



**REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & NOTTINGHAM LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY  
STRATEGY**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Place Select Committee of the Council's statutory duty, as a Responsible Authority, to publish the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
2. To provide an update on progress so far and the key milestones that need to be achieved by March 2025, including the proposed timetable for Cabinet Member, Cabinet and Council decisions.

**Information**

3. The Environment Act 2021 brought into law the Government's intention to create a Nature Recovery Network across England. The Nature Recovery Network will comprise of 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) which will cover the whole of England. In accordance with the Act, each strategy will be designed to ensure a locally targeted and co-ordinated approach to help reverse the ongoing decline of nature and biodiversity.
4. Following a provisional indication by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment gave approval on 11 July 2022 for the County Council to act as the Responsible Authority for the development of Nottinghamshire's LNRS, including the City of Nottingham.
5. The 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 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023. This was followed by confirmation of "new burdens" funding, through a Section 31 (S.31) grant for the preparation of the LNRS in July 2023.
6. The preparation of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS is a new statutory duty for the Council, and is required to have regard to the:
  - Environment Act 2021(Section 105);
  - Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023; and
  - LNRS Statutory Guidance.
7. The County Council, as a Responsible Authority, must involve the Supporting Authorities in the development of the LNRS, as set out in the Regulations. For Nottinghamshire, these are

the City Council, the 7 District and Borough Councils and Natural England. It has been confirmed that the East Midlands Combined County Authority will also be a Supporting Authority for both the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS and for the Derbyshire LNRS.

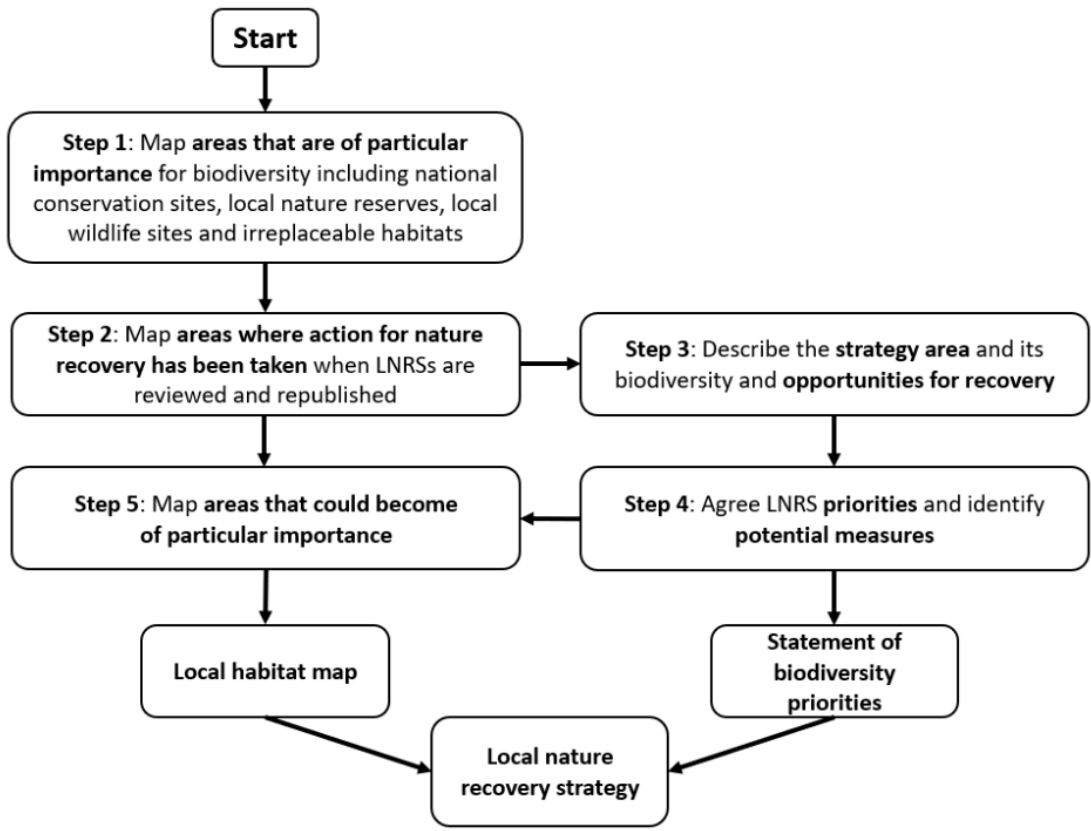
8. All Nottinghamshire local authorities have a key role to play in preparing and delivering the LNRS and, as place leaders for their area, have an opportunity to positively shape the future of their natural environment.
9. The LNRS is intended to provide a range of benefits including:
  - A single vision and strategic approach across the County and City, locally leading the way in which biodiversity is protected, restored, and enhanced.
  - An evidence-based approach to inform priorities for nature recovery.
  - A clear rationale for funding opportunities.
  - Building and strengthening local partnerships to achieve agreed outcomes.
  - Involving landowners and regulatory decision makers, to understand how they can contribute to nature's recovery.
  - Supporting the planning system in local policy and decision making, including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Measures within the LNRS can also be shaped to provide co-benefits, for example by improving public access to green space and supporting people's health and well-being, alongside helping biodiversity.

