



# Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

November 2025

## Town & Parish Council Toolkit

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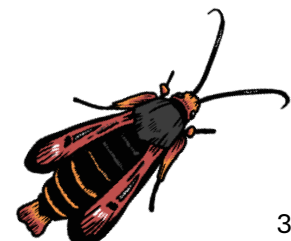
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# HOW THE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY WILL BENEFIT TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

## It will:

- allow areas of greatest potential for nature recovery to be better reflected in planning decisions and steer losses and impacts away from the county's most valuable natural assets.
- maximise the opportunities for development, land use and land management to make a positive contribution to nature recovery.
- inform future neighbourhood plans, in terms of land use planning, and inform development management, in relation to biodiversity net gain.
- help align your emerging neighbourhood plan's nature recovery priorities to the wider Nature Recovery Network.
- help to identify where developers BNG provision (on-site or off-site) will be most impactful and beneficial to the Nature Recovery Network through a financial incentive via the BNG strategic significance multiplier.
- identify opportunities to fulfil statutory biodiversity duty obligations.
- help to maximise the wider environmental benefits of nature recovery to aid societal needs of a healthy and thriving natural environment by, where appropriate, directing nature recovery action to where such additional benefits will be most notably felt.
- spatially identify nature recovery opportunities to guide investment and action to where it is most needed and where it will deliver the greatest benefits.



# LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY SUMMARY

## What is the Kent & Medway local Nature Recovery Strategy?

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been instructed by the government under the Environment Act 2021, as part of their mandate to reverse the decline of biodiversity. A total of 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies are being developed across the whole of England, with the purpose of creating a shared, strategic vision for where and how to best help nature recover. Kent County Council are the authority responsible for developing and aiding the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway.



## Purpose of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

**The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides:**

- Set of agreed, ambitious priorities for nature recovery.
- Practical and deliverable potential measures that will deliver on these agreed priorities.
- Spatially framed Strategy that not only identifies what potential action but also where, focussing action to where it is most needed and where it will deliver the greatest benefits.
- Shared vision for nature recovery and the use of nature-based solutions in Kent and Medway.
- Framework for joined-up action, developed with those who will be instrumental in its delivery.

**The intention of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to:**

1. Direct action and investment to areas where it is most needed and will derive the greatest benefits.

2. Steer losses and impacts away from the county's most valuable natural assets.
3. Maximise the opportunities for development, land use and land management to make a positive contribution nature recovery.

**The mechanisms for this are provided by:**

- A new duty on all public authorities to have regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies.
- An incentive in how the new requirement for biodiversity net gain is calculated - to recognise the added impact of taking action where the Local Nature Recovery Strategy proposes.
- Integration of Local Nature Recovery Strategies into the planning system, so that areas of greatest potential for nature recovery can be better reflected in planning decisions.
- Funding for specific activities that local nature recovery strategies will be expected to propose locations for.



**The Strategy will not:**

- Draw localised, detailed boundaries but will identify areas where action is likely to provide the greatest gains.
- Dictate actions or instruct their implementation but will identify potential measures that could be taken to support the recovery of nature.
- Force landowners and managers to make changes to the way they use and manage the land or their operations. But action will be incentivised by linking delivery of the Strategy priorities to a wide range of government grants and funding.
- Prevent development from happening but will inform future local plans, in terms of land use planning, and inform development management, in relation to biodiversity net gain.
- End in 2025 – once published, the real work begins in respect of delivery. Further the Strategy itself will be reviewed, revised and republished on a regular cycle, which must happen every 3 to 10 years.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is habitat and species focussed and can only include priorities and actions which relate to nature recovery and wider environmental benefits. Consequently, it does not make provision for access

nor health and wellbeing. However, it does seek to maximise the benefits to these societal needs of a healthy and thriving natural environment by, where appropriate, directing nature recovery action to where such additional benefits will be most notably felt.

## Understanding the elements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy



The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a set of agreed priorities for Kent and Medway's nature recovery, with spatially framed potential measures to deliver these.

A **priority** is the outcome we want to see for nature.

A **potential measure** is the proposed action to deliver the priority – these must be practical and achievable.

The **Local Habitat Map** is a map of the Strategy area that provides a clear visual way for groups and individuals to understand the areas which are, or could become, of particular importance for biodiversity and the environment to target nature recovery action.

The mapped parts include:

- Location and extent of areas identified as of particular importance for biodiversity.
- Locations where potential measures have been proposed.
- Location and extent of areas identified that could become of particular importance for biodiversity.

**Areas of particular importance for biodiversity** are the strategy area's national conservation sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitat. The areas eligible for inclusion in this map is tightly defined by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy regulations.

**Potential measures mapping** identifies where the action determined as necessary for our nature recovery priorities should be strategically targeted to achieve the greatest gains for biodiversity and deliver the widest environmental benefits.

### **Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity**

comprise the extent of the potential measures, with areas of particular importance for biodiversity excluded. These are the areas where the Strategy proposes effort should be concentrated to restore habitat, to achieve the greatest gains for nature and derive the greatest benefits from a healthy, functioning environment. They are the areas of Kent and Medway where targeted action will enable us to deliver on the priorities laid out by the Strategy.

