

Communities Scrutiny Panel

DATE	04/01/2024
REPORT OF	Kath Jickells
SUBJECT	Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)
STATUS	OPEN

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

North East Lincolnshire's Council Plan 2023-26 sets out our aim to balance economic growth with the green agenda, making sure that we take our community with us and enable the best outcomes for the families that live, work, and visit here.

The report sets out our plan to manage nature's recovery across the borough and Greater Lincolnshire in the coming years. Legally, the LNRS will have to be reviewed every 3-10 years but there is not set deadline within this period that the LNRS will have to be reviewed at. This supports the delivery of our outcomes framework by ensuring our people benefit from a green economy and high-quality environment and enjoy good health and wellbeing and our strategic environmental priorities in our Natural Assets Plan.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) also facilitates the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain, ensuring continued housing development and growth in our area aligned to the objectives in our strategic housing plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the current progress of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The strategy will establish the priorities to enable nature's further recovery across Greater Lincolnshire, building on an already established strategic framework within North East Lincolnshire for enhancing our Natural Assets and improving biodiversity. Work is currently ongoing to engage partner organisations and residents on how best to deliver the LNRS across Greater Lincolnshire.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

For members to consider the progress of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. In 2021 the government enacted the Environment Act. The Act included a provision for each region across England to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 1.2. The strategy replaces the old Biodiversity Action Plan and is intended to set out the priorities for Nature Recovery across Greater Lincolnshire. Priorities for nature's recovery will include which areas should be designated for nature, what species and habitats are appropriate for those areas and how we link each area to create a network for nature. It is intended that the strategy will also be used as a basis for Local Planning

Authorities to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain.

- 1.3. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was introduced in the Environment Act (2021) and places a requirement on new developments to provide a 10% biodiversity increase on land that is developed on. This can be delivered onsite, offsite or through national BNG credits. However, onsite BNG delivery is expected to be prioritised before offsite provision, and use of national credits is to only be considered when either onsite or offsite provision are not viable.
- 1.4. A Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy will act to provide information, maps and a strategic approach into how BNG can be delivered and where across greater Lincolnshire it is suitable to provide certain habitats and prioritise the recovery of certain species. The LNRS will also work alongside local plans, policies and strategies to deliver the greatest benefit to local people and communities through nature's recovery.
- 1.5. The LNRS will be developed using extensive mapping, surveying, and consultation with stakeholders to identify land that would be best suited to deliver nature recovery and potentially be used as best suited sites for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 1.6. Within each region, a lead authority has been chosen by the government to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy with consultation from supporting upper tier authorities.
- 1.7. In Greater Lincolnshire the lead authority is Lincolnshire County Council who are supported in the delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy by North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council.
- 1.8. The government has set a mandatory deadline of March 2025 for when each Local Nature Recovery Strategy must be in place and adopted by all planning authorities.
- 1.9. Lincolnshire County Council has established a management board for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which consists of a representative from each upper tier authority in Greater Lincolnshire (Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council), a representative from Natural England and representatives from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership who have been commissioned to assist with the development and delivery of the LNRS.
- 1.10. While the Lincolnshire District Authorities are not part of the LNRS management board, their input into the LNRS strategy is vital. As such the LNRS management board are consulting with the Lincolnshire District authorities and other partner organisations to ensure that the strategy delivers for all of Greater Lincolnshire.
- 1.11. A public survey was carried out between 21st September 2023 – 15th December 2023 which aimed to get the view of residents and the public on what they feel their priorities for nature and nature recovery in Greater Lincolnshire are.
- 1.12. Responses for the survey were collated by district and unitary local authority area and the survey received the highest number of responses from residents within North East Lincolnshire. Results for the survey are currently being analysed and results will be published on the LNRS website. Districts were used as the boundaries to assess results so that it could be assessed whether there was representation from each area

across Greater Lincolnshire from the survey responses.

- 1.13. Alongside the public survey and LNRS website, social media pages and a video have been created to help keep people informed on the progress of the LNRS and to provide residents with ways they can engage with the LNRS team.
- 1.14. Once survey results have been analysed, consultation workshops will be taking place to engage with landowners, farmers, environmental professionals, supporting authorities, non-governmental organisations and charitable groups, Community Groups and businesses to feed into the development of the LNRS. The results from the public survey will be used to inform these workshops so that the views of local residents within greater Lincolnshire are considered in the final LNRS document.
- 1.15. A first draft of the LNRS will be produced by Autumn 2024, with a view to having a full 6-week public consultation on the draft LNRS in the Autumn of 2024.
- 1.16. Following the consultation, amendments will be made to the LNRS based on the feedback the LNRS management board receive with the final LNRS currently scheduled to be completed by December 2024. This final draft will then be brought back to scrutiny for members to review, prior to the strategy being submitted to cabinet for approval.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1. The Environment Act 2021 placed new statutory requirements on local authorities to protect and enhance their local environment. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will form part of fulfilling these requirements and aligns with our other strategic aims, to enhance the environment and recover nature which is set out in the Council's Natural Assets Plan.

2.2. The LNRS will help inform decisions on local biodiversity net gain delivery through our planning process. This will provide opportunities for greater enhancement and connectivity of our natural assets which the LNRS will support. Without an adopted LNRS, there is the possibility that biodiversity net gain delivered through developments will not feed into the wider strategic aims of NELC's Local Plan, Natural Assets Plan and Environmental Vision.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. The ongoing delivery of each of the LNRS will support the council's relationships with individuals, communities and partner organisations and demonstrate our commitment to work together to meet our shared aims of a sustainable future.

3.2. An initial public survey has been completed, with the results currently being analysed. A full formal public consultation will be completed in Autumn 2024.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. The development of the LNRS has been supported with burdens funding by central government and has been provided to the responsible authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

4.2. There is no expectation that there will be any financial implications for the Council other than officer's time in developing the LNRS.

4.3. There is no legal duty for the Council to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy currently. However, as the LNRS aligns with currently adopted NELC plans and strategies, the LNRS will not have any additional financial implications beyond that of current strategies, policies, and targets.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The strategy aims to engage with all people across Greater Lincolnshire, including children and young people. The strategy will be used as a way of identifying areas of nature recovery priority across Greater Lincolnshire, which will benefit future generations by improving our natural assets.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As the strategy aims to build towards nature's recovery, the strategy will benefit our local area and will help with the delivery of the Council's Carbon Roadmap and Natural Assets Plan. The Strategy also realises the economic, social and health benefits of a high-quality environment and protection of nature and wildlife.

MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

7. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The strategy set out in this report will impact on all wards in the Borough.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[NELC Net Zero Carbon Roadmap](#)

[NELC Natural Assets Plan](#)

[NELC Environment Vision](#)

[Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#)

9. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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