### **Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

10. The joint LNRS will be evidence based, locally led and collaborative. It must include a statement of biodiversity priorities and a local habitat map. The statement will cover:
  - 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.
11. The Government guidance recommends that Responsible Authorities follow a broad process in developing their LNRS, as set out in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1 – Process for developing an LNRS

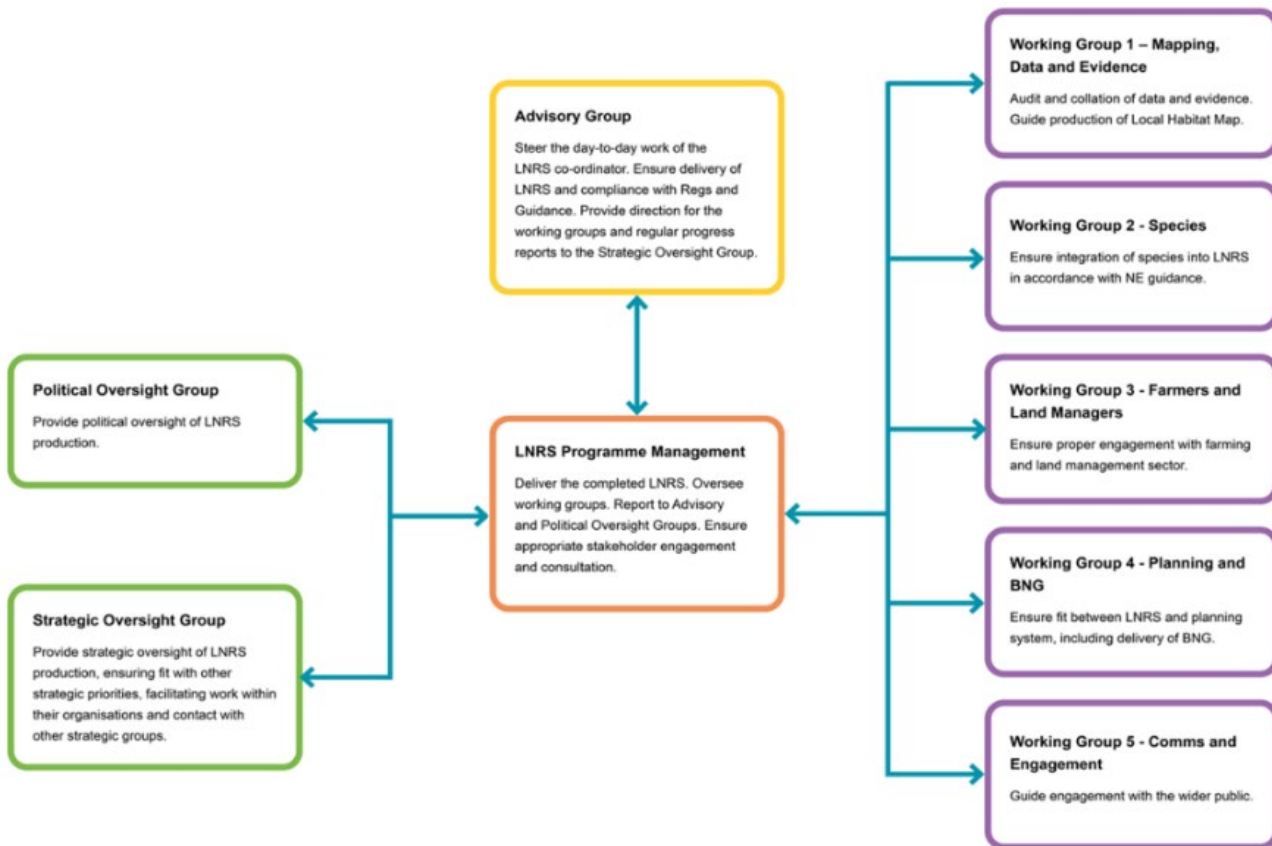


The LNRS must be published and be publicly available, with the evidence base against which it has been formulated, in accordance with a format prescribed by Government. It must then be reviewed and republished as part of an ongoing cycle of appraising what the strategy has achieved and identifying what further work is needed for nature to recovery.

