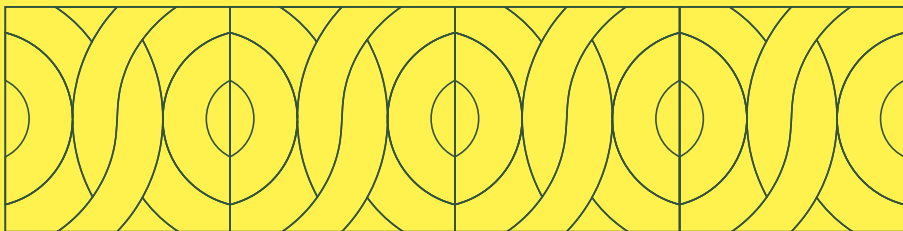


OUR AMBITION FOR NATURE RECOVERY



INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Crown Estate has a responsibility to take a leading role in stewarding the UK's natural environment and biodiversity, alongside our commitments to support the UK's transition to a net zero, energy secure future; support inclusive communities; and responsibly generate a financial return for the country.

Our approach to nature recovery is to take joined-up action across land and at sea to restore nature and create lasting benefits for people, climate and the environment. We have proposed commitments and goals to achieve this, which draw on our role and capabilities as one of the UK's largest custodians of national assets. We are responsible for some of the most diverse, distinct and important holdings on land and at sea, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These diverse marine, coastal, rural and urban habitats are home to thousands of species and vital ecosystems, which communities and our economy rely upon.

Humankind is pushing nature to breaking point with changes in land use, the growing demand for resources, and economic activity that takes more from nature than it gives back. There is an urgent need to reset our relationship with nature. As an independent business, set up to act in the long-term national interest, we must play our part in halting the decline of nature and to steward the land and sea for future generations.

We have proposed three goals around increasing biodiversity, addressing the water crisis and enabling people to reconnect with nature. While we have made progress in these areas, we recognise that we have a long way to go.

We are committed to playing our part in cultivating a positive relationship with nature and we recognise the diverse interests of those who depend on the land and sea directly or indirectly – industry, those who manage and work on it, and coastal,

rural and urban communities. Our goals and interventions must support and accelerate existing activities that seek to restore nature.

I want to thank the many stakeholders who have contributed their time and expertise in helping us to shape our nature recovery ambition. We welcome feedback and look forward to working closely with you and others in continuing to evolve and deepen our approach as we seek to contribute to nature recovery at scale.

Setting out our ambition is an important step forward as we believe that open engagement will ensure we develop and strengthen our thinking and action on nature. We will update on our approach to nature with public targets and KPIs in 2025.

Prior to this we welcome feedback on our ambition at:
naturerecovery@thecrownestate.co.uk.



“We have a pivotal role to play in driving nature recovery at scale on land and at sea.”

Dan Labbad
Chief Executive Officer

VALUE OF NATURE AND SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

Nature is under threat

Globally, nature is under mounting pressure across land and sea, threatening the very ecosystems that humankind depends upon.

The 2023 State of Nature report declares that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.

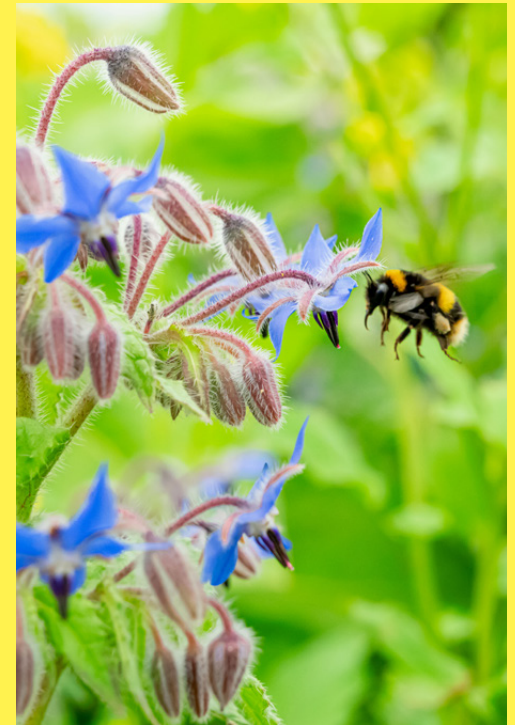
Nature is essential for all life

Healthy habitats, ecosystems and an abundance of species are vital to regulate the climate and to support the long-term sustainability and prosperity of society. Nature provides us with water, food, energy and raw materials, underpinning the functioning of the economy.

Research by the Green Finance Institute in 2024 shows that nature degradation is slowing the UK economy and could lead to an estimated 12% reduction in GDP.

