

SECURING ENHANCED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, NATURAL CAPITAL AND BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

20. **Biodiversity and Natural Capital:** All new developments will be required secure a degree of biodiversity net gain¹. From November 2023 the DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain Metric should be used in conjunction with an assessment of wider biodiversity issues such as inter-connectivity of habitats, wildlife corridors and landscape character.
21. Existing trees, hedges and biodiversity features of importance that are consistent with the wider landscape character should be retained and considered in the design from the start. A Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted with the application and accompanied, where appropriate, by surveys of the site and nearby potentially affected biodiversity assets ensuring that these are taken into consideration and suitable protection, enhancement or, where appropriate and acceptable, offsetting is in place.
22. Green roofs may be considered as a contribution to biodiversity gain and can be included on a wide range of buildings. Where considered, expert advice should be sought regarding the range of plant species used, enabling the roof to function while contributing to local biodiversity value.
23. A Derbyshire Natural Capital Strategy has been commissioned with the objective of fully understanding the state of the natural capital assets, the extent, quality and abundance of the natural environment, and the ecosystem services that we derive from

¹ Environment Act 2021

them, taking the word 'environment' in the broadest possible meaning. The study will explore the pressures that will be exerted on the environment over the coming years, including climate change, and consider the wealth of ecosystem services that will need to be delivered in Derbyshire for society, the economy and the environment to prosper. Central to this will be understanding what ecosystem services will be needed where, and what natural capital assets are required in order to deliver them. The Derbyshire Natural Capital Strategy will therefore become an important reference work for developers and planners when considering the impacts of a proposal on the natural environment and its implications for biodiversity net gain.

24. In terms of climate change, carbon sequestration along with water management, including nutrient neutrality and flood risk will be key elements of natural capital considerations. One of the outcomes of the Natural Capital Strategy should be an understanding of the desirability of different land uses in different areas, according to their current importance for, and future potential to deliver the necessary ecosystem services. This will feed into strategic economic and land use decision making. The Natural capital Strategy will therefore provide the context for the appropriate siting of certain environmental interventions and natural capital enhancements as well as other land uses. Natural Capital decision making therefore has a key role to play in both climate change mitigation and adaptation.
25. **Trees, Landscaping and Public Open Space:** In line with the requirements of the NPPF, designs should take advantage of the climate change benefits of trees, for carbon sequestration, the provision of shade, impact on local air quality and aesthetic benefits contributing to health and wellbeing. Tree planting proposals should take advantage of specialist advice regarding species selection and location in relation to buildings, roads, other infrastructure and wider landscape character. The inclusion

of trees and green spaces within a design should be considered from the start. Adequate provision will be required for the ongoing maintenance of green infrastructure and the aftercare of new planting.

26. **Multiple benefits:** Many measures providing natural capital benefits may contribute to several climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience goals. Tree planting may provide cooling shade, flood water control and carbon sequestration as well as habitat creation. Similarly, the creation of wetlands as part of a SuDS scheme can contribute towards flood water control, carbon sequestration, habitat creation and potentially assist in achieving nutrient neutrality. The potential importance and contribution of schemes proposed in terms of biodiversity should not therefore be underestimated and should be considered in the wider context of the services that natural capital provides, not least, health and wellbeing.