**Proposed Governance Arrangements**

- Following receipt of “new burdens” funding through a Section 31 grant, for the preparation of the LNRS in July 2023, an LNRS Co-ordinator has been appointed to manage the process. Their focus to date has been establishing the joint governance arrangements of the LNRS with the Supporting Authorities and the reporting arrangements of the working groups’ structure. These groups are now meeting regularly, and progress is on track following the timeline of the Project Management Plan. Figure 2, below, shows the relationship and reporting of the groups:

Figure 2 – Governance and Reporting of LNRS delivery



a) **Political Oversight Group** The LNRS Political Oversight Group will be responsible for endorsing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy prepared by Nottinghamshire County Council on behalf of all relevant local planning authorities. The purpose of the group is to:

- Monitor production of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS.
- Ensure support at a political level for the LNRS.
- Confirm the vision and strategic priorities for the LNRS.
- Monitor delivery and review of the LNRS.

Membership of the Political Oversight Group will comprise senior Members from the County Council, City Council and the District and Borough Councils. Following a presentation to, and further discussion with, senior officers from the Supporting Authorities, it was agreed that the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee should take on the role of the Political Oversight Group and receive reports on progress with the LNRS. At the meeting held on 7 June, the Economic Prosperity Committee endorsed their role as the Political Oversight Group to monitor the development of the LNRS prepared by the County Council on behalf of the City and District and Borough Councils.

b) **Strategic Oversight Group** The LNRS Strategic Oversight Group ensures that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is in compliance with the legislation and associated guidance. The purpose of this group is to monitor the production of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LNRS, ensuring that the LNRS has support and buy in from senior

representatives and key organisations across the county. In addition to the Responsible and Supporting Authorities, senior representatives from the following organisations have been invited to be members of the Strategic Oversight Group:

- Forestry Commission
- Environment Agency
- National Farmers Union
- Country Land and Business Association
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- National Trust
- Woodland Trust
- RSPB
- Canal and River Trust
- Nottingham Trent University
- University of Nottingham
- East Midlands Chamber
- Public Health

The Group met on 29 May and will be chaired by the Chief Executive of Rushcliffe Borough Council going forward.

c) **Advisory Group** The Advisory Group has been established to support and enable the preparation of LNRS and stakeholder engagement. Its role is to:

- Make recommendations to the LNRS Coordinator.
- Make recommendations on the format and content of the LNRS.
- Respond to reports from the Working Groups.
- Provide information about projects, plans and strategies that will support nature recovery.
- Ensure that LNRS development aligns with local and national environmental objectives.
- Review reports to the Strategic Oversight Group and Political Oversight Group, produced by the LNRS Coordinator, including reports on progress, expected delivery dates and decisions for approval.

The Advisory Group oversees the work of the LNRS co-ordinator and ensures compliance with the Regulations and Guidance. This Group also provides direction for the Working Groups. Members of the Advisory Group include officers from:

- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Nottingham City Council
- 1 representative of the District/ Borough Councils (currently Rushcliffe Borough Council)
- Natural England
- Forestry Commission
- Environment Agency
- 1 representative from each of the 5 Working Groups.

d) **Working Groups** Five Working Groups have been established to undertake tasks to assist the LNRS preparation. These cover:

- Mapping, Data and Evidence;
- Species;
- Farmers and Land Managers;
- Planning and Biodiversity Net Gain; and
- Communications and Engagement.

Each Working Group has its own Terms of Reference and membership is drawn from individuals and organisations with relevant knowledge and expertise for the outputs required.

- e) **LNRS Programme Management** This is an internal County Council officer group, with responsibility to ensure delivery of the final LNRS, oversee the working groups and report to the Political and Strategic Oversight Groups. The Group also ensures that the appropriate level of community engagement and consultation is undertaken and that the conditions of the Section 31 grant are met.

### **Involvement of People and Organisations**

14. The County Council, as the Responsible Authority, must ensure that the LNRS is understandable and that it has promoted its value to local stakeholders and has encouraged their involvement in its preparation. Consultants that specialise in stakeholder and public engagement have been appointed to assist the County Council in this and will be arranging a programme of consultation for different sectors over the Summer and early Autumn.
15. The Council is also required to take reasonable steps to involve the Supporting Authorities, as set out in the Regulations. A Supporting Authority can formally object to the LNRS consultation draft and give notice to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if it considers that the final LNRS proposed for approval is materially deficient. Officers therefore meet regularly with Natural England and the City, District and Borough Councils to discuss progress of the LNRS.

Supporting Authorities have the opportunity to:

- **Work closely with the County Council** to help shape the LNRS so that it aligns with organisational needs and priorities.
  - **Provide local data and input information from other relevant strategies**, such as Tree and Woodland Strategies and Landscape Management Plans.
  - **Periodically review and agree drafts of the LNRS.** The Regulations provide all Supporting Authorities with the opportunity to review and agree drafts ahead of public consultation and publication to ensure widespread agreement on the content and approach.
16. The consultation draft of the LNRS will be subject to a 28-day formal consultation with the Supporting Authorities, followed by 6-week statutory consultation with all stakeholders. The Council will need to demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to have regard to any opinions expressed by the Supporting Authorities and any representations received in relation to the strategy during the 6-week public consultation.