**Wider measures** are proposed actions which would be similarly beneficial over wide areas or those where it was not possible to determine specific locations to carry out the proposed action. Collectively, these wider measures identify areas of additional opportunities for nature recovery but do not form a part of the formal Local Nature Recovery Strategy's Local Habitat Map.

**Priority species** are species the Strategy has determined should be prioritised for recovery action. They were identified from an initial list of threatened and locally significant species.

Within the Strategy document you will also find:

- A description of the Strategy area and its biodiversity – with a general overview in the Strategy Area Description and more detail provided alongside the relevant habitat and species priorities in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.
- An overview of how the distribution and extent of habitats has changed.
- Pressures for nature, and challenges to its recovery.
- The national and local strategic context for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- The opportunities for recovering and enhancing biodiversity.
- Wider environmental issues affecting part or all of the Strategy area which changes in land use or management, nature-based solutions, could help to address.

Find the strategy, here: [Local Nature Recovery Strategy documents | Making Space For Nature Kent](#)



## INFLUENCING LOCAL PLANNING

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has a statutory role in influencing all tiers of planning, with the express requirement that strategic development, minerals and waste, neighbourhood and local plans must all have regard to any local nature recovery strategy that relates to all or part of the local planning authority's area. It is a material consideration to help decision-makers direct losses and impacts away from our most valuable natural assets and direct action and investment to areas of greatest need and benefit - a key informative tool for place-making and planning rather than a directive.

The inclusion of land in the LNRS is **not a statutory designation** (it does not automatically grant protection or prevent land uses, such as development from taking place). It is an **opportunity map** intended to guide investment and action. The LNRS provides a **spatial strategy** for nature recovery, helping developers to identify where their BNG provision (on-site or off-site) will be most impactful and beneficial to the Nature Recovery Network through a financial incentive via the BNG strategic significance multiplier.

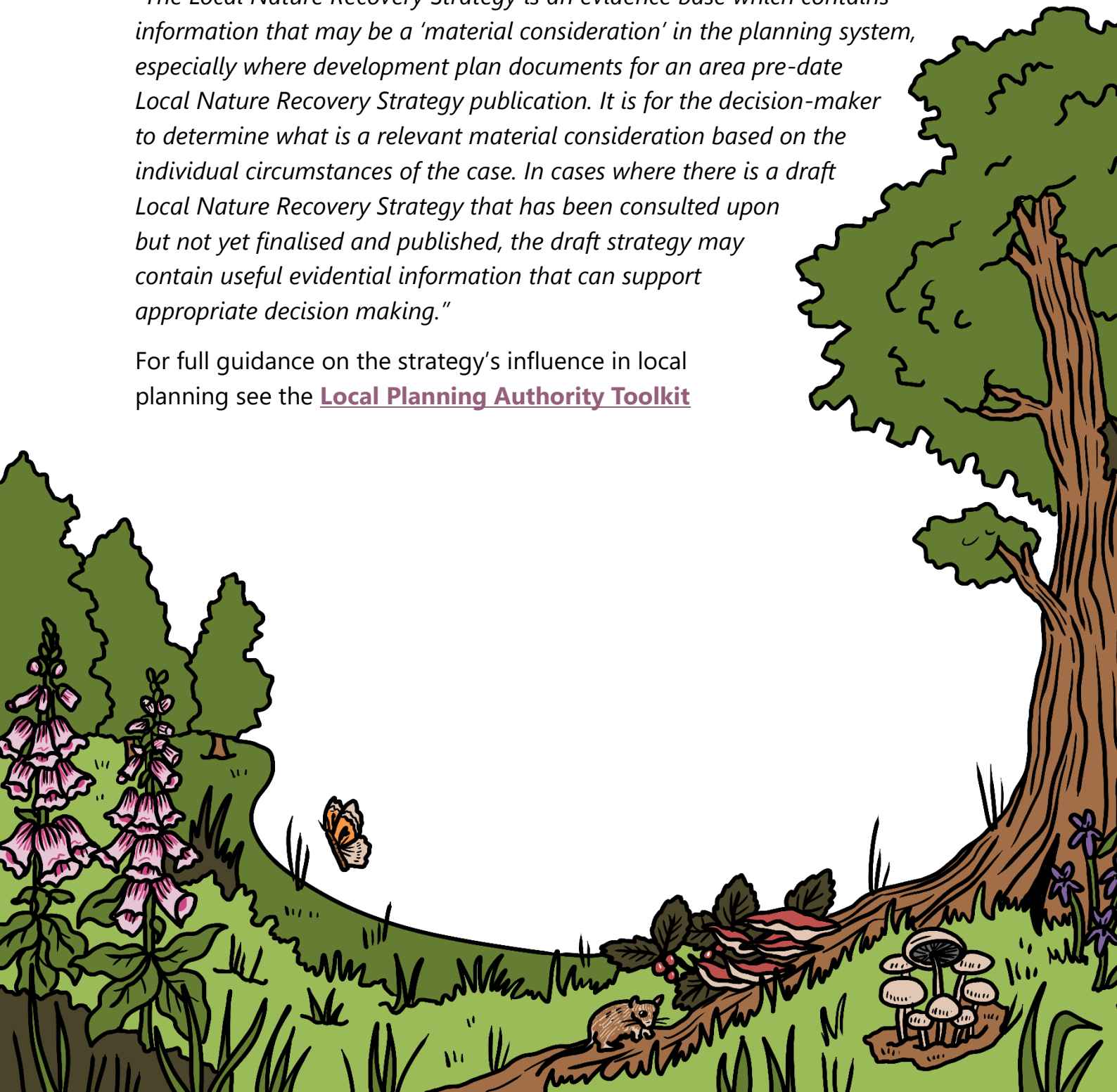
In February 2025, the Government published updated [Planning Practice Guidance](#) to outline the requirements for local planning authorities and other public bodies on how to **integrate LNRS into the planning system** in England. This is a crucial element of the implementation of the Environment Act 2021, aiming to drive coordinated action for nature's recovery. The guidance clarifies the role of LNRS in **plan-making** and **planning decisions**.



