

Desborough Town Council Biodiversity Policy

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Desborough Town Council will from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take to further the general biodiversity objective consistent with the proper exercise of its functions.

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020),

“Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet. Biodiversity is important for its own sake, and human survival depends upon it.

“Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of ground-breaking studies ... have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our ‘ecosystems’. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.”

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council’s area and within the Council’s influence. The Council, and any committees etc. of the Council, will consider sustainability, environmental impact, and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways subject to legislation so allowing:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications;
- support the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices in the Council’s operations;
- support residents and local organisations’ activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

The Council owns no land or buildings but if that situation changes then the policy will be reviewed. The Council will however, continue to strive to source sustainable materials whenever practicable when procuring supplies and equipment for the Council’s use.

The Council notes that the biggest single action it can take to promote the biodiversity duty is in influencing future development of the environment by commenting on planning matters. Developments, especially housing developments, which take account of biodiversity issues in the initial planning stage and throughout construction and which conserve and integrate existing habitats or provide new habitats are more likely to have a positive long-term beneficial impact on biodiversity (net-gain). The Council will also include policies in support of biodiversity within the emerging draft neighbourhood plan.

When commenting on planning matters, the Council will:

- support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats (whilst retaining the right to comment or object to other aspects of any such applications);
- support the protection of sensitive habitats from development;
- consider whether any development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife;
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.

This policy will be reviewed after every ordinary election or sooner should legislation dictate.