

Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 14 October 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Forde – Climate & the Environment

Director Lead: Matt Finch, Director – Communities & Environment

Lead Officers: Matthew Norton – Business Manager – Planning Policy & Infrastructure
Nick Law – Biodiversity & Ecology Lead Officer

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Key Decision
Report Title	Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) – Final for Publication
Purpose of Report	To inform Members of how the County Council’s LNRS development team have responded to the Council’s previous consultation response.
Recommendations	That; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Council raises no objection to the proposed Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy being published: and b) Officers prepare any guidance necessary regarding usage of the LNRS in relation to planning development and the preparation of biodiversity net gain assessments.
Alternative Options Considered	None, as a Supporting Authority it is considered important that the Council informs the County Council’s LNRS team whether it intends to object or not to the publication of the LNRS.
Reason for Recommendations	Officers consider that the LNRS proposed for publication is sufficiently acceptable and when published will be a consideration when plan making and therefore has relevance in respect of Ambition 6 of the Community Plan.

1.0 Background

- 1.1. In the report presented to Cabinet on 10 June 2025, officers informed Members of the production and consultation on the Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) being prepared by Nottinghamshire County Council and sought approval for the District Council’s response to the final draft.

- 1.2. The report informed members of the process for adoption of the LNRS and provided evidence of the Council's engagement with the process as a Supporting Authority. This has involved attendance at in-person and online events and workshops. As part of this process officers raised several issues with the County Council's LNRS team at the Supporting Authority consultation draft LNRS stage (March-April 2025), prior to undertaking a wider public consultation on the draft LNRS. However, officers considered these issues were resolvable prior to the final LNRS document being published and therefore no objection to publication of the draft LNRS for public consultation was raised.
- 1.3. The County Council's LNRS team subsequently responded to the concerns raised by officers and Appendix B of the June Cabinet Report formed a proposed further response from the Council, with a recommendation that Council approve this response. Cabinet subsequently approved the response in their decision on 10 June 2025. The response was then sent to the County Council.
- 1.4. Following the close of the public consultation on the draft LNRS, the County Council's LNRS team made amendments to the LNRS and following an update to the County Council's Place Scrutiny Committee on 10 September, sought Cabinet approval (on the same day) for the amendments, thereby enabling the final version to be sent to the Supporting Authorities for the statutory 28-day pre-publication period. They received Cabinet approval and on 22 September the District Council received a copy of the LNRS proposed to be published. Supporting Authorities have a right to object to the publication of the final LNRS according to specified criteria so long as this is made before 21 October 2025.
- 1.5. In setting out the timeline for the production and publishing of the LNRS, the report highlighted how the proposed publication date did not align with the Council's Cabinet timescales. Therefore, it was recommended that the Portfolio Holder, following consultation with the Planning Policy Board, should comment on the final LNRS, setting out whether the Council objects or not to the publication. Subsequently, there has been slippage in the County Council's LNRS team's target timings and the new timelines set out in the preceding paragraph are such that it has been possible to return to Cabinet via this report and for Cabinet to make this decision.

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1. The consultation response approved by Cabinet on 10 June 2025 highlighted how there were still areas of concern. How the County Council's LNRS team have responded to these are discussed below.

Overlap with Existing Built Development

- 2.2. This was mainly in connection with the buffering approach that had been taken in relation to watercourses. Whilst officers still consider that this is visually misleading, they acknowledge that to map otherwise would be extremely time consuming and with use it should become evident that this layer can be used pragmatically. Therefore, whilst not ideal, this is not considered to be of sufficient concern to warrant an objection to the LNRS being published.

Poor Representation of Grassland Measures

- 2.3. The additional areas that officers proposed should be mapped under relevant grassland measures were reviewed by the LNRS team and with a few exceptions were accepted. Those that were rejected were discussed, and the Biodiversity and Ecology Lead Officer was happy to accept the small number of rejections.
- 2.4. Accepting these rejections was helped by the fact that the LNRS team proposed additional areas to those that officers had proposed. As part of the ongoing consultation between officers and the LNRS team, areas they had proposed adjacent to the A46 were subsequently removed because of potential unnecessary conflict with the proposed A46 improvements.
- 2.5. Others had also raised concerns regarding the paucity of grassland measures and in response the LNRS team has added similar additional areas outside of our District applying the same methodology officers used for their proposed additional areas.

Wet Woodland Layer

- 2.6. Officers continuing concerns regarding the wet woodland layer were addressed by an acknowledgement from the LNRS team that in the draft Statement of Biodiversity Priorities an unfortunate 'cut and paste' error had occurred, and the wrong Potential Measures had been pasted alongside the Codes for Woodland Priorities and Potential Measures. This has now been corrected satisfactorily.

Relationship with Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.7. Officers had raised detailed concerns with the LNRS team regarding this matter with the conclusion that the lack of correlation in the terminology for habitats used in the LNRS documents and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and UK Hab habitat classification system would potentially result in additional burdens for those completing and reviewing BNG calculations.
- 2.8. In response, the LNRS team have produced a draft supporting document to provide guidance. The Biodiversity and Ecology Lead Officer provided a framework for the document and has commented on drafts. The LNRS team have decided to not include this as an Appendix to the final published LNRS (as was initially intended) but to provide it as a separate guidance note. The reason for this being that there is likely to be a need to amend this guidance following its initial use. This is considered by officers to be a reasonable and pragmatic approach. The draft guidance is still being consulted on, and officers continue to provide advice on its development. Therefore, it is considered that this matter is resolved.

Potentially Misleading Paragraph in Section 2.3 of the draft Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

- 2.9. We note that there has been no amendment or discussion regarding this. However, officers consider this is not of sufficient importance to warrant an objection to publication of the LNRS.

Additional Item

- 2.10. In addition to the grassland areas, following responses from the online survey and a specific landowner request an additional site encompassing several land parcels has been mapped for grassland and woodland measures at Lowfield Lane, to the south of the approved Lowfield Lane development. Officers have considered this and concluded that this was acceptable.

Proposal

- 2.11. Whilst officers still retain some concerns regarding implementation of the LNRS and its potential effects on officer workloads when reviewing biodiversity net gain calculations, their advice to Council is that any remaining concerns are not sufficiently material to justify an objection to the final LNRS being published. Therefore, it is recommended that Cabinet approves publication of the final LNRS, and this should be conveyed in writing to the County Council before 21 October 2025.
- 2.12. Officers will now consider whether the Council should publish its own guidance regarding usage of the LNRS in relation to planning development and the preparation of biodiversity net gain assessments.

Other Options Considered

- 2.13. As highlighted in the 10 June 2025 Cabinet report, as a Supporting Authority, the District Council has a regulatory role to play in the production of the LNRS and in authorising the publication of the final Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature recovery strategy. Officers consider that they have engaged extensively with the process, and at this concluding stage there are no valid reasons to object to publication of the final LNRS.

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.

Financial Implications: FIN25-26/3273

- 3.1. No financial implications identified.

Legal Implications - LEG2526/2993

- 3.2. In the 10 June 2025 cabinet report the District Council's regulatory role regarding production of the LNRS was identified along with the need for a final decision on whether to object to publication of the final LNRS to be delegated. As discussed above, this need for a delegated decision is no longer required.
- 3.3. Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report

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.

None