Everyone needs to act, together

The problems and solutions are connected; all land types and uses, sectors, supply chains, cities, towns and communities are inherently connected to and part of nature. The Crown Estate, like all those with the ability to influence, needs to work at pace to protect and restore biodiversity.



OUR PORTFOLIO

With our unique remit and diverse portfolio, The Crown Estate has a statutory mandate to create holistic and long-term financial, environmental and social value for our stakeholders, our customers and the nation.

This diverse portfolio, spanning a large variety of habitats, means that we have to work in partnership and provides us with the ability to bring together public and private partners, stakeholders and customers to catalyse change.



Our portfolio includes:

~50% of foreshore
in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

Territorial seabed out to

12 nautical miles.

200,000 acres of rural land,
including grassland, wetland and peatland. This includes:

~54,000 acres
of uplands and commons interests in Cumbria and Wales.

The Windsor Estate's 16,250 acres.

Of which 80% is subject to environmental, ecological and land use designation.

One of the largest custodians
of retail destinations in the UK.

Real Estate portfolio spanning
~10 million sq ft
in London's West End and
~8 million sq ft
of regional commercial development space.

WE HAVE ENGAGED EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Nature recovery is emerging; unlike net zero, the taxonomy, standards and frameworks for nature recovery are in development. Ongoing engagement with a wide range of experts and organisations is necessary to shape and refine our approach.

Nature recovery is complex; and doesn't organise by the shape of our holdings. Bringing in outside perspectives helps us to understand how our activities fit within a wider context, including ecosystems and economic systems.

Our engagement over the last 12 months includes:

- Interviews with over 30 experts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- A workshop in January with 38 stakeholders to develop focus areas.
- An interactive webinar in July to test our draft approach, commitments and goals.
- Input from environmental NGOs, public bodies, SMEs, corporates, academics and trade unions.
- Advice from The Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), Pollination and Wonderoom.



With thanks to the following organisations for their valuable time and insights:

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (Northern Ireland), Afonydd Cymru, Arup, Business for Nature, Cambridge Greater Shared Planning, CISL, CaSP, Defra, Duchy of Cornwall, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Environment Agency, Farmers' Union of Wales, Forager, Forestry Commission, Office for the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Greater London Authority, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Green Alliance, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Knepp Estate, London National Park City, Marine Management Organisation, National Trust, Natural England, Natural History Museum, NFU, NFU Cymru, North Northamptonshire Council, Natural Resources Wales, Pala, Pollination, Restore Nature, Rewilding Britain, Royal Parks, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Trees for Cities, UKGBC, Ulster Wildlife, Vertical Meadow, Wildlife Trusts, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association, Wildlife and Countryside Link, Wonderoom, World Resources Institute, WWF, WWT, Zoological Society of London

Please note this publication does not represent these organisations' views.

HOW WE CAN MAKE THE MOST DIFFERENCE

In collaboration with stakeholders, we have identified the following areas of activity where we can have the most positive impact on nature, through direct action and playing an enabling and influencing role:

Funding nature's recovery

Help to align and leverage public funding, create pathways for private sector development, support the development of nature markets, and fund research and pilot projects directly.

Embedding nature recovery into lease agreements

Shape customer practices through the lifetime of the asset and at every stage of the leasing cycle.

Influencing across supply chains

Bring together upstream and downstream actors to drive innovation and adoption of best practices on nature.

Accelerating innovation

Restore nature through research and development, engagement throughout supply chains, and bringing together key experts.