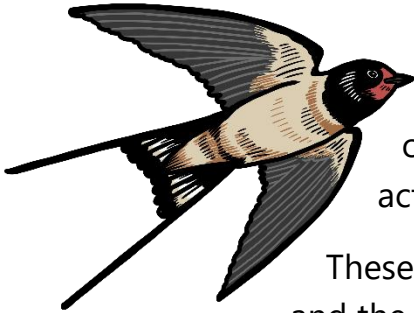
*“Local planning authorities should be aware of those areas mapped and identified in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the measures proposed in them and consider how these should be reflected in their local plan. In doing so, they should consider what safeguarding would be appropriate to enable the proposed actions to be delivered, noting the potential to target stronger safeguarding in areas the local planning authority considers to be of greater importance. This will enable local planning authorities to support the best opportunities to create or improve habitat to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including where this may enable development in other location.”*

*“The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is an evidence base which contains information that may be a ‘material consideration’ in the planning system, especially where development plan documents for an area pre-date Local Nature Recovery Strategy publication. It is for the decision-maker to determine what is a relevant material consideration based on the individual circumstances of the case. In cases where there is a draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy that has been consulted upon but not yet finalised and published, the draft strategy may contain useful evidential information that can support appropriate decision making.”*

For full guidance on the strategy’s influence in local planning see the [Local Planning Authority Toolkit](#)



# HOW TO INTERPRET THE PRIORITIES AND POTENTIAL MEASURES



The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is structured around 10 ambitions of which the **priorities** (the desired outcomes for nature recovery) and **potential measures** (the actions to achieve them) are centred around.

These include six ambitions that focus on broad habitat groupings and the aspirations we have for our grassland, successional, wooded, freshwater, urban and coastal ecosystems. Three ambitions focus on functional connectivity, the use of nature-based solutions and land management and land use. The tenth ambition relates to the Strategy area's priority species and their recovery. The ambitions are delivered by a number of priorities.

## Priorities (The 'What')

A priority is the **desired outcome for nature recovery**.

Local authorities should view these as the **high-level, non-negotiable goals** for nature recovery in their area. Any project, policy, or land management decision should be assessed against its potential to contribute to these specified outcomes.

Sitting under these priorities are potential measures and wider measures. These are the actions that are required to realise the outcomes and ambitions we've identified for Kent and Medway's nature.

Each nature recovery priority also notes the priority species that will benefit from its delivery. Some priority species require action that are covered by the potential measures identified for the habitat priority; these are identified separately to the priority species that are associated with the habitat in question but require bespoke measures.

## Measures (The 'How' and 'Where')



Measures are the **practical actions** required to deliver the priorities.

These measures have been framed around the Strategy's overarching principles by considering: better, bigger, more, connectivity (Lawton's principles), nature-based solutions, land management and land use.

Measures are identified as either a potential measure or wider measure:

- **Potential measures** identify where the action determined as necessary for our nature recovery priorities should be strategically targeted to achieve the greatest gains for biodiversity and deliver the widest environmental benefits.
- **Wider measures** are proposed actions which would be similarly beneficial over wide areas, or it was not possible to determine specific locations to carry out the proposed action.

Each measure has a reference number, so you can link the measure to its overarching priority, and the measure to its associated map. For example -

<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Priority reference number</b>	<b>Potential measure reference number</b>
GL - <i>Grassland habitats</i>	GL3 - <i>Lowland meadows</i>	GL3.2 - <i>Create new lowland meadow sites, in close proximity to core/good condition sites.</i>



It is advised that:

- LPAs should consider the **priorities** and **proposed actions** (measures) set out in the LNRS when determining their plan policies. This will assist authorities in targeting and focussing such actions on what will deliver the greatest gains for nature and wider benefits for their existing and new local communities.
- The LNRS potential measures could be used to help inform how a **development could best contribute towards nature recovery** by finding out which other measures are recommended in the proposed development location even outside of the mapped ACIB.
- The non-statutory wider measures could also be used to help inform how a **development could best contribute towards nature recovery** by finding out which other measures are recommended in the proposed development location.





