



The Coal
Authority

Nature Recovery Plan
2024 to **2026**





Who we are

The Coal Authority exists to manage the legacy from Great Britain's coal mining past. So much of our 3 nation's history has been shaped by the natural minerals under our soil. None more than coal, which has provided heat, steam and power for hundreds and hundreds of years.

Coal was nationalised in 1947, which is why the UK Government own the majority of underground workings and remaining coal reserves under England, Scotland and Wales, along with the responsibility for many of the associated challenges and hazards.

As domestic coal mining has reduced, and humanity recognises the impacts of burning carbon on our climate, we are seeking alternative ways to maximise low carbon opportunities from closed and abandoned mines such as mine water heat networks. These can provide heat for homes and businesses, across communities whose identity was shaped by coal, while also supporting decarbonisation and levelling up outcomes for communities who could now benefit from low carbon, social and economic benefits from the warm water in the historic mining assets.

We work with partners, communities and customers to listen, learn and take practical action to support them to create safer, cleaner and greener communities.

We are a 24/7 emergency response organisation, with staff across Great Britain ready to respond and take action to keep people safe and provide peace of mind.

Extensive coalfields exist across Great Britain and it is estimated that 25% of homes and businesses are located above former coal mines. The vast majority of people will never experience any problems from that, but for those who do we are here to provide support and expertise.

The Coal Authority is a non-departmental public body and partner organisation of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Foreword



Carl Banton
Operations Director

This Nature Recovery Plan is a document that shows our commitment to reversing the decline in biodiversity, making ecosystems more resilient, and making nature a fundamental part of how we operate. To achieve this, we have clear themes and principles to guide us, we collaborate with various stakeholders, and we align our efforts with global and national policies including the Environment Act.

This plan is our contribution to a better future for both nature and society. It also includes a specific commitment in line with the Greening Government Commitments, which involves protecting and enhancing various aspects of our land and operations to benefit the environment.

We are responsible for managing over 1,300 hectares of land that support diverse habitats and help protect rivers from pollution. This Nature Recovery Plan builds on our business and sustainability plans and outlines how we will positively impact nature and people's relationship with nature.

We have set four main goals: improving the connection between people and nature, building and maintaining the value of nature into everything we do, connecting and improving nature networks, and building strong partnerships for nature. These goals align with legal requirements, government objectives, and best practices, and we will continuously assess and adjust our plans to ensure they are effective.

