

Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 10 June 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Forde - Climate & the Environment

Director Lead: Matt Finch, Communities & Environment

Lead Officer(s): Matthew Norton, Business Manager – Planning Policy & Infrastructure, Ext. 5852 / Nick Law, Biodiversity & Ecology Lead Officer, Ext. 5333

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Key Decision
Report Title	Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation
Purpose of Report	To inform Members of the production and consultation on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy by Nottinghamshire Council and to agree the District Council’s response.
Recommendations	That: a) the proposed consultation response at Appendix B be approved; and b) the Portfolio Holder for Climate and the Environment, in consultation with the Planning Policy Board, be given delegated authority to comment at the next stage as set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report.
Alternative Options Considered	None, as a supporting authority it is considered important to respond to the consultation to assist the County Council in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Reason for Recommendations	To allow the District Council as a supporting authority to respond to consultations on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Environment Act 2021 established a requirement to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies for “areas” within England and that these strategies should cover the whole of England. The core purpose of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), as defined by DEFRA, is to help reverse the ongoing decline of nature and biodiversity in England through coordinated, practical and focused action.

- 1.2 Nottinghamshire County Council was formally appointed as the Responsible Authority for preparing, publishing, reviewing and re-publishing the LNRS for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 26th June 2023. Newark & Sherwood District Council, along with the other local authorities in Nottinghamshire, the East Midlands Combined County Authority and Natural England are identified as supporting authorities in the legislation.
- 1.3 The LNRS must be evidence based, locally led and collaborative. It must include a statement of biodiversity priorities and a local habitat map. The statement covers:
- the existing biodiversity
 - opportunities and priorities, in terms of habitats and species, for recovering or enhancing biodiversity; and
 - proposals for potential measures relating to the agreed priorities.
- 1.4 The LNRS must be published and be publicly available, with the evidence base against which it has been formulated, in accordance with the format prescribed by Government. It must then be reviewed and republished as part of an ongoing cycle of appraising what the strategy has achieved and identifying what further work is needed for nature to recovery.
- 1.5 The County Council has worked with the SAs and a wide range of stakeholders to produce a draft LNRS for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, in accordance with the Regulations and Guidance. This has included both in-person and online events and workshops to inform development of the Priorities and Measures and the subsequent Mapping of Measures. Stakeholders engaged through events and workshops have included planners, ecologists, environmental and land-based NGOs, organisations that operate at landscape scale, green space and partnership groups, parish councils, farmers and landowners, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University. This stakeholder input has informed the production of the consultation draft of the LNRS and the accompanying digital mapping of Measures.
- 1.6 The process for adoption of the LNRS is set out in the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 which came into effect on 13 April 2023. Under the Regulations, the County Council must provide a consultation draft LNRS to the District Council and other SAs, prior to undertaking a wider public consultation. Supporting Authorities have 28 days to raise an objection, which would be referred to the Secretary of State.
- 1.7 The County Council carried out this consultation in March and April 2025. The District Council in reviewing the document raised a number of issues with the County Council, but ultimately though officers decided that the matters raised could be addressed as part of any updates to the LNRS and therefore did not object. The Council's letter and a summary of these issues can be found at **Appendix A**.
- 1.8 No objections were received from SAs, and the County Council is now undertaking a public consultation on the draft LNRS for a period of 6 weeks. The consultation runs from 6 May to 16 June 2025. The Statement of Biodiversity Principals and the Local Habitat Map area available to view on the County's LNRS website: [Notts Nature Recovery](#)

1.9 Following the close of consultation, the County Council will consider the consultation response and finalise the LNRS. This is followed by a further 28-day period for the SAs to comment on the final version (and as at the pre-consultation stage can object to its publication) before notification can be given to the Secretary of State and the final version of the LNRS can be published.

2.0 Local Nature Recovery Strategy Proposals and District Council Response.

2.1 The County Council has engaged the District Council at various points during the production of the LNRS. Officers gave the County Council a detailed review of an earlier version of the mapped measures which had been provided. A number of issues were raised and as can be seen from the letter in **Appendix A** the County Council has attempted to address some of the concerns the Council has raised. Our continued concerns relate the suitability of some of the measures that have been set out for grassland and wet woodland and the usability of certain other mapped measures.

2.2 Ensuring the LNRS is appropriate is important not only in its own right but because of the influence it has on the planning process and wider land management policies. Under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, as a local authority, the District Council has a duty to have regard, in the exercise of our functions, to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This duty was further extended by amendments arising from the Environment Act 2021. This duty means that NSDC must have regard to the LNRS as this will define local priorities via locations for the protection, enhancement and creation of important biodiversity features.

2.3 The Government has provided guidance¹ as to how that ‘regard’ should be translated in terms of the plan making process:

“Local planning authorities should be aware of those areas mapped and identified in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the measures proposed in them and consider how these should be reflected in their local plan. In doing so, they should consider what safeguarding would be appropriate to enable the proposed actions to be delivered, noting the potential to target stronger safeguarding in areas the local planning authority considers to be of greater importance. This will enable local planning authorities to support the best opportunities to create or improve habitat to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including where this may enable development in other location.”

2.4 Consequently, the LNRS will become an important component of the plan making process and will influence decision made on the location of new development and the policies and proposals in the new Local Plan. It should also be noted that once the LNRS is published it will replace the District Council’s interim [Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic Significance Policy](#) (which was agreed by Cabinet in January 2024) and will be used to inform Biodiversity Net Gain considerations on new planning applications.

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018-2021), and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. *Guidance – Natural Environment*. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

- 2.5 Beyond the planning process the LNRS has the potential to influence land management funding schemes and the emerging market for habitat banks, this is because most of the proposals in the LRNS will be delivered on private land holdings.
- 2.6 Following consideration of the Draft LNRS officers have drafted the Council's proposed consultation response which is attached at **Appendix B** for approval by Cabinet. By the time of Cabinet, it will have been considered by Planning Policy Board at its meeting of the 28 May and Policy & Performance Improvement Committee at its meeting on 2 June 2025, and the results of these discussion will be reported to Cabinet at the meeting. Alongside the response officers are preparing more detailed suggestions for potential additional areas for grassland measures to be applied to.
- 2.7 The publication of the final LNRS for consideration by SAs will be in September and unfortunately this will not tie in with the Council's Cabinet timescales. Therefore, it is proposed that the Portfolio Holder, following consultation with Planning Policy Board, will comment on the final LNRS, setting out whether the Council objects or not to the publication.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

3.1 Financial Implications – FIN25-26/978

No financial implications have been identified.

Legal Implications - LEG2526/6610

- 3.2 As a supporting authority under the relevant legislation the District Council has a role to play in authorising the publication of the final Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy. As the timeframes will not facilitate the document returning to Cabinet for final consideration it is considered appropriate that delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Climate and Environment to respond on the Council's behalf following appropriate consultation with the Planning Policy Board.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic Significance Policy](#)