming under greater attack from disease. Unlike some authorities we continue to plant these trees where possible to ensure that they do not disappear from our local landscape. We keep a constant watch on our tree stock to ensure that diseased trees are removed as soon as possible to prevent further spread.

At present we do not plant any sycamore across any of our sites. On new developments we work with developers to produce a varied planted scheme and ensure that the right tree is planted in the right location.

Stafford Borough Council protects trees with amenity value by designating Tree Preservation Orders. A Tree Preservation Order or TPO is an Order made by the Council that gives legal protection to trees or woodlands which make a significant impact on local surroundings. A TPO makes the felling, lopping, willful damage or destruction to trees without the written permission of this authority a criminal offence.

## Hedgerows

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The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 require notification for the removal of most rural hedgerows. It is a criminal offence to deliberately remove a hedgerow without permission. A hedgerow is important if it satisfies a number of criteria set out in the Regulations.

Further information can be found at:

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/hedgerows](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/hedgerows)

## Access to Open Space

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The majority of our open spaces are freely accessible to the public to roam wherever they like. In addition to this many of the Council's play areas are also provided on these large natural open spaces providing a link between formal play and free nature play.

For more information on the Council's Parks and Open Spaces visit

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/open-space-sport-and-recreation](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/open-space-sport-and-recreation)









# Green Flag

The Green Flag Award scheme 'recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world'.

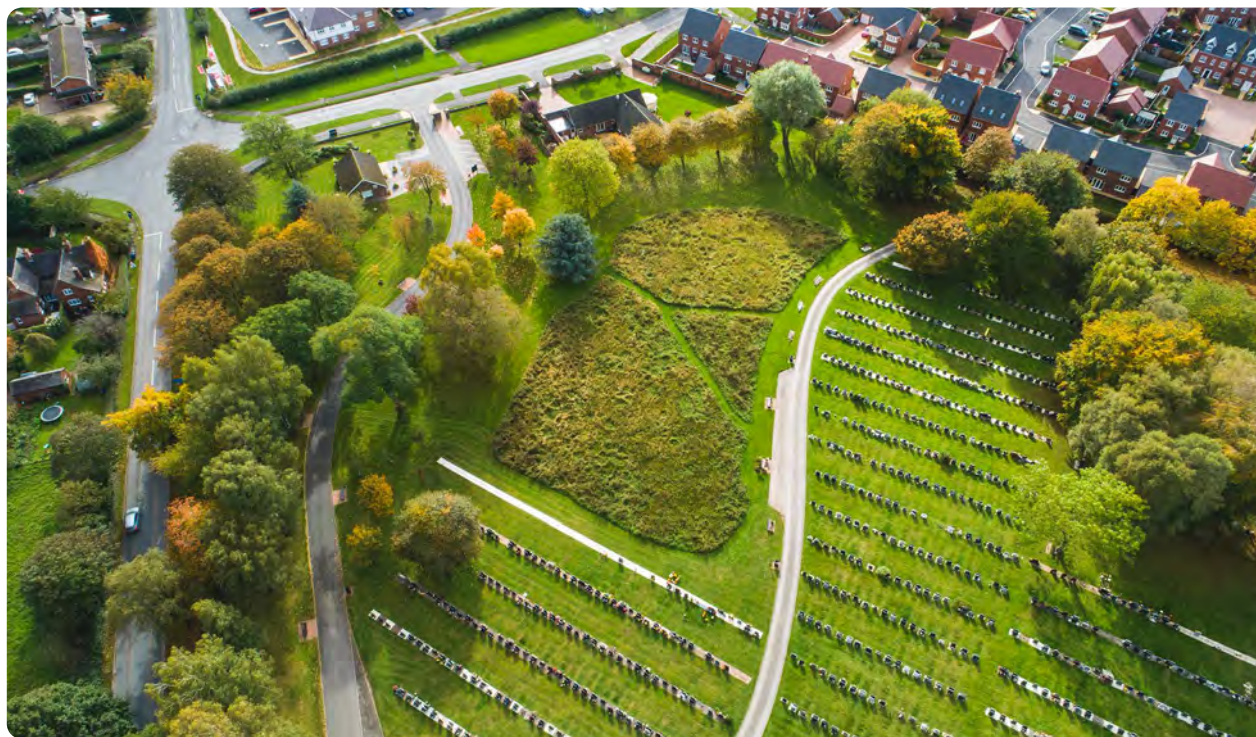
The scheme's stated purpose and aims are:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.