## HOW TO INTERPRET THE MAPPING TOOL

### **A note on the Strategy's potential measures mapping and its limitations**

Before using the Strategy mapping it is important to note the following:

- Mapping indicates areas where the potential measures could be delivered. In some instances, these are wide ranging areas, in others they are specific areas depending on the mapping capability. In all cases, the mapped areas are indicative.
- The strategic nature of this document means that some measures may not be relevant or appropriate when considered in detail at the local level.
- The desk-based approach means the mapping is theoretical and not based on actual known site condition. Site assessments, and other permissions and prerequisites, will inform the appropriateness of the action to that location.
- Inclusion of a site in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy does not preclude that action from any necessary permissions, site assessments and other prerequisites before it is implemented.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and National Nature Reserves are statutory national and international designations. Measures have been mapped to these sites to maintain the integrity of the connectivity approach taken in creating a nature recovery network for the Strategy area. The potential measures also present future considerations for the site. However, the mapped potential measures do not override or replace existing management associated with the designation nor do they negate the need for any requisite consents or approvals. It is essential that the existing designated features and the legal processes and guidance are checked and followed prior to delivery of the suggested measure.
- The mapped Areas of particular importance for biodiversity (APIB) are comprised of the Strategy area's national conservation sites (National Nature Reserve, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Marine Conservation Zones and Ramsar), Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and irreplaceable habitat. Those mapped are representative of eligible areas as of August 2025 – the mapped area cannot

be updated once the Strategy is published and therefore any newly designated sites will not feature. Therefore, the APIB map should not be used as a definitive guide to the location of designated areas in the county and areas where protections and restrictions may apply. For this, please refer to [MAGIC](#) and [Kent Local Wildlife Sites](#)

- Mapping is based on existing known data – consequently, other sites may hold potential interest or relevance to a potential measure but may not be mapped as there is no pre-existing data available.
- The Strategy and associated maps do not dictate actions, nor instruct their implementation – they are a guide for how landowners and managers could use or manage the land, or approach their operations, in a way that could support the recovery of nature.
- Mapping of an area to a potential measure, wider measure or areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity does not offer any formal, or otherwise, protection which can only be provided through statutory designations or local planning policy. It also does not preclude any uses of the land or operations.
- Although mapping indicates where this action may be most needed or result in the greatest gains, the introduction of this action can be applied outside of the target area – nature recovery action does not need to be limited to the areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity.
- A potential measure may have value locally, that is not reflected when considered strategically at a county scale – therefore its exclusion from the mapping does not indicate that the action is not applicable.
- The Strategy notes a number of management measures to increase the functionality or biodiversity of a habitat – some have been mapped, some not. These management measures apply to all the county and although mapping indicates where this management may be most needed or result in the greatest gains, the introduction of appropriate management will deliver benefits wherever it is applied.



Here you will find the [Mapping Tool](#)

Here you will find the [Mapping Tool Guidance](#)

Here you will find detail on how we [created the maps](#)

Here you will find out what data was used to [inform the mapping layers](#)

What to do if you don't see any potential measures mapped to your area:

If your area of interest doesn't have potential measures (nature recovery action) mapped to it, it does not mean that it is not important for a particular habitat or potential measure, just strategically it was not founded. If you have plans for nature recovery actions we still encourage you implement those - we would just suggest that nature recovery actions complement any potential measures mapped in the surrounding area.

What to do if you want to implement a different nature recovery action to those mapped to the area:

We have mapped opportunities using a desk-based approach which means the mapping is theoretical and not based on actual known of site condition, so there will be times where another action seems the more appropriate choice. This may be down to local knowledge and expertise of the area, site assessments or what is practically feasible for the landowner/manager. This is not a problem and if a different action makes more sense locally then please implement that. Incentive to deliver what has been mapped is the potential to unlock future funding, grants and investments and BNG on the land.



What to do if more than one measure is mapped to the land:

Find advice on our website, here: [Prioritising action when more than one potential measure is mapped to the same location | Making Space For Nature Kent](#)

## HOW THE LNRS LINKS WITH BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) provides a mechanism by which development can support nature recovery. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will have a critical role in ensuring that the gains derived through this new, mandatory requirement make a meaningful contribution to the local biodiversity and are directed to where this contribution is most needed. Recognising the potential of Biodiversity Net Gain, several district and boroughs have ambitions to deliver beyond the mandatory 10%; to make the most of this opportunity the strategy must ensure it is fit for the purposes of informing net gain.

