

Councils' Role in Nature Recovery

Bringing Nature Back

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About Ulster Wildlife

- We are Northern Ireland's **largest LOCAL** nature conservation charity, established in 1978.
- We're **working to bring nature back** on land and at sea, **inspire people to take action** for nature and climate, and play our part in ending the climate and ecological emergencies.
- We **manage 18 nature reserves**; **save species at risk** from red squirrels and hedgehogs to native oysters; **restore and connect habitats** such as peatlands; **influence government policy** and **empower people to stand up for nature**.
- We are **one of 46 independent Wildlife Trusts**, collectively working across the UK to bring nature back.
- We are **driven and supported by over 14,000 members**.

Why is nature recovery so important

- Nature has a right to exist
- It is vital for our economy – farming, tourism, clean air and water
- It can help to reduce the effects of climate change
- It provides us with ecosystem services – infiltration, attenuation, coastal protection, carbon sequestration, pollination, pest control, nitrogen fixing in soil
- It keeps us healthy
- It makes us feel better
- Everything is connected - loss is never isolated



What can Councils do within their functions?

COUNCIL FUNCTION

Leisure and recreation

Environmental Health

Recycling and waste management

Waste collection and disposal

Local Planning

Strategic Planning

Cemeteries

Regulation of HMOs

Estate Management

Arts, heritage and cultural facilities



The big opportunities

- Application of nature-based solutions
- 30 x 30
- Biodiversity net gain
- Creation of Nature Recovery Networks
- Partnerships with eNGOs eg native oysters
- Think BIG. Putting up a nestbox might help one or two birds but it won't help nature recover on the scale that is needed

Nature based solutions

- An important tool to protect, manage or restore ecosystems
- Can substantially contribute to net zero
- Can help to protect us from storms, heatwaves, drought, shifting precipitation and temperature trends



Two sides to Nature based solutions

We can either

- Protect and restore ecosystems so that they continue to provide us with critical protection and ecosystem services like pollination and flood protection, or
- Incorporate nature into the solutions that we are developing to stop climate change and adapt to its effects

Help to deliver 30 x 30

- COP15 in 2020, a framework was agreed to put nature on a path to recovery by 2030 and to protect 30% of our planet's land and seas for nature by 2030 – 30 x 30
- Endorsed by the NI Executive
- We need to meet this bold and ambitious target as current strategies and actions have not stopped the decline of species and habitats
- At least 10% of land should be designated for strict protection eg Ramsar, ASSI and in favourable condition
- Councils could act to ensure the connectivity of areas of habitat and protect these nature recovery networks through the Planning system and management of open space.

30 x 30

- Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) offer a key avenue for governments and others to achieve 30x30, through recognising sites and territories with effective and equitable conservation outcomes (IUCN)
- For example, Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) and Local Wildlife Sites

Biodiversity Net Benefit

- Not yet legislation in NI, but could still be considered
- In Wales, every development must deliver a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystems must be left in a better state than before. Goes beyond mitigation and compensation
- In England, BNG requires at least 10% biodiversity gain, maintained for at least 30 years. More prescriptive than Welsh model

Nature Recovery Networks

- Landscape Partnership – Ulster Wildlife, RSPB, National Trust and Woodland Trust
- Produced NI's first set of Nature Recovery Network maps
- Available to all Councils, free of charge

Partnerships



- Make facilities and sites available to eNGOs
- Ulster Wildlife manages Balloo Wetland and Balloo Woodland
- Native oyster nurseries at Carrickfergus and Glenarm – more please!

THANK YOU

