

## **NATURE CRISIS**

Draft NPF4 seeks to take account of the need to address the nature crisis by protecting and enhancing Scotland's biodiversity, aiding nature recovery and restoration.

### **Local Development Plans should:**

- facilitate biodiversity enhancement, nature recovery and nature restoration.

### **Development proposals should:**

- contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity;
- minimise impacts on biodiversity, nature networks and the natural environment and take into account the need to reverse biodiversity loss:
- only be supported at national, major or EIA level, or where an Appropriate Assessment is required, where it can be demonstrated that they will conserve and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks within and adjacent to the site so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. To inform this, proposals should:
  - be based on an understanding of the characteristics of the site;
  - integrate and make best use of nature-based solutions;
  - be supported by an assessment of potential negative effects, which should be fully mitigated; and
  - provide significant biodiversity enhancements, in addition to any proposed mitigation.
- certain proposals for local development should only be supported if they include appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity. Nature Scot will publish draft guidance on appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity which can be read alongside the draft NPF4.

## **Responses to the Position Statement**

There was support for strengthening the approach to protecting and restoring the natural environment and for an increased focus on biodiversity. There were calls for biodiversity to have equal recognition with the climate crisis, and be central to decision making throughout the planning process. Securing positive effects for biodiversity from new developments was welcomed with some highlighting the opportunity to consider a net gains approach, and calling for a clear policy steer to stimulate a nature-based solution market.

## Policy changes

The policies in NPF4 build on the spatial strategy set out in NPF3, of which the natural environment was a central part, and on the policies set out in SPP. They are informed by Nature Scot's report '*Delivering Scotland's Ambition to Secure Positive Effects for Biodiversity*<sup>1</sup>'. We also convened a working group to further explore the options and emerging themes with wider stakeholders which met in February, March and July 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> [securing-positive-effects-for-biodiversity.pdf \(transformingplanning.scot\)](#)