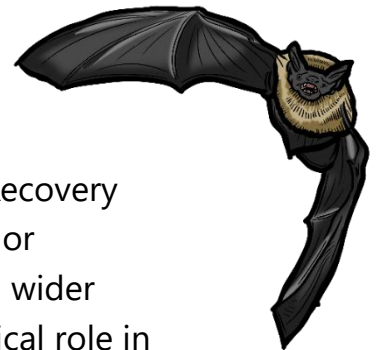
The LNRS highlights where developers can most effectively fulfil their mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain duties, which requires them to deliver a minimum 10% uplift in biodiversity. Whilst in some cases BNG is delivered onsite as a designed component of new developments, a proportion will also be sought offsite. The LNRS mapping tool assists in identifying where the most biodiversity gains can meaningfully be achieved through nature recovery actions.

### How will the LNRS inform BNG?

The 2025 updated planning guidance notes that Local Nature Recovery Strategies will identify areas where habitat creation, restoration or enhancement would be most beneficial for nature recovery and wider environmental outcomes, and that the strategies can play a critical role in supporting offsite gains to be delivered in a way that maximises biodiversity benefits, when these are required to achieve a development's biodiversity gain objective. This can help to support bigger and more joined-up areas in which our wildlife can thrive.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are designed to promote the delivery of offsite biodiversity gain in the right places, where offsite provision is needed to meet the biodiversity gain condition for a development and it cannot be met in full through onsite habitat enhancements.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy can be used as a key source of information for strategic approaches to offsite biodiversity net gain delivery



and connections to existing habitat, when local planning authorities are carrying out their functions in respect of biodiversity net gain.

The statutory biodiversity metric formula takes different factors into account, including the habitat's size, condition, type and strategic significance. Strategic significance is the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type.

Where a Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published, high strategic significance (and the associated score) is applied to a location when:

- the location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of the Strategy; AND
- the proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the habitat parcel.

What this means is that a development project that creates, enhances or recovers habitat in line with the identified action and in locations which are mapped in a local nature recovery strategy will get a higher biodiversity value in the biodiversity metric than they would in other locations. This is because they are in a more strategic location for nature recovery.

For the latest government guidance on biodiversity net gain, see: [Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](#)

For the latest government guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies, see: [Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK](#)

Guidance on how to use the mapping tool to identify 15% strategic significance uplift, see: <https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/bng/>.



# BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT

Biodiversity supports people's health and wellbeing through day-to-day connection with nature, improving mental and physical health. Biodiversity also provides regulating services – including contributing to clean air and temperature regulation. These wider advantages can reach people most readily in the urban environment, but only if nature is properly considered as part of infrastructure and the benefits of existing habitats and green spaces are recognised. Urban environments with plenty of green space and wildlife corridors can offer a connection with nature and health and wellbeing benefits, particularly when habitats have been improved, increased, added to or joined up close to populations otherwise lacking natural green space.



## **Biodiversity Duty**

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) places a duty on all public authorities who operate in England to consider how they can conserve and enhance biodiversity. In complying with this duty all public authorities must “have regard” to any relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides an evidence base and opportunities for local authorities to comply with their enhanced biodiversity duty.

## **‘Quick Wins’ to make a positive impact on biodiversity**

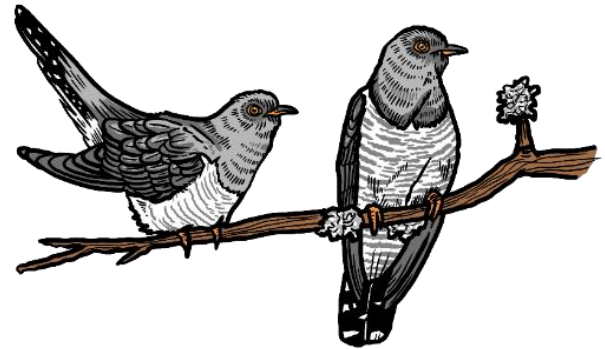
Some cost-effective, high-impact actions for biodiversity with fast results. See priorities URB1, URB2 and URB3 (pages 174-181 of the strategy).

Where new public access is required, consider:

- 1) How its location could improve linear habitat connectivity.
- 2) A wider route provides opportunity for quality wildlife corridors (buffers) to be included along the linear route. Including some dense vegetation as a barrier to the corridor will reduce wildlife disturbance.

A good size path will keep disturbance to a minimum as the public will have enough room to cross paths.

- 3) The management of the public access route is key- path maintenance for the public to easily access, conservation cuts and wild verges.



For new or existing greenspace, consider:

- 1) Employ conservation cuts, minimise mowing and leave wild strips, buffers and corners on verges and grass areas.
- 2) Manage areas of urban green space to maximise nature provision and provide a greater complexity of habitats, with year-round shelter, forage and food.
- 3) Plant the right trees, shrubs and plants in the right place and with appropriate management to ensure their successful establishment.
- 4) Use minimal, and if possible do not use, pesticides and herbicides.
- 5) Use information boards to educate the public.

Create new small habitats on council owned or public land:

- 1) Small, neglected areas of public land can be turned into pollinator gardens with native wildflower mix.
- 2) Bird and bat nest boxes on council-owned buildings.
- 3) Small wildlife friendly ponds in parks or greenspaces- even a small depression lined with a pond liner can provide an essential water source and habitat.
- 4) Apply conservation cuts to grass verges to allow wildflowers to grow.

