

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) delivery

– policy update December 2024

Background

The core purpose of LNRSs is to agree priorities for nature's recovery, map the most valuable existing areas for nature, and map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat. They were originally designed to help habitat creation or improvement to meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements to be targeted where it will provide the most benefit. However, the Government intends for LNRSs to be put to wider use in helping to target action for nature recovery and use of nature-based solutions. Some of these uses are well established, while others are still under development.

This policy update provides more certainty about how LNRSs will be used, and how they link to different incentives and funding sources. This should help the responsible authorities currently preparing and finalising their LNRSs to ensure that their strategies are “fit for purpose”, and support better engagement with landowners and managers by providing a clearer understanding of what LNRS means for them and their land.

Defra will keep responsible authorities informed of the links between delivery mechanisms and LNRSs as they develop.

Uses for LNRS that are based in law

Targeting BNG – LNRSs will determine where habitat creation or enhancement for BNG will be of [‘high strategic significance’](#). This means that when habitat is created or enhanced to generate biodiversity units for the purposes of BNG, it gets a 15% uplift in the [biodiversity metric](#) if it follows what is set out in the LNRS.

Duty on public authorities to conserve and enhance the environment – LNRSs will inform how all public authorities in England meet their [legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity](#). The duty applies to a long list of national and local government organisations as well as some private utilities such as water companies. Public authorities must understand which LNRSs are relevant to them and how they can contribute. This could be through:

- managing areas of land that they are responsible for in a way that supports what the LNRS proposes
- using the LNRS to inform relevant regulatory decisions

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a particularly important role to play in supporting the delivery of actions proposed in LNRSs. Government is required to publish guidance to explain how LPAs should use LNRSs to inform the preparation of Local Plans enabling them to more effectively identify, map and safeguard areas for nature recovery.

Planning law – [Changes to planning law](#), expected to come into force later in 2025, will make it a legal requirement for plan-makers to “take account” of LNRSs. Like the existing requirements on Local Plans, this will help the needs of nature recovery to be properly reflected in the planning system. It will also apply to a wider range of similar spatial plans, at larger and smaller scale than local plans.

Other ways in which LNRs will be used

LNRs will also be used:

- **to provide information to farmers and land managers** to help them choose which Countryside Stewardship and Sustainable Farming Incentive options are appropriate for their land
- **to help groups of farmers and land managers shape nature recovery priorities** for their area, and to encourage collaboration across holdings and landscapes
- **to identify opportunities for Landscape Recovery project proposals**, and to provide evidence to support their application and project development
- **to help Government when considering applications for funding** for specific nature recovery activities, by acting as criteria in applications
- **to help responsible authorities and/or local partnerships leverage and target funding for environmental projects** to areas where they could have the most impact for nature and the wider environment
- **to inform how Defra arms-length bodies carry out existing functions to better support nature recovery** – for example, by drawing on LNR priorities and proposals when providing land management advice to farmers, or when selecting locations for nature-based solutions such as natural flood management and tree planting
- **to inform the development and implementation of Protected Landscape management plans**, by identifying locations and measures that will drive delivery of the agreed targets and outcomes set out in these plans

Ways in which LNRs might be used in future

Government is keen to add to the list above to provide further encouragement and support for the delivery of actions proposed in LNRs.

Below are some further opportunities for how LNRs could be used in future, but which require further exploration to determine whether this will be the case.

LNRs might be used:

- **to identify where funding could be made available** to encourage farmers and land managers to carry out the most environmentally impactful actions on their land
- **as required criteria in future government nature recovery funding schemes**, meaning that actions proposed in the LNR would be eligible for funding
- **to inform the identification of areas that could potentially contribute towards Government's [30by30 commitment](#)** following appropriate action for nature recovery
- **to inform where private companies choose to provide corporate donations** for habitat creation or enhancement projects that deliver LNR proposals
- **to guide private finance investments in nature and carbon markets** – for example, targeting action on tree-planting as part of the [UK Emissions Trading Scheme](#)

How LNRSs will not be used

LNRSs are not designed to be prescriptive. They are tools to drive forward action to recover nature.

The following list sets out the ways we don't intend LNRS to be used. We do not foresee this changing in the future.

LNRSs won't be used to:

- **require owners or managers of land to make specific proposed land use changes** – this will remain their choice
- **place new restrictions on developing land** – LNRSs will be one source of evidence used to inform the preparation of plans that will determine where development should occur (these plan preparation processes have their own consultation and engagement requirements so that different needs for land can be balanced by the plan maker)
- **identify areas to be given legal nature protections that create restrictions on how land can be used or managed** – LNRSs do not propose new nature reserves or any other kind of legal designation
- **prevent nature conservation work** in areas not prioritised by the LNRS (e.g. by restricting funding in areas that are not mapped)
- **determine regulatory decisions**, such as the result of Environmental Impact Assessments – LNRSs can be a source of evidence to inform decision making but determination must still be made on the basis of relevant legislation and statutory guidance