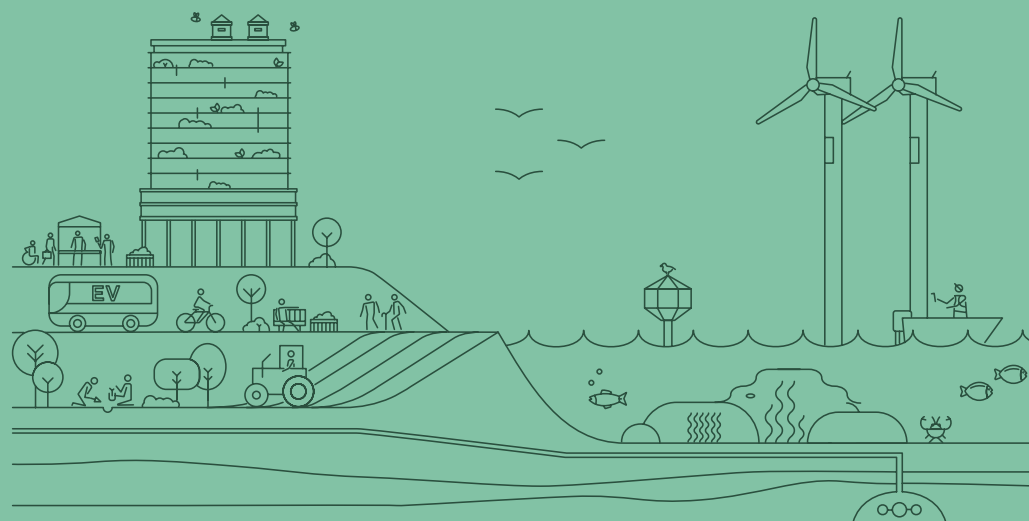
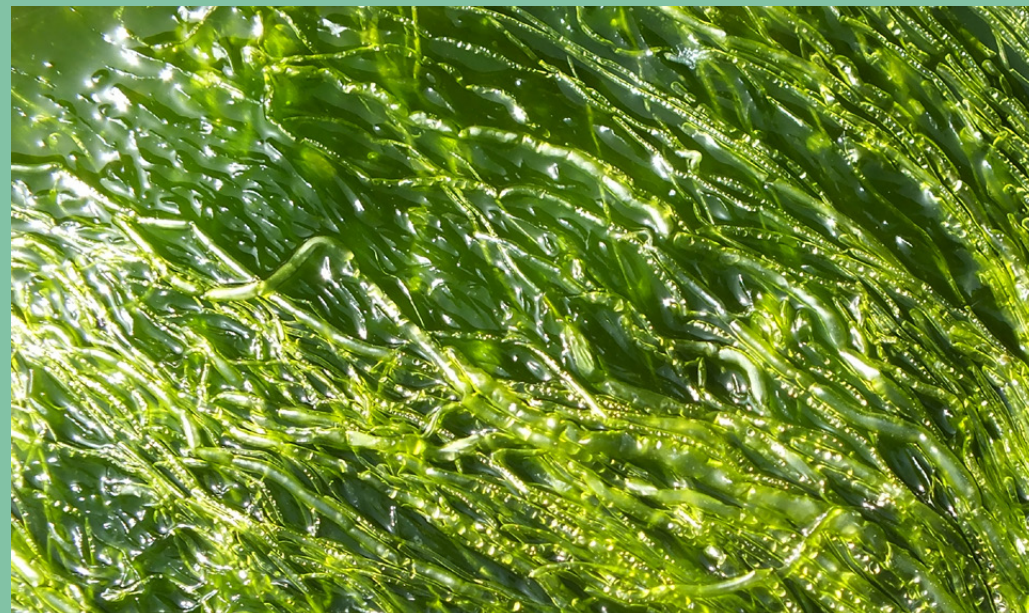
Accelerating seascape and landscape scale projects

Connect with diverse stakeholders across the public and private sectors, and civil society, to deliver joined-up nature initiatives.

Addressing evidence gaps

Ensure we have a detailed understanding of The Crown Estate's entire nature footprint and support research and pilot initiatives to address gaps presenting barriers to nature recovery efforts.

All of these areas inform our ambition for nature recovery and feed into our commitments.



INTRODUCING OUR NATURE RECOVERY AMBITION

Our vision

Nature is flourishing and cared for as one of the UK's most precious assets.

Our approach

Joined-up action across land and at sea to restore nature and create lasting benefits for people, climate and the environment.

We are setting goals and commitments for nature recovery that will drive everything we do across our whole business. Our approach to nature recovery is not separate from our approach to decarbonisation, energy security, communities or the economy – we must navigate these responsibilities, risks and opportunities together as we seek to create lasting and shared prosperity for the nation.

The goals underpinning this vision and approach are aligned with domestic and global ambitions for nature recovery, helping to halt nature's decline by 2030 and contributing to nature's recovery by 2050.



OUR FOUR COMMITMENTS ENABLE A JOINED-UP APPROACH



Understand Nature

Identify high quality data to inform decision-making

Short-term milestone:

establish a best available baseline for The Crown Estate's natural assets by 2026 to set a pathway and prioritise actions for measurable biodiversity increase by 2030.



Partner for Nature

Collaborate to accelerate nature recovery at scale

Short-term milestone:

build high impact partnerships to catalyse action for nature recovery across land and sea, including community ownership models for long term stewardship.



Design for Nature

Embed nature as a core priority in our management of land and seabed

Short-term milestone:

align decision making across The Crown Estate with system-level planning for nature, applying our guiding principles and setting guardrails by 2025, to support climate adaptation and thriving communities.