New developments:

- 1) Consider adding biodiversity non-negotiables to policy for new developments. You will find a developers positive biodiversity impact list in the [Local Planning Authority Toolkit](#).
- 2) Consult the LNRS for mapped actions in the proposed development area to encompass into site design.

- 3) Consult the LNRS for priority species in the area and look for ways to encompass that into site design.
- 4) Avoid fragmenting existing green and blue corridors in and around the new development area, where that cannot be helped, plan to reconnect them and new green and blue infrastructure around and through the new development site.

#### Public engagement, communication and awareness:

- 1) Signage to explain why conservation work has been undertaken. This reduces wildlife disturbance and vandalism through education.
- 2) Provide the public with guidance on how to utilise their own gardens for wildlife, educate and inspire through council social media and websites.
- 3) Support local community and volunteer groups to manage land for biodiversity and sign post the public.
- 4) Partner with local wildlife groups to run a BioBlitz (a community event to find and identify as many species as possible in a specific area) to raise awareness and collect data.

#### Data and evidence supporting measures

- 1) The strategy includes some data and evidence supporting measures which identify what is needed to better inform the priority's delivery and/or will allow improved mapping during the next iteration of the Strategy. Consider what is achievable for your area.



## Strategy supporting measures

Requirements for the recovery of a habitat or achievement of a priority which were identified and could not be mapped or fell outside the definition of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy potential measure, were included as supporting information:

**Land management and land use principles** – in effect, these are best practice and/or recommended approaches that should underpin any action taken for the delivery of the priority. These are not exhaustive – rather they are indicative of the principles that should be applied.

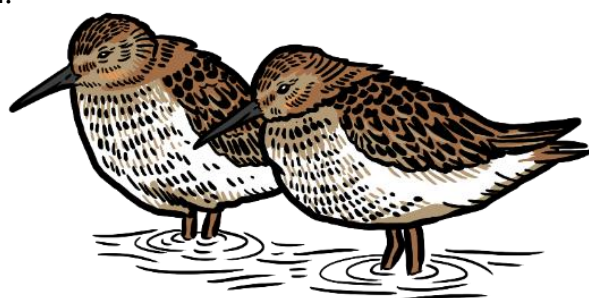
**Supporting measures** – these largely relate to supporting mechanisms, processes and functions that are considered critical to the delivery of the identified potential measures for habitats and species, and without these being addressed those measures will be limited in their success.

**Data, evidence and mapping needs** – identifies what is needed to better inform the priority's delivery and/or will allow improved mapping during the next iteration of the Strategy. Supporting measures and further data/evidence/mapping, sit outside the regulatory scope of Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

However, it is important to acknowledge and recognise these in the context of the priority they relate to and are therefore detailed. Only those considered critical to the achievement of the priority have been included within the strategy. It is useful to refer to these for direction on how to deliver on the potential measures.

### Additional supporting measures:

Please refer to the strategy for the full list of potential measures and supporting information, you will find a list of additional supporting measures that weren't considered critical to achieving the priorities and therefore not included in the strategy in the [Local Planning Authority Toolkit](#), you may find these useful for further direction.



## Case studies

We will continue to add to a collection of case studies sharing nature recovery stories across Kent & Medway, here: [Nature recovery case studies | Making Space For Nature Kent](#).

## Habitat Banks

Creating a habitat bank is a strategic way for town and parish councils to turn local land into a valuable environmental and financial asset. By creating a habitat bank, a council creates “biodiversity units” to sell to developers looking to purchase biodiversity units for off-site BNG.

This is an opportunity to strengthen local nature networks, and create high-quality green amenities for residents, provided that the required long-term commitment and initial resourcing needs can be managed.

The LNRS mapping will identify nature recovery opportunities on your land. This will ensure that projects contribute to the wider ecological network. It also provides an opportunity to align with existing conservation efforts, facilitating access to funding and collaborative opportunities, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the habitats created.

Several Local Planning Authorities have their own guidance on creating habitat banks as well as biodiversity strategies, so it is important to consult them as well as the LPA itself to ensure that projects are consistent with the district or boroughs biodiversity goals and help address local ecological priorities. This approach can also open-up opportunities for partnership working, as well as provide access to potential funding for biodiversity-related projects.