Our priorities

Improving the connection between people and nature

Building strong partnerships for nature

Connecting and improving nature networks

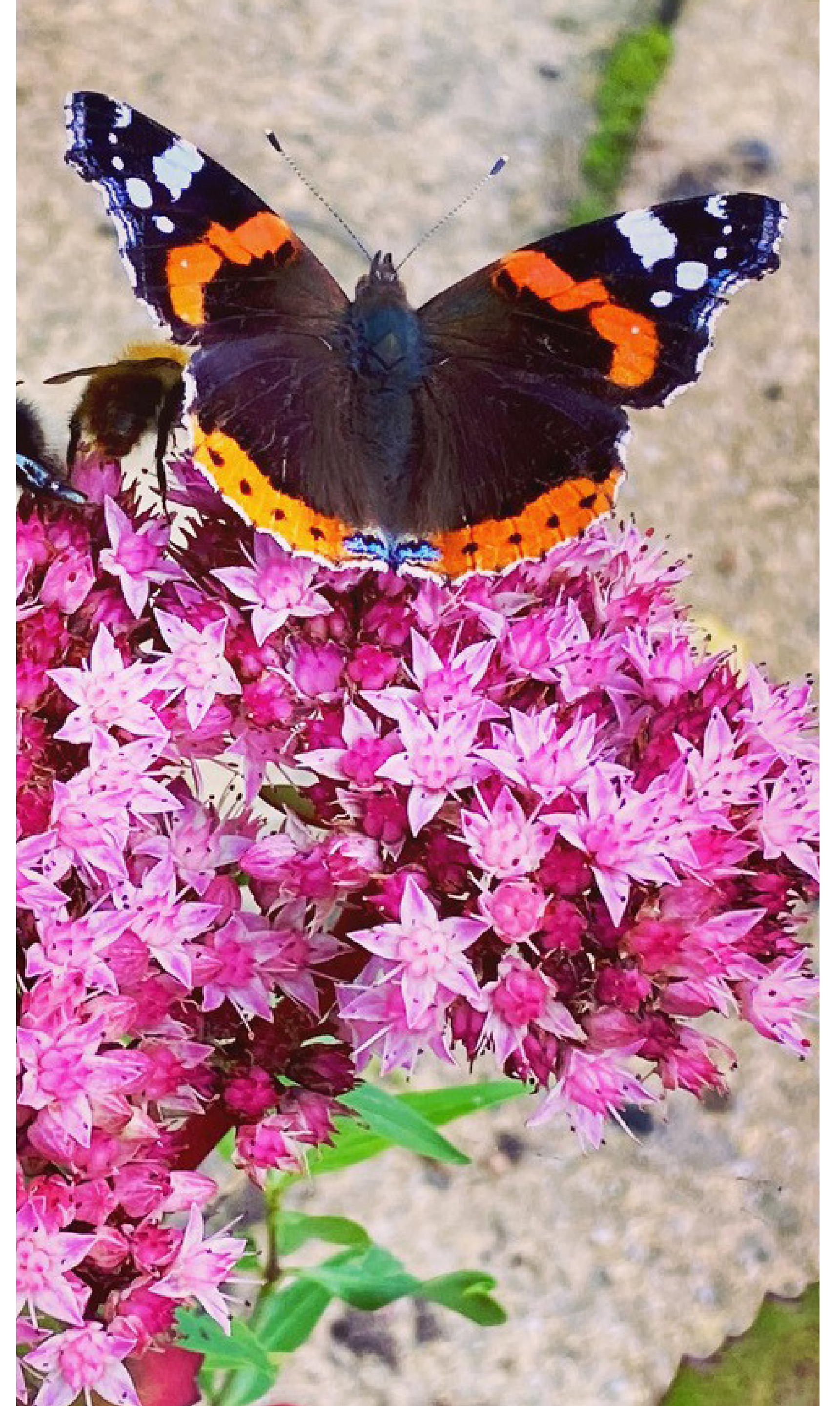
Building and maintaining the value of nature into everything we do