Fund Nature

Unlock capital at scale to protect and restore nature

Short-term milestone:

help create a sustainable economic model for nature recovery in the UK by 2030, using our capital investment to catalyse funding streams and high integrity natural capital markets.

OUR THREE GOALS FOCUS ON OUTCOMES FOR NATURE, CLIMATE AND PEOPLE



Goal 1: **Deliver increased biodiversity**

Deliver a measurable increase in biodiversity for The Crown Estate's holdings across land and sea by 2030, supporting climate adaptation and resilience.

Why?

Changes in land use, such as intensive agriculture and urban development, are causing degradation in the form of habitat loss and depleted soil condition. In parallel, changes such as offshore development and sewage outflows drive deterioration of freshwater, marine and coastal environments in the form of habitat fragmentation and loss.

The Crown Estate has an opportunity to deliver measurable increases in biodiversity across landscape and seascape. This will require the protection and prioritisation of areas for nature recovery. Overall, this will support the nation's ability to build resilience and adapt to climate change.



Goal 2: **Protect and restore freshwater, marine & coastal systems**

Identify and tackle causes of water degradation and water stress in areas within The Crown Estate's influence by 2030.

Why?

The challenge of improving water quality across our rivers, lakes and seas is a key national focus. Chemical run-off from agriculture is a significant cause of pollution, alongside other commercial activities and sewage outflows. Water management is becoming an increasingly important issue due to climate change impacts and escalating demand through increased urban and housing development.

As one of the UK's largest custodians of national assets, on land and at sea, we can use our influence and customer relationships to support actions to improve water quality and reduce water stress.



Goal 3: **Increase social and well-being benefits from nature**

Reconnect people with nature, delivering measurable health and well-being benefits by 2030, including community engagement with nature across our projects and developments.

Why?

Creating locally accessible blue and green spaces contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities and provides a range of broader benefits to society and the environment such as improved air quality, temperature regulation, and biodiversity enhancement.

Our holdings offer an opportunity to drive a shift to developing nature projects that engage urban, rural and coastal communities, and in a way that works for both nature and people.

WE HAVE STEPPED UP EFFORTS ACROSS THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Supporting a thriving marine environment and sustainable development

As managers of the seabed and much of the coastline, we are working in partnership with a wide range of organisations to enable decarbonised, clean energy, drive economic growth and jobs, and deliver a thriving marine environment. Our vision is to create the most sustainable and attractive marine economy and environment in the world, delivering value for the nation and nature.

To deliver this vision, we have established a Whole of Seabed Programme, which builds on 20+ years of evidence to co-ordinate and spatially plan future activities alongside government, environmental NGOs, industry and marine experts. This will inform our Marine Delivery Routemap; a strategy on how to best use the seabed to allow space for nature to thrive, and inform decisions on future leasing, licensing and investment.

Other nature-related activities for marine & coastal environments include:

- £50 million Offshore Wind Evidence and Change (OWEC) Programme, working with partners to fund projects such as the Marine Restoration Potential (MaRePo) project, supporting the sustainable expansion of offshore wind.
- Working with the Sea Ranger Service to gather data on birds and marine mammals, and provide training opportunities for young people.
- Providing the licences for seagrass and native oyster restoration trials.
- Working with over 200 cross-sector experts to develop a **'High-Integrity Marine Natural Capital Markets in the UK - A Roadmap for Action'**. This presents a pathway to securing new sources of finance to protect, restore and sustainably manage marine and coastal ecosystems.
- Investing in the Marine Data Exchange; a world leading digital platform that enables UK offshore industries to share survey data.



“We must go further than managing environmental impacts from offshore wind farms to have a positive impact on sea life and marine natural habitats, so that they and the livelihoods that depend on them can thrive.”

Gus Jaspert
Managing Director, Marine

WE HAVE STEPPED UP EFFORTS ACROSS THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

A green agricultural transition

The Crown Estate is aiming to be an exemplar of large-scale, productive and sustainable agricultural best practice, working with farmers to diversify land-use and income streams, adopting regenerative practices and enabling nature recovery. New environmental farm business tenancies will help to support and incentivise tenants, and new estate environmental plans set out locally developed priorities. Created and restored habitats will provide benefits for water quality and climate resilience, while reducing our business' carbon footprint. The Crown Estate Environment Fund—currently £10 million—supports farms with this work: over 400 acres of new woodland and 200km of hedgerows have been planted in the last two winters, and marginal land will be re-purposed for nature.

