

TITLE:	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
FAO:	Elected Members of the Liverpool City Region constituent Local Authorities
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OVERVIEW	To provide members with an overview update on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and next steps

Summary

- The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is appointed as Responsible Authority for the development of the city region’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders.
- The strategy will identify and map opportunities for nature recovery intervention and is to be completed by summer 2025.
- A public engagement survey was undertaken in autumn 2023 to ask why nature is important and what people would like to see prioritised. Citizens highlighted the importance of nature for their mental and physical health.
- Stakeholder engagement is ongoing and in June 2024 a “call for nature recovery opportunities” gave landowners the chance to highlight where they could help deliver nature recovery, and allowed members of the public to suggest where they would like to see nature recovery happen.
- A further public consultation on the draft strategy is anticipated in early 2025.

What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs), established by the Environment Act (2021), are statutory, evidenced based, locally led, strategies that will identify constraints, opportunities and priorities for nature recovery. The LNRS will map areas where funding and efforts would provide most benefit for nature and people.

The LNRS is non-binding, however the Environment Act strengthened the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and planning decisions and policies have to “take account” of LNRSs.

There will be 48 LNRSs covering the whole of England, including the Liverpool City Region; a major commitment in the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan.

Who is producing the Liverpool City Region Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

LNRS will be developed by “Responsible Authorities” designated by DEFRA which in the case of the Liverpool City Region is the Combined Authority, with local authorities (designated as “Supporting Authorities”) contributing to the development process.

Preparation of the LNRS

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Findings from the State of Nature Report 2023 indicate an ongoing decline in nature, with one in six species at risk of extinction, 43% of UK birds under threat, only 11% of UK land protected and just 7% of woodlands in the UK considered in good ecological state.

In the Liverpool City Region, our post-industrial legacy has left biodiversity in a state of decline. 15% of Priority Species, (those identified as threatened and requiring urgent conservation action) recorded in the LCR are likely to have gone locally extinct while a further 14% have not been re-recorded since 1990. Since the early 1980’s there has been approximately 5% loss of all habitats, notably 10% of our most biodiverse grasslands have been lost. These habitats are of critical national and local importance, representing a significant biodiversity resource within the LCR, and our coastal and intertidal habitat is recognised as being of international importance.

The LNRS is being developed in line with statutory regulation and guidance and with collaboration from a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors, to create a strategy that works for everyone.

The Combined Authority is working closely with all the Local Authorities in the City Region, including with Planning Officers to ensure the LNRS complements and supports planning policies and Local Plans.

LNRS preparation is also being supported by a technical group of local experts (including local authorities, MEAS, universities, national and local wildlife organisations, health sector, and voluntary groups).

What has been done so far?

A public engagement survey was undertaken in autumn 2023, to understand how the public interacts with nature, the species and habitats they'd like to see prioritised and actions they'd like to see in the strategy.

This consultation received nearly 700 responses. The sentiment of the responses was positive with 78% of respondents suggesting actions for nature recovery such as urban greening and community-based activities. 78% of respondents said that they spend time in nature to enjoy the natural beauty, but the key takeaway was emphasis on the relationship between nature and health, with 85% of respondents listing mental and physical wellbeing as a societal benefit that nature provides.

Wider stakeholder engagement is ongoing and involves one-to-one sessions with landowners, targeted events with farmers, land managers and local experts, and wider stakeholder workshops and focus groups.

Using the ecological evidence base and feedback received from stakeholder groups, a set of strategy priorities have been established, setting out the overarching goals for nature recovery across the region.

In addition, in June 2024 a “call for nature recovery opportunities” gave landowners the chance to highlight where they could help to deliver nature recovery, and allowed members of the public to suggest ideas and existing nature recovery projects.

What happens next?

Work is now being completed to use evidence from public engagement and technical expertise to identify and map deliverable opportunities for nature recovery across the LCR, supported by technical experts and the ongoing stakeholder engagement.

A second round of public engagement will commence in February 2025 with a formal consultation on the draft strategy.

Local authorities will approve the strategy pre-consultation and pre-publication.

Further information and regular updates can be found on a dedicated LNRS webpage on the [combined authority's website](#).