

**City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Economic Prosperity Committee
7 June 2024**

Subject:	Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Presenting Authority:	Nottinghamshire County Council.
Report author and contact details:	David Arnold, Head of Planning and Environment david.arnold@nottscc.gov.uk
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Catherine Mayhew, LNRS Co-ordinator catherine.mayhew@nottscc.gov.uk Heather Stokes, Conservation Team Manager heather.stokes@nottscc.gov.uk
Key Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Subject to call-in: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Value of decision: Not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Authorities affected: All	Date of consultation with relevant authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal pre-consultation with the Supporting Authorities for a 28-day period during October 2024. • Formal Six-week wider consultation with stakeholders during November and December 2024. • Formal pre-publication with Supporting Authorities for a 28-day period during January 2025.
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/constituent authorities): <p>Nottinghamshire County Council was formally appointed as the Responsible Authority for preparing publishing, reviewing and re-publishing the statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 26 June 2023. The County Council, as a Responsible Authority, must involve the Supporting Authorities in the development of the LNRS. For Nottinghamshire, these are the City Council, the 7 District and Borough Councils and Natural England. The East Midlands Combined County Authority will be a Supporting Authority for both the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS and for the Derby and Derbyshire LNRS. Supporting Authorities have an important role in shaping the LNRS and it is important that all the Nottinghamshire Councils work collaboratively in agreeing future nature recovery for Nottinghamshire and the City.</p> <p>It is proposed to report to the Economic Prosperity Committee at key milestones to provide an appropriate level of political oversight to monitor progress of the LNRS.</p>	
Exempt information: Not Applicable.	

Recommendations

Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the role of the Economic Prosperity Committee as the Political Oversight Group to monitor the development of the LNRS prepared by the County Council on behalf of the City Council and the District and Borough Councils.
2. Note the statutory duties placed on the County Council as the Responsible Authority in preparing the LNRS and the role of the Supporting Authorities in shaping the LNRS.

3. Note 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.

1. Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 Oversight of the preparation of the LNRS is required, to ensure that there is confidence in the robustness of the process at the most senior level within the Supporting Authorities.
- 1.2 The Responsible Authority and Supporting Authorities have roles that are prescribed in the legislation, regulations and guidance.
- 1.3 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 meet DEFRA's preferred timeframe of publication at end of March 2025.

2 Background

- 2.1 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 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.
- 2.2 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 26th June 2023.
- 2.3 The preparation of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS is a new statutory duty for the County Council and is required to have regard to:
 - The Environment Act 2021(Section 105).
 - The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.
 - LNRS Statutory Guidance March 2023.
- 2.4 The County Council, as the 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 Derby and Derbyshire LNRS.
- 2.5 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.

2.6 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.

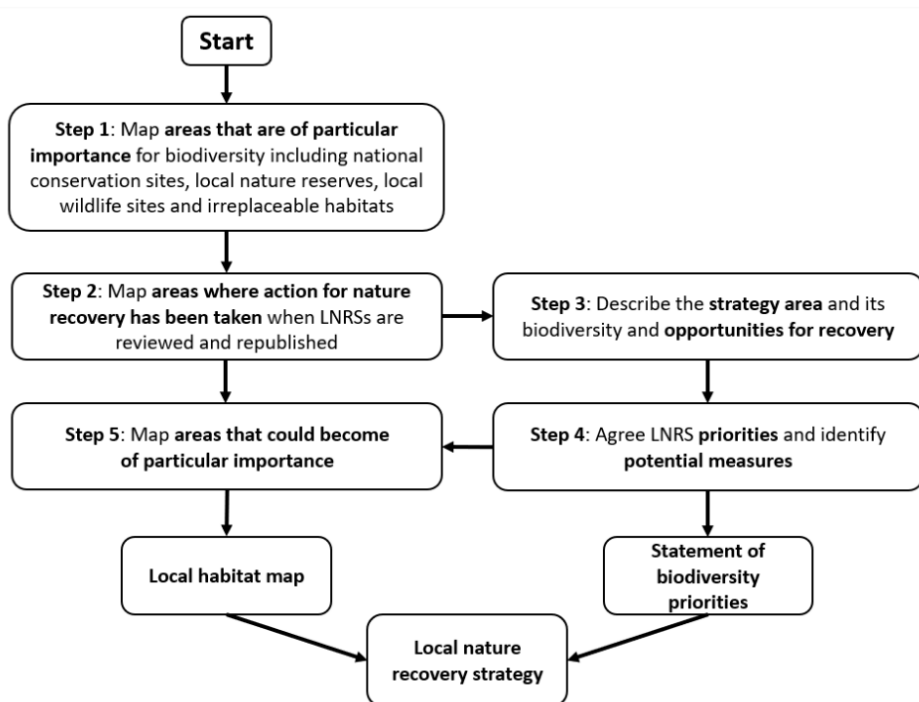
Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy

2.7 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.

2.8 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.

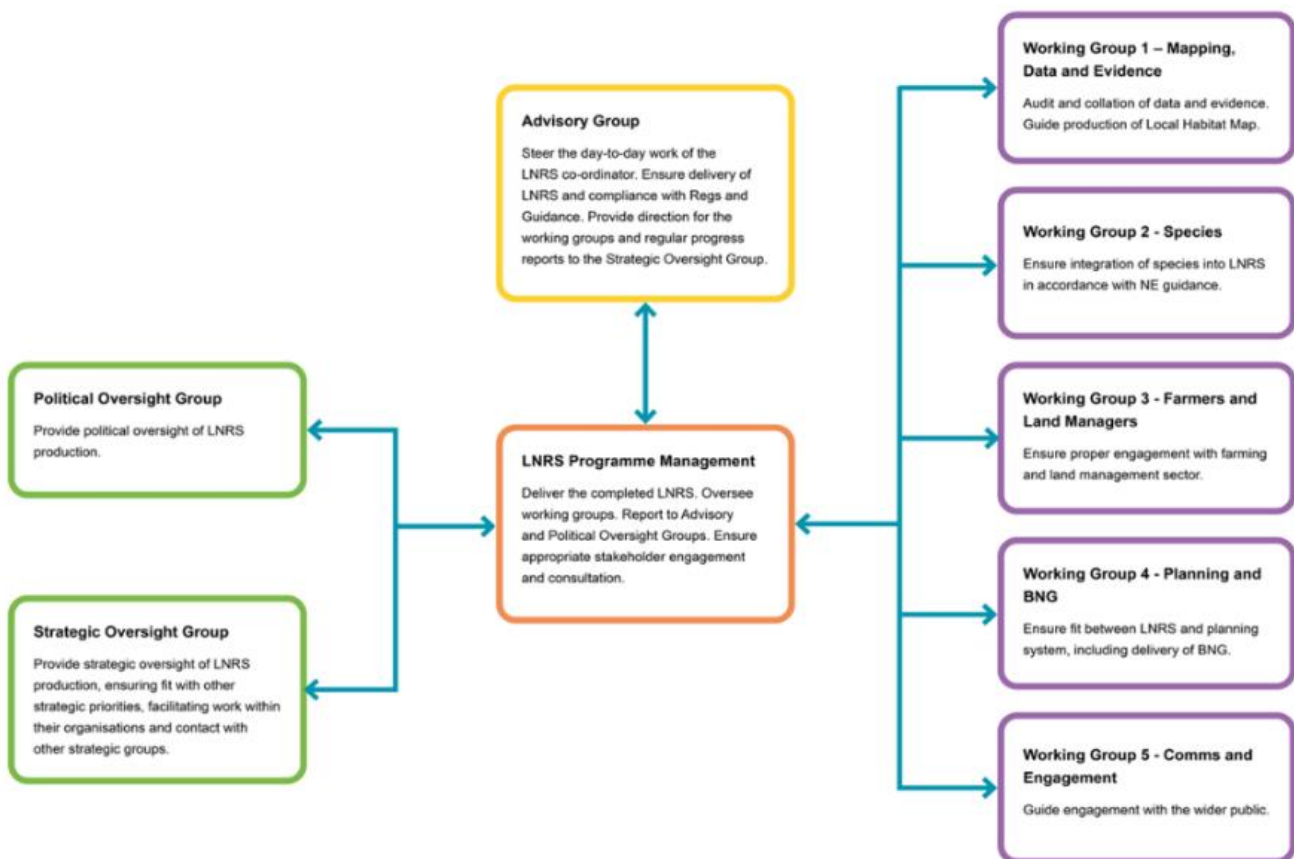


2.9 The LNRS must be published and be publicly available, with the evidence base against which it has been formulated, in accordance with a format prescribed by Government. It must then be reviewed and republished as part of an ongoing cycle of appraising what the strategy has achieved and identifying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

Proposed Governance Arrangements

2.10 Following receipt of “new burdens” funding, through a Section 31 grant, for the preparation of the LNRS in July 2023, a 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** It is proposed that the LNRS Political Oversight Group would be responsible for endorsing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy prepared by Nottinghamshire County Council on behalf of all relevant Supporting 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 of 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 has been recommended 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.

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, ensure 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
- Nottingham Wildlife Trust
- National Trust
- Woodland Trust
- RSPB
- Canal and River Trust
- Trent River Trust
- Nottingham Trent University
- University of Nottingham
- East Midlands Chamber
- Public Health

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.
- To make recommendations on the format and content of the LNRS.
- To respond to reports from the Working Groups.
- To provide information about projects, plans and strategies that will support nature recovery.
- To ensure that LNRS development aligns with local and national environmental objectives.
- To 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 S.31 grant are met.

Involvement of People and Organisations

2.11 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 now 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.

2.12 The County 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.

2.13 The consultation draft of the LNRS will be subject to a 28-day formal consultation with the Supporting Authorities, followed by 6-week statutory public consultation with all stakeholders. The County 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

2.14 Since August 2023, Officers and partners have:

- Finalised a Project Plan and timetable, in consultation with the LNRS Advisory Group. This includes the proposed consultation period of the draft LNRS and the governance arrangements that surround publication and its approval from the Supporting Authorities. The Project Plan is included in Appendix 1 of this report.
- Established representation from all the Supporting Authorities and key stakeholder organisations and agreed the governance structure. 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's website.
- Continued to develop the evidence base, including reviewing existing strategies and plans from the 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 to undertake extensive stakeholder engagement. This work is being funded from the S.31 grant.

Approval Process

2.16 As set out in the Project Plan (Appendix 1), the timescale for approval is as follows:

- **Nottinghamshire County Council 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.

- **Nottinghamshire County Council 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 the Pre-Consultation draft LNRS – **October 2024**
- **Nottinghamshire 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 Pre-Consultation version – **February 2025**
- **Nottinghamshire County Council Cabinet 27 March 2025**
Seek Cabinet approval to formally publish the LNRS.
- **Nottinghamshire County Council Full Council 22 May 2025**
Seek approval for Council to adopt the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

3 Other options considered in making recommendations

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The provision of political oversight of the LNRS was discussed following a presentation to a meeting of the N2 Environmental Strategy Working Group, comprising senior officers from the Supporting Authorities. It was recommended that the Economic Prosperity Committee could take on the role of the Political Oversight Group and receive reports on progress with the LNRS, rather than setting up a separate group to undertake this role.

4 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)

- 4.1 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.

5 Legal and Procurement colleague comments (including risk management issues, and legal, Crime and Disorder Act and procurement implications)

5.1 This report has been compiled after consideration of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights and the public sector duty.

Social value considerations

6.1 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.

7 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



8 List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

8.1 None

9 Published documents referred to in this report

9.1 None

