

The Planning Bill: Link priorities to recover nature

The Planning Bill announced in the Queens Speech of 11 May 2021 proposes a significant relaxation of planning rules. Without clear commitments to increase the amount of land protected for nature, and to strengthen those protections, the Bill could result in vital wildlife habitats being lost forever. However, by adopting an approach that puts nature at the heart of planning, the Bill can create great places for people to live and contribute towards nature's recovery.

Link's Planning for Nature Sub-Group, part of the [Land Use Planning Group](#), propose that the following three priorities be built into the Bill:

1. New provisions for the recovery of nature.

Delivered through:

- i) A new planning designation for the purposes of enabling the recovery of nature, identified through Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- ii) Local Nature Recovery Strategies being given formal weight in the planning system through being embedded within Local Plans.

2. Stronger protections for nature in all areas.

Delivered through:

- i) Strengthened environment assessments and protections for designated areas.
- ii) Reforms to help protected landscapes work better for nature.
- iii) Better resourcing of local planning authorities and higher quality environmental data.

3. Effective developer contributions mechanisms (above and beyond Biodiversity Net Gain) that will support nature.

Developer contributions should help deliver:

- i) Accessible nature-rich greenspaces for local communities.
- ii) Strategic biodiversity mitigation schemes to address the harm from new developments to the National Sites Network.
- iii) Nature-positive developments.
- iv) In addition, Biodiversity Net Gain should be extended to major infrastructure projects.

Link's Planning for Nature Sub-Group will be publishing a paper in due course, setting out these proposals in more detail.