

THE RIVER RESTORATION CENTRE

Strategic Plan

2022 to 2025



the River Restoration Centre
Working to restore and enhance our rivers

RRC Board
January 2022

1. Introduction

The River Restoration Centre (RRC) is an independent, UK-wide not-for-profit organisation which fulfils a unique role driving the restoration and best practice management of river systems.

RRC considers the whole river system. River systems are shaped by water and sediment supplied by the surrounding catchment landscape. The catchment type, the gradient of its slopes and valley bottoms influence the shape and characteristics of tributaries, river channels, floodplains and associated wetland habitats. We are committed to ensuring that our river systems are protected, managed and restored for people and wildlife, with enduring and wide-ranging benefits which future generations can enjoy.

In these times of biodiversity, climate and health crises, there is now a growing and sustained public and political focus on our natural landscapes for health & well-being, economic green recovery and nature-based solutions. This is creating many new funding opportunities across the UK, and across different sectors, to restore our river systems. RRC will provide its support to ensure that the UK nations meet the level of ambition required through the Environment Bill, 25 Year Plan and emerging devolved national legislation. We will continue to work with practitioners, policy-makers, local authorities, water companies, academics and third sector organisations to address the many challenges facing river systems, and to build the capacity and capability required by the river restoration community to meet this increasing need and opportunity.

This plan's timeframe is set within the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, recognising the increasing threats to freshwater ecosystems and the need to do more, quickly. With our partners in Europe, and through our membership of the European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR) we will continue to ensure that the UK contributes to, and learns from, work to implement the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: specifically, the ambitious target of "at least 25,000 km of rivers will be restored into free-flowing rivers by 2030 through the removal of primarily obsolete barriers and the restoration of floodplains and wetlands".

This Strategic Plan sets out what RRC aims to achieve over the next three years. It includes the conceptual foundation of our organisation by outlining our vision, mission, purpose and values.

2. Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values

Purpose:

To actively promote the re-establishment of natural processes, features and biodiversity of river systems; to support others to achieve this by collating information and evidence to derive knowledge and share best practice throughout the river and catchment management community.

Vision:

Naturally functioning river systems benefitting people and wildlife.

Mission:

To champion the natural and societal benefits of restoring river systems.

Values:

We are a specialist organisation, focused on what we do best:

- We are passionate about the natural form, functioning and beauty of the rivers in our landscape

- We believe that the natural environment should be managed in a sustainable and equitable way
- We strive for evidence-based policy and practice
- We pride ourselves on providing high quality advice
- We believe in collaboration and sharing our knowledge
- We encourage the involvement of citizens in the management of river systems

3. Core Work Areas

RRC's activities develop, promote or deliver across the following three work areas:

1. Information sharing and knowledge exchange

Covered by our 'enquiries' function and support of the river restoration community, as well as maintaining the national river restoration inventory (NRRI) and RiverWiki, convening the annual river restoration network conference and coordinating demonstration site visits.

2. Technical advice and assessment

Including projects to support catchment focused river restoration planning, project scoping, monitoring and assessing success and benefits. At the national scale: advice on programme steering groups, advisory boards and working groups.

3. Training and guidance

Our long-running guidance manuals, contributions to new publications, developing new science and evidence-based tools and methods, plus our growing programme of training courses help to build standards and increase capacity for government agencies and NGOs to deliver river restoration.

4. Strategic Intent for 2022 - 2025

Our overall strategic objective is to:

Maintain and enhance the RRC's position as an independent expert organisation and key facilitator of river restoration.

To achieve this we will:

- A. Ensure the long-term sustainability and corporate good health of the organisation through diligent governance and efficient and effective management;
- B. Strengthen our communications with our target audiences;
- C. Partner with other organisations to maintain and expand our influence and effectiveness;
- D. Develop and disseminate evidence-based methods and tools for planning, delivering and monitoring river restoration;
- E. Increase capability and capacity within the sector by improving standards through expert support, training and guidance;
- F. Support and partner scientific research and innovation to better inform river restoration planning and delivery;
- G. Ensure we contribute to the nature recovery and climate change agendas.

Table of Actions to deliver the Strategic Objectives

Action no.	Strategic Actions	Sustainable business	Communicate with RR Audience	Partner others	Develop methods and tools	Improve standards, capacity & capability	Apply science and innovation	Link to Climate & Nature Recovery
	New Actions	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Extend our support of third sector river restoration delivery organisations		x	x	x	x		x
2	Develop and implement a recognised certification scheme for river restoration		x			x		x
3	Assess feasibility of running a scientific conference or symposium		x			x	x	
4	Assess eligibility for Independent Researcher Organisation (IRO) status						x	
5	Monitor the Strategic Plan	x						
6	Review the current NFP legal status	x						
7	Review RRC's location at Cranfield	x						
	Existing Actions	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
8	Effective horizon scanning	x	x	x			x	x
9	Provide expert technical advice and support		x	x	x	x		x
			x	x		x		x
10	Develop analytical tools and methods for river restoration and catchment planning				x	x	x	x
					x	x		
11	Maintain and grow the reputation of the RRC Annual Network Conference	x	x	x				
			x	x				
12	Build, strengthen and secure the UK River Prize		x	x				x
13	Build UK capacity and ensure standards		x			x		
14	Improve the collection, storage, processing and accessibility of river restoration data and information.				x	x		
				x	x			x
			x	x	x	x		x
15	Develop and maintain science and research partnerships across institutions and industry			x			x	
					x		x	
			x			x	x	
16	Improve RRC communication with the river restoration audience.		x	x				
		x	x	x				
			x					x
17	Grow a broader base of income generation	x						
		x		x				
		x	x					
18	Ensure the Board of Directors has an appropriate range of professional and personal skills	x						
19	Undertake succession planning to maintain and improve staff engagement, productivity, development, health and well being	x						
		x						
20	Maintain and develop efficient and effective management systems	x						