## Summary of Progress to Date

17. Since August 2023, Officers and partners have:

- Finalised a Project Plan and timetable, in consultation with the LNRS Advisory Group and Legal and Democratic Services. This includes the proposed consultation period of the draft LNRS and the governance arrangements that surround publication and its approval from the Supporting Authorities.
- Established representation from all the Supporting Authorities and key stakeholder organisations and agreed the governance structure as set out in paragraph 13 above. Terms of Reference and roles and responsibilities have been agreed for each group, and meetings diarised for all the Groups for the next 10 months.
- Set up a page on the County Council's website, to facilitate communication and engagement [Local nature recovery strategy | Nottinghamshire County Council](#).
- Prepared the first part of the Local Habitat Map, showing existing designated sites. This is available to view on the County Council website.
- Continued to develop the evidence base, including reviewing existing strategies and plans from County, City and District Councils and key stakeholder organisations, that could affect nature recovery.
- Developed the list of species which are currently vulnerable or threatened in Nottinghamshire. With the support of local species experts, this "long list" is now being refined, to prepare a list of priority species for Nottinghamshire.
- Appointed specialist consultants in line with the County Council's Financial Regulations to undertake extensive stakeholder engagement. This work is being funded from the Section 31 grant.

## Approval Process

18. A progress report of the LNRS was reported to the **City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee** on 7 June.

19. As set out in the Project Plan, the timescale for Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Cabinet and Council approval is as follows:

- **Cabinet Member Briefing August 2024**  
The draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be shared with the Cabinet Member along with the emerging Local Habitat Map, Evidence Base and Priorities.
- **Cabinet 19 September 2024**  
Approval to undertake the formal pre-consultation with the Supporting Authorities for a 28-day period and, subject to no objections being received, to proceed to the formal 6-week consultation with wider stakeholders and the public that will take place during November and December 2024.

- All Supporting Authorities to formally confirm position on Pre-Consultation draft LNRS – **October 2024**
- **Cabinet Member Decision January 2025**  
Seek Cabinet Member approval to sign off the responses received from the formal 6-week consultation and recommendations on any changes to the consultation draft LNRS. Approval will also be sought to undertake a further 28-day statutory consultation with the Supporting Authorities on the Pre-Publication version of the LNRS.
- All Supporting Authorities formally confirm position of the final consultation version – **February 2025**
- **Cabinet 27 March 2025**  
Seek Cabinet approval to formally publish the LNRS.
- **Full Council 22 May 2025**  
Seek approval for Council to adopt the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

### **Other Options Considered**

20. The County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment gave approval on 11 July 2022 for the County Council to act as Responsible Authority for the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy covering Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. The option for the County Council not to accept the appointment as Responsible Authority was discounted at that time, given the county-wide nature of the LNRS and the need for significant input from the County Council.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

21. The Responsible Authority and Supporting Authorities have roles that are prescribed in the legislation, regulation and guidance.
22. The Responsible Authority and Supporting Authorities need to be aware of the decision-making processes and deadlines that will need to be met if we are to achieve DEFRA's preferred timeframe of the end of March 2025.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

23. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.
24. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy should seek to achieve multiple environmental benefits for the residents of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, including improved access to green space, resilience to climate change and improved water and air quality.



## **Financial Implications**

25. The costs of preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, including direct LNRS staffing and consultancy costs, will be covered by the Section 31 Grant from Department Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. There are also significant “in-kind” contributions of staff time and expertise from both the County Council and key partners.

## **Equalities Implications**

26. The implications of this report relating to equality issues have been considered and it has been concluded that no protected group will be adversely affected.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Place Select Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the statutory duties placed on the Council as the Responsible Authority in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to cover Nottinghamshire and Nottingham and the role of the Supporting Authorities in shaping the LNRS; and
- 2) Comment and consider progress so far and the key milestones that need to be achieved over the next 10 months, including the proposed timetable for decisions that need to be taken by the County Council, City Council and the Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils in endorsing the LNRS plan.

**Councillor Neil Clarke MBE**  
**Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**  
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## **Constitutional Comments (CM 04/07/2024)**

27 The report falls within the terms of reference of the Place Select Committee.

## **Financial Comments (PAA29 02/07/2024)**

- 28 The financial implications are set out in paragraph 25 of the report. The costs of preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, including staffing and consultancy costs, will be met from the £285,268 Section 31 Grant received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- 29 Any requests for approval to proceed with projects in support of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy that are not already in the Council’s budget will include estimated revenue and capital costs and the proposed funding for these.

## **Background Papers**

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.

## **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

All