Visit the gov.uk website:

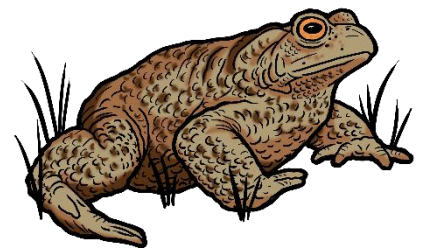
[Biodiversity Net Gain for land managers](#)

[Biodiversity Net Gain for Landowners](#)

[Securing off-site biodiversity net gain: local planning authorities](#)

[Off-site BNG: what can you do after 30 years?](#)

[Sell biodiversity units as a land manager](#)



# GUIDANCE FOR INCORPORATING THE LNRS INTO EMERGING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

A neighbourhood plan should use the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to create local policies that drive nature recovery, here are some suggestions:

## Protect and Enhance Existing Assets

- **Protect Core Nature Sites:** Develop policies that specifically protect the sites identified in the Local Habitat Map and using your own on the ground knowledge, and local data.
- **Buffer Zones:** Introduce policies requiring development to maintain appropriate buffer zones around important habitats to minimise adverse impacts.
- **Protect Green Infrastructure:** Protect and enhance components of the wider green infrastructure network, such as ancient woodland, mature trees, and existing hedgerows, which act as vital corridors.



## Direct Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- **Strategic BNG Delivery:** Policies should direct developers to deliver their mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on-site where possible, but if off-site is necessary, policies should strongly encourage or require it to be delivered in the locations identified in the LNRS's 'Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)'. The Biodiversity Metric provides a higher unit value (a 'strategic significance multiplier') for habitat creation/enhancement in these mapped LNRS areas, providing a financial incentive for developers to align.
- **Specify Habitat Types:** Link new habitat creation in your plan to the specific potential measures outlined in the LNRS for your area.

## Establish a Connected Green Network

- Create/Enhance Corridors: Use the Local Habitat Map to identify and create policies that require new development to contribute to linking up fragmented habitats. This could include:

Green Corridors: Mandating the creation of new or improved hedgerows, linear planting, or stepping-stone habitats to connect core sites.

Waterways: Protecting and restoring riparian habitats along local streams and rivers.



## Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Plans

- Aligning GBI Plans with the LNRS: Plans should be developed to align with the spatial requirements of the LNRS, ensuring the GBI network is functional for both people and wildlife. Policies can link the provision of GBI in developments to the LNRS's priorities. The potential measures will help to indicate types of green and blue infrastructure, and the mapping will strategically place them.
- Development Green and Blue Infrastructure Plans: Require all new, non-minor developments to submit a comprehensive GBI Plan showing how they will connect to and enhance the wider local network, going beyond just the site boundary. The Urban priorities and potential measures in the strategy provide ways to incorporate biodiversity into new developments but also into existing developments and infrastructure in the urban environment.  
Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) is a useful resource.

## Promote Nature-Based Solutions

- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): Mandate the use of SuDS that incorporate biodiverse planting and to manage flood risk, improve water quality, and provide new wildlife habitat.
- Urban Greening: For built-up areas, encourage or require features like green roofs, living walls, and street tree planting to create habitats, reduce the heat island effect, and provide amenity space.

## WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Kent and Medway's districts and boroughs all share priorities relating to wider environmental benefits, the most common being good air quality, clean and plentiful water, climate change mitigation and adaptation, enhancement of the natural environment and built heritage, health and wellbeing and access to, and engagement with, the natural environment. They all also have net zero commitments. Working with nature, and using nature-based solutions, these priorities can be addressed.

### **Nature-based solution opportunities:**

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy's (LNRS) priorities extend beyond solely biodiversity and include broader benefits from Nature-Based Solutions. The mapping will help identify where these wider benefits could deliver.



Within urban environments, there is a cross over with other habitat-related nature-based solutions. An example is planting trees and hedgerows in urban areas and alongside major roads to tackle air quality, temperature regulation and carbon sequestration. Another opportunity for carbon capture and temperature and air quality regulation in urban spaces is provided by green walls, balconies and roofs being either retrofit to existing structures or designed into new developments. Sustainable urban drainage systems and swales are another freshwater management option which addresses water drainage issues in built environments.

Sustainable urban drainage systems are effective in alleviating flood and drainage issues for both existing urban areas and new developments, by incorporating swales, wetland and pond features. Green roofs can also offer water management benefits by absorbing rainwater, reducing runoff and neutralising acid rain. Permeable pavements and gardens are another way to reduce runoff and slow the amount of water entering combined sewerage systems.

Landscaping and planting can also provide nature corridors throughout built environments by including grasses, wildflowers, trees and hedgerows. This

provides forage and shelter and also increases opportunities for the migration of species, particularly pollinators, through the urban environment.

### **Health, access and connection to nature opportunities:**

Due to DEFRA regulations, our priorities and potential measures had to be habitat and species focused, so where possible we included shared benefits with the public for health, access and connection to nature. The LNRS supersedes the Kent Biodiversity Strategy (2020) which had a section solely focused on connecting people with nature. So that this doesn't get forgotten or lost, we have provided some guidance for focussing on our connection with nature, the ability to access it and the impact it has on our health.

A healthy and functioning natural environment, with clean and plentiful water, good air quality and suitable green and blue infrastructure, should be the first consideration before any housing development goes ahead, as these wider benefits are essential for people as well as wildlife. Biodiversity supports people's health and wellbeing through day-to-day connection with nature, improving mental and physical health. Biodiversity also provides regulating services – including contributing to clean air and temperature regulation. These wider advantages can reach people most readily in the urban environment, but only if nature is properly considered as part of infrastructure and the benefits of existing habitats and green spaces are recognised. Urban environments with plenty of green space and wildlife corridors can offer a connection with nature and health and wellbeing benefits, particularly when habitats have been improved, increased, added to or joined up close to populations otherwise lacking natural green space.