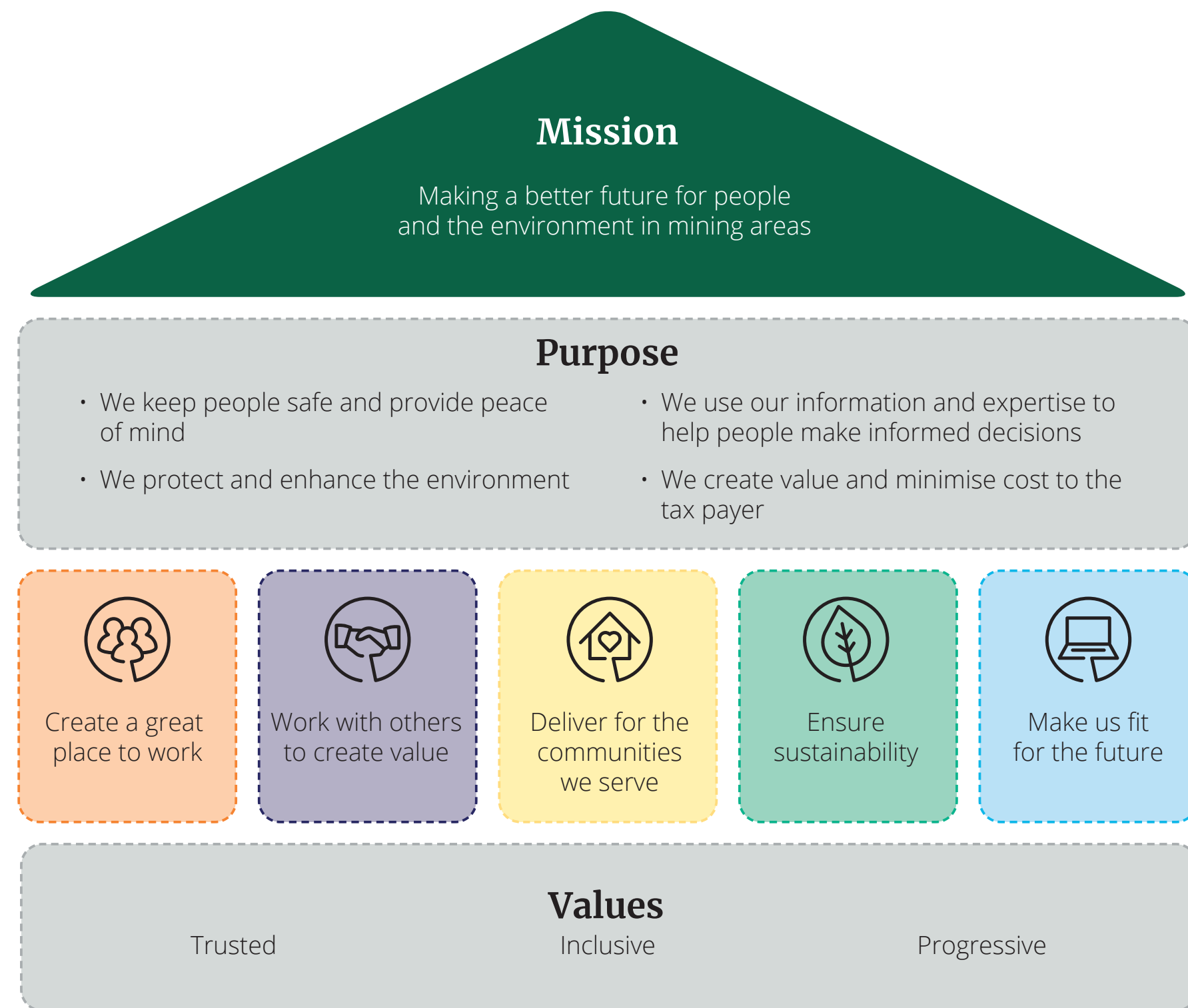
Click or scan to view our Business Plan



Click or scan to view our Sustainability Plan



Our mission, purpose and values



Our values

Trusted:

- we act with integrity
- we are open and transparent
- we deliver on our commitments

Inclusive:

- we promote a culture of mutual respect
- we recognise that our differences make us stronger
- we work with others to achieve our mission

Progressive:

- we are open minded and innovative
- we recognise that the past can help us shape the future
- we listen and learn



Improving the connection between people and nature

We are dedicated to creating a better future for both people and the environment in mining areas including actively involving communities in nature recovery.

This includes improving perceptions, engaging with diverse stakeholders, connecting with local nature groups, and supporting educational programmes. By following these principles, we aim to make meaningful progress in fostering a nature-positive future.



By 2026 we will:

- Have established a pilot programme to test our participatory engagement tools and process to integrate community insights and feedback into our decision making
- Begun to develop an environmental education and engagement package (virtual and direct delivery) supporting understanding of the history and management of the UK's historical mining estate



Building and maintaining the value of nature into everything we do

We recognise the immense value of nature in supporting economies and well-being, and we are committed to integrating biodiversity, nature recovery, improvement, maintenance and management into our work.

We will extend our environmental management and practices to address threats and opportunities related to nature including managing risks associated with nature loss.

We will assess the impact of our operations on natural habitats and will strive to minimise nature loss and add additional value where possible.



By 2026 we will:

- Have developed a biodiversity opportunity mapping programme to record and maintain data on the current and potential value of our landscape and biodiversity assets

Connecting and improving nature networks

We work at landscape and catchment scale to ensure that our sites form part of and benefit the wider environment.