In 2006 Stafford's Victoria Park attained the borough's first Green Flag. Then, in 2014 Tixall Road Crematorium followed suit since when, Stonefield Park in Stone, Eccleshall Road Cemetery in Stafford, Stone Cemetery and Wildwood Park have also been successful in achieving the award.

Each of the borough's Green Flag winning sites offer a unique set of assets and attributes that provide significant benefit to the local community and those who visit from further afield.

Sites are judged on a range of criteria including how healthy, safe and secure they are, how well maintained they are, the environmental management in place and the biodiversity, landscape and heritage management of each site.



*Stafford Crematorium, Tixall Road, Stafford*

# Pollinator Strategy



**The Council will work to support land management, developers and communities to provide better habitat for pollinators across our towns and developments in the wider countryside.**

This work will include where possible, management of parks and amenity grassland, new housing developments, schools, cemeteries, road verges and roundabouts.

In creating a pollinator friendly strategy for Stafford Borough, it is our aim to improve conditions for pollinators in accordance with the aims set out in Defra's National Pollinator Strategy (2014 - 2024),

- More, bigger, better, joined-up, diverse and high-quality flower-rich habitats (including nesting places and shelter) supporting our pollinators across the country.
- Healthy bees and other pollinators which are more resilient to climate change and severe weather events.
- Enhanced awareness across a wide range of businesses, other organisations and the public of the essential needs of pollinators.
- Evidence of actions taken to support pollinators.

A pollinator friendly borough would seek to create a better environment for all pollinating insects including bumblebees, solitary bees,

hoverflies, wasps, flies, beetles, butterflies, moths and honeybees.

There are five principle actions recommended to achieve this aim and they are:

**1. Manage our land to have more native flowers, shrubs and trees that provide nectar and pollen**

**2. Cut grass less often and ideally remove cuttings to allow plants to flower**

**3. Avoid disturbing or destroying nesting/hibernating insects by having grass margins, bare soil, dead wood**

**4. Support communities in enhancing their local open space for nature**

**5. Reduce and phase out pesticide use**

## Bee Friendly Stafford

One initiative that will greatly help pollinating insects in Stafford was the successful application to become a recognised 'Bee Friendly Town'. This accolade is awarded by the Bee Friendly Trust, in recognition of meeting their criteria for bee-friendly actions and activities, including planting up patches of land, support from local schools and community events. Additionally, the Council has undertaken or supported many other actions to enhance open spaces for biodiversity - that will benefit pollinators.

- Continuing to manage and improve 14 hectares of flower-rich meadows on our own Stone Meadows and Ferndown Local Nature Reserves.
- Conservation grazing on Barlaston Common LNR and the resultant increase in heather and other plants.
- Streetscene, local Bumblebee Conservation Trust along with "Wild about Stafford" volunteers have created a "bee - friendly" area of open space at Astonfields Road.
- Supporting Rising Brook with their new wildflower areas
- A new meadow area at Eccleshall Road cemetery



## Open Spaces and Biodiversity

Additionally, the Council has undertaken or supported many other actions to enhance open spaces for biodiversity that will benefit pollinators, often with the help of local residents and groups.

West Way triangle (near A449) tree planting and no mow areas. (Rising Brook Ground Force)

West Way (old play area site) wildflower areas. (Scout Group)

Doxey Meadows - wildflower planting, tree planting, pathways, benches. Community space. (Doxey Group)

Martin Drive - tree planting, wildflower areas. (Castle Fields Residents Association)

Rosehill, Castlefield's open space - no mow areas. (Castle Fields Residents Association)

Sandon Road - wildflower areas, raised beds, bulb planting.

Falmouth Avenue open space - wildflower planting, tree planting, nature area. (Baswich Residents)

Dawlish Avenue - tree planting/orchard. (Baswich Residents)

Aston Lodge Estate - no mow areas. (Aston Lodge Residents Association)

Sandyford Street - no mow areas, wildflower areas.

Castle Acre - wildflowers. (Residents' Group)

Rising Brook library field - no mow areas.

Tixall Road Crematorium - wildflower area.

Old Tillington Hall frontage - wild no mow areas.

Friars Terrace - no mow area.