### **Opportunities to deliver for both people and wildlife include the following:**

- Green transport routes that allow both people and wildlife to move through the urban landscape.
- Access and stepping stone green sites to give a variety of experience of natural green space from town to countryside, benefiting people's health and wellbeing and providing a habitat for wildlife.

- Allotments and orchards to provide healthy activity opportunities for people and to help them connect with nature.
- Community projects focused on improving green areas for nature that offer health benefits and combat loneliness and isolation, while also benefiting wildlife.
- Gardens, parks, verges, window boxes, SuDS, tree planting and green roofs to help to bring nature close to people in urban environments.



### **Kent Biodiversity Strategy, 2020:**

All districts refer to and endorse the aims and objectives of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy (2020) however the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy supersede this. In order to retain the health, access and connection to nature efforts, we have included the strategy's objectives for engagement below. The Nature Recovery team will continue to look into how these aspects will work alongside the published strategy.

### Connecting people with the natural environment

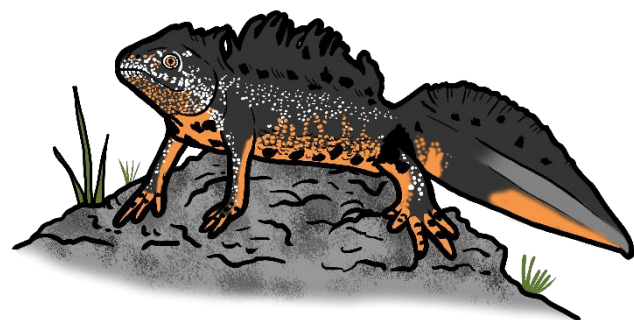
The strategy wanted to see the widest possible range of ages and backgrounds will be benefiting from the mental and physical health benefits of the natural environment, and to inspire the next generation to take on guardianship of the county's biodiversity.

Fundamental to the recovery of Kent and Medway's habitats and wildlife is the need to reconnect local people with their natural environment and to rekindle their enthusiasm for, and appreciation of, nature: many of us only value and protect what we care about. We need to work with all generations, and young people especially, to ensure local people have the opportunity for regular contact with our natural world, and have the tools and vision to regain the biodiversity that has been lost. Kent is a densely populated part of the country, which is a pressure on our sensitive wildlife sites that are vulnerable to disturbance; and not all areas of high biodiversity value and importance are suitable for public access for this very reason. But the close proximity of these sites to the population is also an opportunity for people to experience nature, learn to love it and protect it, and to improve their own wellbeing. The

challenge is to mitigate the risks and unlock the opportunities in a way which allows people to access nature in a low impact manner but which still provides a wildlife enhanced experience. The England Coastal Path will provide people in Kent with a greater opportunity to access the county's special coastal margins and connect with nature; and within Kent this access is extended further by linking up with the Thames Path. To ensure the increased access does not impact on these vulnerable habitats and species, regular monitoring needs to take place which will not only enable protection of these areas but also increase our knowledge of them.

The strategy objectives for engagement were:

- An increase in the number of health initiatives, bringing more people into contact with the natural environment.
- An increase in the number of people taking action that benefits biodiversity, including citizen science projects, with 23% of Kent's residents participating in environmental volunteering.
- An increase in the number of opportunities for children and young adults to engage with environmental issues, in and out of school.
- There is more and better quality, accessible natural space and green infrastructure close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, where both people and wildlife can thrive; and all new developments will include accessible green space.
- More people are spending more time in natural spaces and benefiting their mental health and wellbeing.
- Create a network of visitor "hubs" in key locations in Kent, including North Kent Marshes, Blean Woods and North Downs, that enable an enhanced visitor experience without negatively impacting wildlife and provide a gateway for people to get involved and take action for nature.
- People are using the increased coastal access rights to gain a better connection with, and understanding of, the coastal margins and marine environment.
- Whilst there is an increase in the number and quality of opportunities for Kent's



residents to connect with the natural environment, this access is appropriately managed, and impacts from disturbance monitored, so that the health and wellbeing benefits realised are not to the detriment of the natural environment through increased use and associated recreational disturbance.

- Kent's population is supported in making the right environmental choices and are empowered to take direct action for the recovery of nature with their own informed actions.

### **Making Space for Nature - Health & Access Workshop**

In July 2024, Making Space For Nature (the project team developing the Kent & Medway LNRS) held a specific Health and Access workshop to achieve the following aims:

- To understand respective priorities in relation to health and access and bring partners working in these areas into the project and encourage joint working.
- To capture health & access priorities for the LNRS to support.
- To get input on spatial datasets that can be used to pinpoint where action is needed.

You will find the outcomes of the workshop [here](#), this includes suggestions from a large number of organisations on how we can improve health and access in our communities.