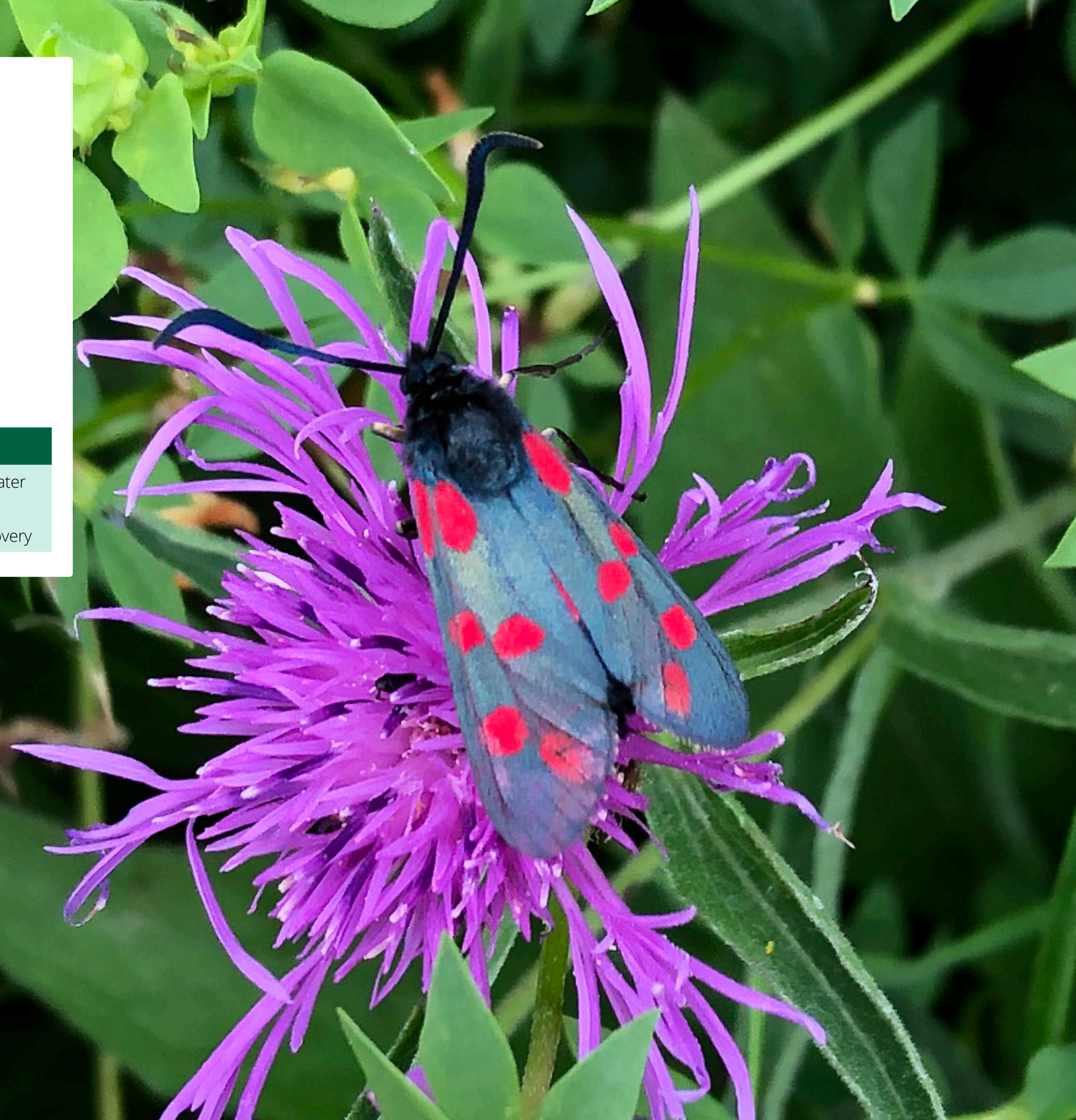
We conduct biodiversity assessments and ecosystem mapping to identify key habitats on our land. Based on this information, we are developing strategies to protect and improve these habitats, ensuring they support biodiversity.

We are also working with others to create larger and interconnected sites that benefit both nature and people. This approach, known as the Ecosystem Approach, provides various benefits, including climate adaptation, flood protection, and clean water.



By 2026 we will:

- Have started to develop the baseline and reporting of the carbon sequestration potential of our land and water assets, and have begun to implement natural climate solutions
- Integrate our nature recovery principles into project design and prioritise practices that support nature recovery



Building strong partnerships for nature

Achieving our nature recovery goals requires effective partnerships. We will listen to and improve our communications with partner organisations, improve our partnership processes, and regularly assess our progress.

We will collaborate with public and private sectors to maximise the nature value and natural features of our estate.



By 2026 we will:

- Clearly know, document, and communicate how nature partnership projects can deliver mutually beneficial goals aligned to mission, purpose, and values
- Understand how nature-based credits can be incorporated into our financial models



Aneurin Cox, Phillip Morgan, Scott Griffiths and Mary Lane from Natural Resources Wales at The Spirit of Llynfi Woodlands, a restored colliery tip located in Maesteg, South Wales.



The Coal
Authority



Making a better future for people
and the environment in mining areas