Wildwood Drive - tree planting and no mow areas. (Residents' Group)

Hillcroft Park - various no mow areas. (G-Miss Group)



*Wildflower area at Holmcroft Park*



*Wildflower area at Tixall Road Cemetery*







# Health and Wellbeing

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that green spaces can improve health and wellbeing (NHS, 2021).

Ensuring that green spaces are not only protected in terms of biodiversity but are also pleasant can ensure that people are living healthy and well. Access to green spaces in which people can live healthier lives with a greater sense of wellbeing is a factor in reducing health inequalities.

The 5 ways of wellbeing are important in utilising green space to improve health and wellbeing. These relate to three key objectives within the strategy of land management. Integration and co-ordination and Awareness.

## The 5 ways of wellbeing are:

### 1. Connect

### 2. Keep learning

### 3. Take notice

### 4. Be active

### 5. Give

**Connect** refers to connecting with people around you, with family and friends and neighbours in your local community. Connecting with people in green spaces can reduce loneliness

and provide a freely available space in which connections with others can be built. Further to this, connecting with nature can support improved physical and mental wellbeing. To achieve this, Stafford Borough Council will engage with local schools, voluntary sector and other charitable organisations who work with people who are lonely or live in deprived areas, to spread awareness around what spaces are available.

**Keep Learning** refers to trying something new and setting a personal challenge, which can generate fun and increase confidence in life opportunities. By ensuring that our partners and stakeholders have a good understanding of our aims, objectives and challenges in this area can ensure they have the knowledge to best support us in achieving our objectives. Stafford Borough Council can achieve this by making relevant information about our habitats accessible and engaging to our partners, stakeholders, and communities.

**Take notice** refers to being curious and noticing the natural environment. For our residents and visitors to the Borough, having positive experiences and taking time to reflect in nature can increase enjoyment of biodiversity. We will signpost locations of interest and engage with

schools and partners. We will also encourage the enjoyment of biodiversity through increasing access to our parks and open spaces.

**Be Active** means going outside and moving in a way that suits your level of mobility and fitness. Increased physical activity can reduce our risks of major illnesses, such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes and can increase our life expectancy. We will support land management by giving clear guidance about appropriate use of spaces that support biodiversity. We will also identify areas that can be used for physical activity and areas that need greater protection.

Finally, **Give** refers to doing something for someone else such as supporting a charity or volunteering. By taking part in the local community and engagement meaningfully with biodiversity people can create a sense of ownership and commitment to the local community that is rewarding and creates connections with people and places. We will achieve this by supporting new or existing 'Friends of' parks and places groups as well as relevant charitable organisations to identify and engage with Stafford's biodiversity as a local asset.



# Community Involvement

There are many ways in which people have a part to play in helping preserve biodiversity.

There are volunteering opportunities on many of the nature reserves in the Borough, including those owned by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. There are many wildlife organisations to join like the RSPB, Plantlife or the Wildlife Trust. The Eco-schools programme is a vibrant network of schools that undertake a range of green initiatives. Many businesses now have environmental management systems in place or provide volunteers for conservation. Even in our own gardens we can all make a difference by adding wildlife friendly features.



## Wild about Stafford

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's "Wild about Stafford" project is working in Stafford Borough to help 'reconnect' volunteers with their local wild spaces. The benefits of 'connecting' with nature, is well documented, with benefits including mental wellbeing, physical health and ownership.

The events are held on the Borough's Local Nature Reserves where a variety of conservation work is undertaken. Work includes meadow restoration, woodland management and scrub control. The sessions cater for people of all abilities with all tools, equipment and expert tuition provided. And yes, there is always time for a break with tea and biscuits on hand!

This work is set to continue with events across the Borough's Local Nature Reserves and has proved to be a successful example of partnership working between the Wildlife Trust and the Council.

◀ *Wild about Stafford volunteers at Barlaston and Rough Close Common.*

# Education

School grounds are ideal places to get children involved, in a hands-on way, with the natural environment.

They offer a safe, practical and exciting opportunity for outdoor learning that can complement classroom-based activities.

Biodiversity has direct links to the science curriculum, providing knowledge, skills and understanding across the key stages in the following areas: Life processes; Humans and other animals; Green plants; Variation and classification, inheritance and evolution; Living things in their environment.



# Residents

## Gardens and allotments

In urban areas especially, gardens and allotments have an important role in supplying habitat for biodiversity. Increasingly people are realising that gardening can be a way of both enjoying and helping nature. There are a number of features that can be incorporated into a garden to help make it greener and more attractive to wildlife.

