

## **Environment Principles – Final Draft**

### **Report by Cllr Bridget Smith, Environment Group Lead**

#### **Background**

In 2020 the ARC Environment working group agreed to produce a set of ARC wide Environment Principles. The principles are attached. They are the result of a collaborative piece of work led by a sub group of the working group, and have had input from a range of partners and stakeholders including:

- Environmental NGOs (who drafted the first document)
- Local Nature Partnerships
- Local Government environment and planning policy representatives (we received responses from c. 20 local authorities, with representation from across the Arc)
- DEFRA
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- MHCLG (planning policy lead)
- University representative from the Universities' Environment Group
- A LEP representative
- Anglian Water
- An Energy Hub representative

#### **Status of Principles**

The principles are a statement of ambition for the Arc. They are intended to:

- support our position with respect the environment policy emerging from the Arc Spatial Framework
- use the Arc as a place for DEFRA to test and apply its 25 year plan and funding through pilots and projects
- support Local Planning Authorities with a frame of reference to develop the principles through Local and Strategic Plans at a local and sub-regional level

## **An Outline of the Principles**

The Environment Principles are grouped under four themes:

- 1. protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats, through the implementation of the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and gain.**
- 2. be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25 year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach. We will aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development.**
- 3. Ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc.**
- 4. Use natural resources wisely.**

Each theme has a number of sub-principles (and one or two principles are still being developed, for example, a waste/circular waste principle).

**The principles were supported by the Arc Leaders' Executive Group on 19 February and will now be considered by the Arc Plenary In March 2021**

### **Next steps**

Following adoption of the Environment Principles, they will be shared amongst a wider audience including the development community. The next piece of work for the Arc Environment Group is to develop an Environment Strategy which will set out a comprehensive plan for how the principles will be delivered in the Arc. This piece of work has been initiated through a collaboration with Cranfield University MSc programme; over the next ten weeks a project will map out what the strategy should include, referring to best practice in similar regions globally. It is likely that the strategy will take 12-18 months to complete.

**Attached: Draft Principles**