

Council Activity Update – Biodiversity

This document sets out the work involving North Herts Council's Senior Ecologist to progress the council's biodiversity aims, especially as it relates to chalk streams.

Upper Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership

We are part of the Upper Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership, our Senior Ecologist is a member of the chalk streams working group which aims to enhance chalk stream health and biodiversity. An example of the work includes Accelerating Chalk Stream Restoration in the Great Ouse Catchment which aims to progress work to better understand and address the challenges of over-abstraction, habitat degradation, invasive species, and community engagement to improve the health and resilience of chalk streams in the region. Fellow members of the partnership include the Wildlife Trust, the Canal and River Trust, the RSPB, and Anglian Water.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

Every area in England has an LNRS to show where nature is doing well, where it needs help, and what actions we can take to help nature recover. It identifies where green and blue spaces, wildlife corridors, and wetlands can make the biggest difference. We are exploring opportunities for habitat enhancement in line with actions identified in the Herts LNRS to support our waters as demand for housing and growth continues. Hertfordshire councils and sustainability officers are working together with [partners](#) such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership to implement the LNRS.

ResilientTogether

We are a partner in the ResilientTogether project, an initiative which works with the local community to reduce flood risk and improve water quality in the Pix Brook. Currently, [natural flood management measures are being installed along the Pix Brook](#) in Norton Common and Pix Meadow to reduce the risk of flooding. This project is funded by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) six-year Resilience Innovation Programme.

Other local river and stream protection

Our Senior Ecologist is involved in the following work centred around protecting and restoring rivers and streams in North Herts and beyond:

- Working alongside the planning team to ensure that **our new local plan** considers the [Chilterns Chalk Stream Planning Guidance](#), a report advising how chalk streams can be protected, preserved and enhanced in the context of development.
- Supporting Oughton Head & River Oughton works to remove in channel structures and improve habitat quality in conjunction with partners, exploring funding through [Section 106](#).
- Exploring opportunities on River Purwell for potential natural flood management measures such as leaky dams, re-connecting the river with its floodplain and slowing the flow.
- Being cognisant of [Revlevel](#)'s ambitions for the Ivel and ensuring development growth is sensitive to this.

- Working with the Environment Agency and other partners to look at all the tributaries of the Ivel and its main channel until the confluence with the Ouse as part of the [River Basin Management Plan](#) (RBMP) process. Looking to define:
 - **Where** action is needed (the specific waterbody or location)
 - **What** action is required (the measure itself)
 - **How** it will be delivered to address the identified pressure

Partnership working for the future of chalk streams

As English councils move towards Local Government Reorganisation, our Senior Ecologist sits on the wider Hertfordshire focus group on the topic of chalk streams. The group will be looking at protection, restoration and enhancement of chalk streams and associated catchments. It includes water quality, abstraction impacts, and habitat restoration.