- Ponds
- Log pile
- Rockery
- Compost heap
- Water butt
- Bird feeders
- Nest boxes / bat boxes

There are also several things to avoid using including pesticides and herbicides. There are now good alternatives to peat - whose continued harvesting is damaging the environment.

## Wildlife friendly planting

Any nectar rich flowers and berry producing shrubs will attract wildlife into the garden. A good variety of plants that will flower across the whole season will help bees, butterflies and other insects. This is particularly important because many bee species are now in decline. Some of the best plants include traditional herbs such as Rosemary, Lavender, Thyme, and Marjoram. Perhaps the most popular plant for butterflies is the Buddleia. By planting flowers like Fennel many aphid-eating insects will be encouraged, for example hoverflies. Hebes and Cotoneasters will both attract bees and butterflies.

If you have a paved area in your garden then removing a couple of slabs and planting low growing plants in the gaps would add interest. Herbs such as thyme and chamomile are suitable but any size of plants in the gaps will attract wildlife successfully. A trellis will add vertical space and many climbers are good for wildlife, especially Honeysuckle which will attract nighttime visitors like moths.

Lawns can have low growing perennials added to them, for example Speedwells, Daisy, Self-Heal, Bird's-foot Trefoil. If you feel more adventurous and have the space, then allowing

a meadow area to develop would really help wildlife. There are now many suppliers who specialise in providing native seeds and plants.

Containers or hanging baskets are also ways of adding plants where space is limited. Even if you have no garden a window box can still add interest.









# Measuring Biodiversity Progress

It is important to have additional mechanisms in place to measure, monitor and review biodiversity conservation to ensure we fulfil our duties, and to ensure that these efforts are coordinated across the Council.

Our plan for future activities on pages 40 - 41 sets out the methods by which we intend to carry out our consideration of biodiversity objectives.

**The Action Plan has five sections or topic areas:**

- 1. Integration and coordination with partners**
- 2. Policies and processes**
- 3. People and communities**
- 4. Managing council land and assets**
- 5. Biodiversity Net Gain**

These are broken down into a series of actions and details, followed by which service area is indicated as responsible for them.



*Wildflower area at the Trentham Estate*

# Future Activities

Topic Area	Type of Action	Detail	Corporate	Operations	Planning Policy/DM	PR and Marketing/Education	Estates/Property Services	Housing
Integration and co-ordination with partners	Action in National Landscapes	Helping to develop and implement management plans for National Landscapes		✓	✓			
		Making improvements to nature in these areas		✓	✓		✓	
Policies and processes	Consider biodiversity in development plan making and decisions	Aid landscape recovery			✓			
		Consider how existing planning advice and strategies can protect and enhance biodiversity			✓			
	Consider relevant strategies:	Staffs and S-o-T Local Nature Recovery Strategy	✓	✓	✓			
	Consideration process	Check existing data about wildlife and habitats in the area		✓	✓			
	Decision making	Consider using the Natural Capital approach for decisions	✓	✓	✓			
		Use Green Infrastructure Framework			✓			
	Review internal policies and processes	Light - make sure the design of artificial lighting minimises effects on nature		✓	✓		✓	✓
		Transport - support sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality	✓					
		Waste - review waste management and recycling processes to reduce water pollution and air pollution from waste transport and landfill	✓					
		Water - improve water efficiency to reduce the effect water abstraction can have on sensitive habitats and species	✓		✓			✓
People and communities	Educate, advise and raise awareness	Educate staff on your biodiversity actions and why they're important				✓		
		Feature biodiversity in public or internal communications				✓		
		Include biodiversity considerations in advice for internal and external clients and service users		✓		✓		
		Include the public in projects to improve biodiversity		✓		✓		
		Put information boards in green spaces or offer guided walks		✓		✓		
		Raise public awareness of how their gardens can support biodiversity, or example by avoiding artificial grass				✓		
		Use libraries and museums to raise awareness of biodiversity				✓		



