

Restoration Handbooks published to give best practice advice on creating new estuarine and coastal habitats

Three new environmental handbooks that set out guidance for the first time of how to carry out best practice estuarine and coastal habitat creation projects across the UK and Ireland have been published.

The handbooks provide practical guidance on restoring and creating estuarine and coastal habitats, bringing together advice on planning and implementing such schemes with case studies and lessons from previous examples.

They will be a tool to support local authorities, community partnerships and environmental organisations on restoring blue carbon habitats – habitats that can absorb carbon dioxide, help achieve net zero and tackle climate change.

The three detailed handbooks have been written by academics, industry specialists and environmental organisations that are experts in the field:

- Saltmarsh, led by the Environment Agency
- Seagrass, led by Zoological Society of London, University of Portsmouth and the Environment Agency
- Restoration of Estuarine and Coastal Habitats with Dredged Sediment, led by Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, Environment Agency and marine consultancy and survey company ABPMer

Since the Industrial Revolution there has been significant loss of nature-rich, carbon-storing estuarine and coastal habitats around the UK and globally, which the handbooks aim to counter by encouraging restoration projects and laying down best practice guidelines.

The handbooks look at a range of existing projects as case studies, such as:

- The restored saltmarshes in Cwm Ivy on The Gower Peninsula and Steart in Somerset restored saltmarshes
- The Seagrass Ocean Rescue reseeded seagrass beds in Dale, Pembrokeshire
- The Solent Beneficial Use of Dredged Sediment scheme

The creation of these habitats will provide flood defence, fisheries, water quality, biodiversity, social and wellbeing benefits, as well as mitigating against climate change.

The coastal restoration handbooks are hosted on the website of the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA), a partnership of local authorities, water companies, environmental organisations and businesses working together to maximise the natural value of the environment.

Emma Howard Boyd, chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Ecosystems cannot adapt as fast as the climate is changing. There is a biodiversity crisis as well as a climate crisis.

It is essential we tackle the climate emergency head-on and to do that we need to move towards a sustainable economy based on valuing nature, and protecting and restoring the natural environment at its heart.

These handbooks set a standard and streamline projects, helping to reduce costs to projects and ensure the best possible outcomes.

Alison Debney, Marine and Freshwater Conservation Programme Manager, Zoological Society of London, said:

By restoring our carbon-rich estuarine and coastal habitats, we both recover biodiversity and build our resilience to climate change creating a win-win situation for nature and people.

Natural habitats provide us with many benefits including protection from coastal flooding, improved water quality, food provision in addition to their incredible carbon-storing potential and biodiversity conservation.

It is the intention that these handbooks provide us with the 'how-to' so that we can collectively contribute to recovering these vital yet neglected habitats and contribute to addressing the global challenge of climate change.

These three handbooks partner with the existing handbook on European native oyster habitat restoration, which was published in November 2020.

All four restoration handbooks will be living documents and will be updated when changes in legislation or updated science.

£624 million of loan funding to support thousands of new homes and improve vital infrastructure

- House builders can now apply for a share of at least £624 million loan financing to pave the way for up to 116,000 new homes
- Funding to improve transport, build schools and unlock land for new housing where it is most needed, with a key focus on transforming brownfield land

- This will help level up communities, boosting small businesses and creating thousands of jobs

Communities across England will be transformed with new schools, health services and transport links to support the delivery of thousands of new homes, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced today (5 November 2021).

Loan funding of at least £624 million will be available for house builders, including SMEs, to improve the vital infrastructure needed to kick-start new housing projects, with a particular focus on transforming unsightly and derelict brownfield sites.

Redeveloping underused land for new homes and improving public services is a key part of the government's mission to level up the country and create vibrant communities where people want to live and work.

This loan funding paves the way for up to 116,000 new homes to support people on to the housing ladder, and will boost smaller building firms and create thousands of new jobs.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

We are building the right homes in the right places so more young people and families can get on the housing ladder.

Improving transport links, building schools and health facilities are key to unlocking new homes and creating vibrant places where communities can thrive.

This money will build on our commitment to bring derelict and abandoned sites back to life, regenerating towns and cities as we level up across the country.

Chief Executive of Homes England Peter Denton said:

This new infrastructure funding will be a powerful catalyst for creating new homes, places and communities.

It gives us the resources we need to back more developments like Houlton in Rugby, where a £35 million funding injection has helped to create new primary and secondary schools, a link road to Rugby town centre, and wider infrastructure needed to build a community of up to 6,200 homes.