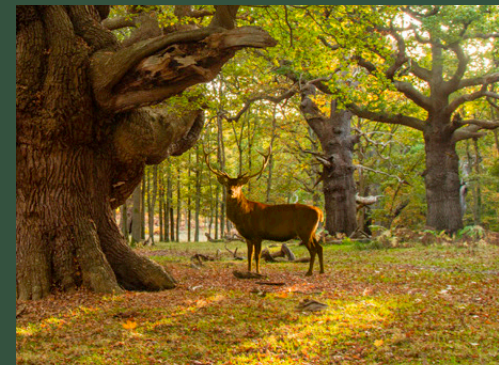
We are already progressing the dedication of 15% of our farmed land to nature recovery.

“Food production and nature recovery are both urgent priorities. Working with our farmers, we will ensure that our rural land can deliver both.”

Paul Sedgwick
Managing Director,
Windsor & Rural

Case study

We are supporting our tenants on our Devizes Estate and the wider Pewsey Downs Farmers to improve biodiversity at landscape scale. The environmental plan details 63 actions contributing to 15 headline objectives including soil health, priority habitats and species, water quality, and heritage features. A new farm tenancy agreement will deliver a shared ambition for low carbon farming, space for nature and diversification of opportunities.



The Windsor Estate

It's 1,000 year history and long-term stewardship by The Crown Estate has made the Windsor Estate an internationally recognised example of biodiversity, sustainability and conservation. It is the top site in Britain's 'Index of Ecological Continuity'. Significant parts of The Windsor Estate are designated by Natural England as: **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**, **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** and **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**. Recent actions have included restoration of parkland, wood pasture, species-rich grassland, heathland and ponds. Our ten-year landscape restoration programme is putting new trees, avenues, hedges, and woodlands into the Windsor landscape.

WE HAVE STEPPED UP EFFORTS ACROSS THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Connecting people to nature

Supporting nature in towns and cities is a key focus for The Crown Estate. Many urban areas are biodiversity poor, and development can exacerbate habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss. The challenge is to meet the national need for regeneration and home building, alongside enabling net zero, nature recovery and improving people's connection to nature.

Case study

Regent Street was originally laid out as a central boulevard through Soho and Mayfair for the Prince Regent to travel through. Two hundred years later, during the pandemic in 2020, we installed a temporary public realm scheme down the entire street comprising more than 5,000 square metres of additional pedestrian space, 332 planters, 62 trees, accessible seating and cycle lanes. We are now collaborating with Westminster City Council on a Park-to-Park initiative to create a permanent green corridor to enhance nature, wellbeing and climate change resilience as well as accessibility and inclusivity.

Working with our partners

At one of our major retail destinations, Rushden Lakes Retail Park, we work with The Wildlife Trust, who manage the Nene Wetlands Nature Reserve that is adjacent to the retail space. In 2023, we completed a biodiversity baseline across the portfolio and found that the Wetlands contribute over 1,600 habitat units over 150 hectares of land and is by far the most rich and biodiverse site within our real estate holdings. We continue to work with the Trust to introduce new keystone species, including beavers being returned to Northamptonshire for the first time in centuries later in 2024. We are also looking to improve the quality and quantity of green space across the retail site with the planned installation of a community orchard.



“Urban biodiversity provides vital connectivity for wildlife ecosystems, whilst contributing to climate resilience and people’s health and wellbeing.”

Kristy Lansdown
Head of Development

CLOSING REMARKS

Our unique assets and our long-term remit create an unequivocal responsibility to contribute to reversing nature loss in the UK. This is the first iteration of our nature recovery ambition as part of our ongoing engagement with our partners, practitioners and stakeholders.

We believe that our vision of nature flourishing and being cared for as one of society's most precious assets is one that we share with many. And we know that collaboration is critical to achieving this scale of nature recovery.

In shaping our nature recovery ambition, commitments and goals, we have drawn on the insight and expertise of many external stakeholders from different parts of the UK and beyond, as well as from within our business. Our approach aims to both focus action and attention from our whole business, and to remain flexible to a fast-moving context and expectations. We expect to evolve and refine our approach as we learn with others and better understand the role we can play.

In July we shared this nature recovery approach with stakeholders, and we are now working that feedback into our plans. We are also finalising our first full set of nature targets and key performance indicators and embedding these in our business.

In our 2025 update, we will provide more detail on our organisation-wide approach, and how we are working with and supporting others. Specifically for Wales, we will be following the requirements of the Welsh Environment Act (Section 6) which sets out how public bodies can detail their progress.

Meanwhile, we would welcome any feedback at:
naturerecovery@thecrownestate.co.uk

We seek to remain collaborative in our approach, transparent about our progress, and open about the challenges we encounter. Please do challenge and support us to live up to this.



Anna Swaithe
Chief Sustainability Officer