Topic Area	Type of Action	Detail	Corporate	Operations	Planning Policy/DM	PR and Marketing/Education	Estates/Property Services	Housing
Managing council land and assets	Enhance protected sites	Local Nature Reserves		✓				
		Local Wildlife Sites		✓				
		Sites of Special Scientific Interest		✓				
	Manage land to improve biodiversity	Allotments		✓				
		Amenity spaces and communal gardens		✓				✓
		Canals and rivers		✓				
		Cemeteries		✓				
		Consider how to manage 'nature corridors' that connect existing habitats		✓			✓	✓
		Consider promoting and encouraging nature-based solutions, restoration of natural processes and landscape recovery on large areas of land.		✓	✓			
		Creating dedicated spaces for wildlife		✓				✓
		Field margins and hedgerows		✓			✓	
		Implementing measures to prevent the spread of invasive species and plant disease		✓			✓	✓
		Leaving dead wood safely in place in woodlands to provide additional habitat		✓				
		Maintaining planted trees to give them the best chance of survival		✓			✓	✓
		Parks and sports fields		✓				
		Reducing the use of herbicides, pesticides, peat and water		✓			✓	✓
		Rights of way and access routes		✓				
		Using native and sustainably sourced trees and shrubs when planting		✓			✓	✓
		Water-dependent habitats		✓				
		Woodlands and nature reserves		✓				
	Improve how you manage buildings	Impact of maintenance work to wildlife		✓			✓	✓
		Managing vegetation around buildings and car parks		✓			✓	✓
		Reduce the use of energy and water to reduce pollution and pressure it puts on wildlife		✓			✓	✓
		Use of chemicals on the premises		✓			✓	✓
	Make space for wildlife	Add green walls or roofs to existing or new buildings		✓	✓		✓	✓
		Build and install nest boxes for birds, bats and other animals		✓	✓		✓	✓
		Farmland - be aware of soil health, water use and waste management and encourage farmers to apply for agri-environment schemes and use pesticides appropriately.					✓	
		Plant wildflowers for pollinators		✓			✓	✓
Biodiversity net gain	Prepare for biodiversity net gain	Internal processes			✓			
		External guidance/documentation			✓			
	Report on biodiversity net gain	Collate required quantitative and qualitative data			✓			

## Appendix 1

# Stafford Borough Nature Declaration

**The Council recognises that: Nature is in long term decline. With 41 per cent of wild species in decline nationally, and 15 per cent facing extinction. The requirement to take action to reverse this is urgent.**

We recognise that:

- a. Nature provides us with vital support systems ['ecosystem services'], and severe declines in biodiversity are undermining nature's productivity and adaptability, posing excessive uncertainty for our economies and wellbeing.
- b. A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, happy, prosperous society.
- c. The impacts of climate change are contributing to nature's decline, while restoring and protection of natural habitat provides a wide variety of cost-effective benefits to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- d. Many of our areas of work across the Borough have an impact on nature, and we have responsibilities to make decisions to protect and enhance it.

This Council further acknowledges that:

To address the nature crisis and aim to achieve the multiple environmental benefits that nature can bring to people, the 'Bigger, Better, More and Joined-up' principles of the 2010 Lawton Report - 'Making Space for Nature' - should be followed to help rebuild nature:

- a. There must be more space given to wildlife.
- b. Existing wildlife spaces must be expanded.
- c. The quality of existing wildlife spaces should be improved by better habitat management.
- d. The connectivity between wildlife spaces must be enhanced.

In order to support the recovery of nature across Stafford Borough, and in recognition of new obligations under the Environment Act 2021, this council commits to:

1. Improve and protect the Borough's habitats resilience to climate change, providing natural solutions to reduce carbon and manage flood risk, and sustaining vital ecosystems.
2. Prioritise the restoration of natural habitats in accordance with Stafford Borough's Nature Recovery Network Map.
3. Formulate a tree planting policy which is underpinned by Nature Recovery Network mapping across the local authority area, pursuing a "right tree, right place" approach. Recognise that tree planting can be deleterious to habitat restoration and should only be planned on land with low ecological value/restoration potential.
4. To continue to manage council-owned land for the benefit of wildlife.