The funding is part of the £2.2 billion loan financing made available at Spending Review 2020 to support infrastructure and drive housing supply.

Loans will be administered by Homes England through the Home Building Fund –

an existing housing supply programme that makes loan finance available to developers.

Last week at Spending Review a further £1.8 billion to regenerate brownfield land and deliver transport links and community facilities was announced.

The funding boost meets the government's manifesto commitment to a £10 billion housing fund and will help unlock 1 million new homes.

In addition, last month the [government allocated £57.8 million through the Brownfield Land Release Fund](#) for local councils to remediate and transform unused and derelict land into new homes.

The funding, to be committed from 2021/22 to 2024/25 with terms of up to 20 years, will enable a continuation of the existing Home Building Fund.

Loan financing provides private sector partners with long-term finance that will help to deliver the infrastructure and land assembly needed to accelerate new homes and drive housing supply in the long term.

The funding supports the government's mission of delivering up to 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020s by unlocking housing supply in the areas of greatest need while also stimulating economic and long-term growth.

[Green Growth Compact agreement between the UK and Zambia](#)

On Thursday in London, the UK and Zambia signed a new landmark partnership to drive sustainable economic growth and build on the momentum created by the historic COP26 climate summit. The Compact was signed in London by the UK Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford and Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stanley K Kakubo.

The Compact sets targets for delivering billions of pounds of new investment, doubling trade volumes between the two countries, and channelling over £100m of new financial resources to small and medium sized enterprises. It will strengthen coordination between the entire UK business community and the Zambian Government, as well as opening up financing opportunities for Zambian businesses. It provides the framework for collaboration with UK institutions that are researching and innovating in renewable energy, urban planning, trade connectivity and more.

The signing followed a reception hosted at the Houses of Parliament by the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Zambia, Laurence Robertson MP, attended by UK Parliamentarians and a wide range of major UK businesses and investors. The Presidential delegation also held meetings to discuss new investments with

UK-Government backed investors such as CDC Group and Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) and UK Export Finance.

While in London, the President and his team are also meeting with the Lord Mayor and representatives of the City of London, the London Metal Exchange and the London School of Economics.

The UK Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, said:

The UK and Zambia are partners in growing greener, more stable economies that create jobs in both countries and new business opportunities.

The Green Growth Compact is a landmark agreement that will benefit the UK and Zambia by boosting UK investment in Zambia by up to £1 billion, creating thousands of jobs and supporting green energy production.

Nicholas Woolley, British High Commissioner said:

This is an extremely exciting time for the partnership between the UK and Zambia. This Green Growth Compact enables us to formally build a stronger trade and investment relationship, based on sustainability, mutual prosperity and creating opportunities for businesses and communities in both our countries.

Steve Beel, Development Director at the British High Commission said:

Supporting Zambia to grow the economy sustainably is at the heart of our approach to tackling poverty and enabling the most vulnerable to be financially supported and have the opportunity to enhance their own livelihoods.

Further information

The Green Growth Compact represents a voluntary plan of action between the Governments of Zambia and the United Kingdom to strengthen economic development and opportunities for both countries. The 2 Governments commit to work together to build a stronger, more diversified and inclusive Zambian economy that delivers economic opportunities for the majority, while delivering a stronger relationship and mutual economic benefits to Zambia and the UK.

The Compact will support Zambia to follow a green development pathway to contribute to global ambitions on emissions reductions whilst protecting Zambia's own unique biodiversity and natural capital for the benefit of future generations. The Compact also incorporates the support and

contributions of a range of other UK partners including:

- CDC Group
- The Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG)
- The British Chamber of Commerce in Zambia
- The International Growth Centre (IGC) based at the London School of Economics

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is the UK's export credit agency.

CDC is the UK's development finance institution helping solve global development challenges by investing capital to support private sector growth and innovation.

The Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) is an innovative infrastructure project developer and investor which mobilises private investment in sustainable and inclusive infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia. It is funded by the governments of the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, Sweden, Germany and the International Finance Corporation.

The London Metal Exchange is the world's primary centre for trading of industrial metals, including copper.

[Environmental scientists and experts investigate Teesside crab deaths](#)

Environmental experts and scientists from a number of organisations have joined forces to investigate why thousands of dead and dying crabs and lobsters have washed up along the coast in Teesside and neighbouring areas.

The Environment Agency, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Hartlepool Borough Council and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council are collaborating on the investigation.

Samples of water, mussel, crab and sediment are being analysed at labs across the UK to determine whether a pollutant or animal disease could have contributed to the deaths of the marine crustaceans, or if it was a natural event.

Hannah Westoby, senior marine monitoring officer for the Environment Agency, said:

We understand how distressing the sight of dead and dying marine

life is on our beaches, so this investigation is a top priority for Environment Agency and Cefas laboratories.

The Environment Agency is investigating whether a pollution incident could have contributed to the deaths of the crustaceans and Cefas is investigating for signs of disease.

The tests being carried out by our labs are extremely complex and have to be undertaken in steps. We're analysing samples of water, sediment and crab for traces of hundreds of potential contaminants, so it is taking time to work through all of the possibilities. We're continuing to collect further samples while we await the results.

Our investigations have managed to rule out the likelihood of a number of possible causes, including sewage, seismic activity and underwater cables. Results for our water samples have come back as normal for those locations. There is always the possibility that this was a natural event, so we are keeping an open mind.

We have found no evidence that there is a risk to human health, but we would urge beach users to exercise caution while our investigation continues. Avoid affected areas of beach and coastline where possible and make sure you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after coming into contact with any affected crustaceans. Do not touch any sick or dead crustaceans and keep pets away from them too.

Mike Gubbins, head of the Fish Health Inspectorate at Cefas, said:

We are investigating whether an aquatic animal disease has caused this mortality.

Our Fish Health Inspectorate have been analysing shellfish samples collected from the area for listed and other non-listed diseases, but none have been detected so far.

We will continue to work with partner agencies to try and find answers for the local community.

Anyone who finds dead crustaceans (crabs or lobsters) or other dead wildlife, should report them to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.

COP26: Scottish businesses among those leading world to net zero

As the world gathers together at the UN COP26 climate summit, the UK Government is calling on the global private sector to follow the UK's example and join the UN Race to Zero.

Scotland's largest businesses are among those across the UK leading the way in the global transition to net zero emissions. SSE, Royal Bank of Scotland/Natwest and Ayr are part of a group of FTSE 100 businesses committing to eliminating their contribution to climate change by 2050.

As of today, 60 of the UK's FTSE 100 companies have signed up to the United Nation's Race to Zero campaign – the largest ever global alliance committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest, backed by independent experts and organisations to ensure everyone in the Race is following through on meeting their targets – signally a strong shift in the UK economy to a greener future.

Accelerating momentum from UK businesses means that pledges have more than quadrupled since November last year, now representing total market capital of over a trillion pounds and combined turnover of £700 billion.

Business and Industry Minister Lee Rowley said:

Businesses both large and small, across all sectors of the global economy, have a crucial role to play in both reducing their environmental impact and developing the green technologies that will set us on the path to net zero.

With over 2,500 UK companies joining the Race to Zero, including the majority of our largest firms, the UK is leading the way in showing how going green doesn't just make sense for the planet – it makes business sense too.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord said:

It's impressive news that some of Scotland's largest and best-known businesses are leading by example on the journey to net zero.

"This shows once again that business growth can go hand-in-hand with tackling climate change, creating jobs and boosting the economy while supporting a greener future."

As part of its net zero pledge, Perth-headquartered energy company SSE is investing £7.5 billion in low-carbon energy and electricity projects,

including backing Scotland's largest windfarm off the coast of Angus, and one of Europe's most productive onshore windfarms on the Shetland Islands.

SSE CEO Alistair Phillips-Davies said:

The UK has decarbonised its power sector more rapidly than any developed economy since the landmark Climate Change Act was passed in 2008 and as the UK's clean energy champion we're delighted to have played our part in that.

Setting bold targets for the future is all well and good, but they need to be followed up with action – and that's what the Race to Zero is all about. We're building more offshore wind than anyone on the planet and ramping up our investment in decarbonising technologies to help accelerate the net zero transition. We hope to see more companies setting target but also delivering the urgent action needed to address the climate crisis.

Also announced today, over 2,000 small businesses from across the UK have pledged to reduce their emissions and join the Race to Zero through the Together For Our Planet Business Climate Leaders campaign, which was launched by the Prime Minister earlier this year to help small businesses go green.

Taking action on climate change will help businesses grow, seize new opportunities, create new jobs, encourage investment and adapt against the challenges of a changing planet, while reducing emissions can lower businesses' running costs, save them money and attract new customers – ultimately helping them maintain a competitive advantage locally and globally.

The commitments build on the government's recently published Net Zero Strategy, which outlines measures to transition to a green and sustainable future, helping businesses and consumers to move to clean power, supporting hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs and leveraging up to £90 billion of private investment by 2030.