5. Embed nature's recovery into all strategic plans and policy areas, not just those directly related to the environment. Ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is well understood across the authority and complements other relevant plans and strategies.
6. Working with partners, demonstrate leadership by supporting and engaging with businesses, communities and the wider public to take action to put nature into recovery.
7. The Council designates the Councils Economic Development and Planning Cabinet Member as portfolio lead for Nature Recovery and also a lead officer to coordinate the council operations in relation to the ecological emergency.
8. Integrate the targets, objectives and outcomes of this motion with those outlined in the existing Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy to ensure measures to tackle climate issues do not contravene the principles of enhancing biodiversity. The value of well managed heathland, wetland and other habitats of principal importance in sequestering carbon is of equal importance and must be acknowledged.
9. Where appropriate, and in accordance with the council's Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy, the council will invest in nature-based solutions to climate change in order to tackle the nature crisis and climate emergency together.
10. Support the development of a Staffordshire wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and through the recently commissioned Nature Recovery Network Mapping, develop a local evidence-based action plan including short and long-term targets for putting nature into recovery by 2040, in accordance with the council's climate change obligations. Areas of focus will include:
  - Land management
  - Biodiversity
  - Roads and highways
  - Planning and development
  - Air quality
  - Transforming urban spaces
  - Health and wellbeing
  - People and communities
  - Education and awareness
11. That the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitor the Local Nature Recovery work and the council's action to support biodiversity and nature recovery on an annual basis.
12. Work closely with Stafford Borough's partners via the Staffordshire Sustainability Board and other organisations to promote Local Nature Recovery.



*Cycling on the trails at Cannock Chase*

## Annex 1

# Further Information and Guidance

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	<a href="http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk">www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk</a>	The Trust manages, conserves and enhances some of the best wildlife sites in the County -including 6 reserves in the Borough. They also provide training and educational resources plus a “Wild about Stafford” officer.
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk">www.rspb.org.uk</a>	The RSPB protects, restores and manages habitats for birds and other wildlife. They manage 200 nature reserves and look for practical solutions for problems facing the environment.
The British Trust for Ornithology	<a href="http://www.bto.org">www.bto.org</a>	The BTO is a research institute measuring changes in bird populations to inform the public and policy makers.
British Dragonfly Society	<a href="http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk">www.british-dragonflies.org.uk</a>	The aim of the society is to conserve dragonflies and their wetland habitats
Butterfly Conservation	<a href="http://www.butterfly-conservation.org">www.butterfly-conservation.org</a>	Information about British butterflies and moths, their habitats and conservation work.
Buglife	<a href="http://www.buglife.org.uk">www.buglife.org.uk</a>	Buglife is devoted to the conservation of all invertebrates, aiming to halt the extinction of species and to achieve sustainable populations.
Botanical Society of the British Isles	<a href="http://www.bsbi.org.uk">www.bsbi.org.uk</a>	The BSBI records plant distribution and produces national Atlases and county Floras. It supports all botanists and provides training and education.
The Wild Flower Society	<a href="http://www.thewildflowersociety.com/index.htm">www.thewildflowersociety.com/index.htm</a>	Created specifically for amateur botanists and wild flower lovers in the UK who enjoy learning more about field botany. A series of outdoor walks are organised each year.
Plantlife	<a href="http://www.plantlife.org.uk">www.plantlife.org.uk</a>	Plantlife carries out practical conservation work, manages nature reserves, and works to connect people with wild plants and promotes their conservation for the benefit of all.



The Mammal Society	<a href="http://www.mammal.org.uk">www.mammal.org.uk</a>	The only organisation dedicated to the study and conservation of all mammals of the British Isles and provide a hub of information and expertise
Bat Conservation Trust	<a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a>	Participates in the biodiversity action planning process, Identifies conservation actions for bats and bat habitats in England; Advises and educate members of the public about bats and provides support to local bat groups.
Froglife	<a href="http://www.froglife.org">www.froglife.org</a>	Froglife is a national wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles - frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards - and saving the habitats they depend on.
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation	<a href="http://www.arc-trust.org">www.arc-trust.org</a>	Current activities include managing eighty nature reserves, working with schools, researching and monitoring species' populations in the wild, and working with other wildlife organisations, and the public, to influence wildlife legislation relating to amphibians and reptiles.
Wild about Gardens	<a href="http://www.wildaboutgardens.org">www.wildaboutgardens.org</a>	Information about wildlife gardening and how gardening for wildlife can make a difference to the UK's wild creatures.
Natural England	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england</a>	The government's advisor providing advice on safeguarding the natural environment, managing reserves and green farming schemes
Environment Agency	<a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk">www.environment-agency.gov.uk</a>	Principle aims are to protect and improve the environment and to promote sustainable development.
The Woodland Trust	<a href="http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk">www.woodlandtrust.org.uk</a>	The Woodland Trust is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity.



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