

REPORT FROM: Assistant Director: Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services

TO: Executive

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LANCASHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- (1) To inform the Executive of the Pre-consultation draft Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and to determine if the Executive agrees to it proceeding to public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Executive endorses the pre-consultation draft LNRS that will form the basis of the formal public consultation.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The LNRS is an appropriate document for the ecological needs of Pendle and is in an acceptable form to proceed to public consultation.

ISSUE

Background

1. The United Kingdom has seen significant reductions in its biodiversity over a number of years. This runs in parallel with the global changes to the climate that are occurring. The Environment Act 2021 was introduced which had within it a range of requirements on both public bodies and developers. For example, it laid the legislative framework for the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain that all qualifying planning applications must comply

with. It is also introduced the Biodiversity Duty which the Executive considered in March 2024, and which forms the basis of a biodiversity action plan that the Council is implementing.

2. A major part of the thrust towards ceasing and more importantly reversing biodiversity decline is the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (“LNRS”). These are strategies that are produced by the designated responsible authority, in this case Lancashire County Council. Their production is supported by legally defined “supporting authorities”. In Lancashire, Pendle is a supporting authority alongside 15 other Local Authorities.
3. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 set out what their responsible authorities and supporting authorities are required to do in supporting the production of LNRSs.
4. The requirements are to involve supporting authorities and to make information available to them on the production of the LNRS. The County Council have fully involved not only supporting authorities but also environmental bodies, such as the Wildlife Trusts, who have been able to contribute to the development of the evidence base and the LNRS itself.
5. Under Regulation 7 supporting authorities must be furnished with a consultation draft. The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of the content of that draft and to determine if Pendle supports or objects to that.
6. Under Regulation 9 Pendle, as a supporting authority, can raise an objection to either the content of the Strategy or to the extent that Pendle has been involved in its preparation. This must be in writing and give reasons for the objection.
7. Pendle, as a “Supporting Authority”, has 28 days in which to make written comments on the pre-consultation draft. Comments need to be made by 6th March 2025. No set timeline has been given for the public consultation but it is likely to happen after the County Council elections on 1st May 2025.

LNRS Preparation

8. The formulation of the draft LNRS has involved a wide range of stakeholders and has been a complex document to pull together. A two month long public engagement was carried out in February/March 2024. Evidence has been collected on Local Plans and local designations such as Biological Heritage Sites and other local nature designations. Pendle has been part of a wider steering group that has guided the process resulting in this pre-consultation draft.
9. A series of thematic habitat groups were set up looking at the network of sites and environments that exist in Lancashire ranging from grasslands to coastal areas. The thematic groups were:
 - Aquatic and Wetland
 - Peatlands
 - Urban and infrastructure networks
 - Coastal and Estuarine
 - Rocky Habitats
 - Grasslands
 - Woodland habitats and trees
10. These were supported by a species technical group and a team bringing together mapping and collecting data and evidence

11. A long list of priority habitats were identified and criteria based factors were devised to consider the pressures on the most important species. A steering group comprising of representatives from the responsible authority and the supporting authorities then agreed the final priorities using a matrix. The matrix was based on the National Environmental Objectives which are targets set under the Environment Act 2021.
12. The draft identifies 24 species of mammals, fish, birds, plants and invertebrates as “target species” which are some of the most scarce and in decline. These are identified as needing bespoke actions. Three universal priorities are also identified:
 - Minimising nutrient enrichment, sediment deposition and pollution.
 - Biosecurity (measures aimed at preventing the introduction or spread of harmful organisms) and the control of invasive species.
 - Minimising recreational impacts.
13. An interactive map was made available that looked at the areas of known biological importance. The map has been put together using a plethora of data sources and is a key part of identifying the areas of importance. An example can be seen on the extract in Figure 1. Pendle has large areas that are ecologically important.
14. The evidence base also looked at barriers to ecological movement such as major transport routes and how those can affect ecological systems and how those barriers can be overcome.

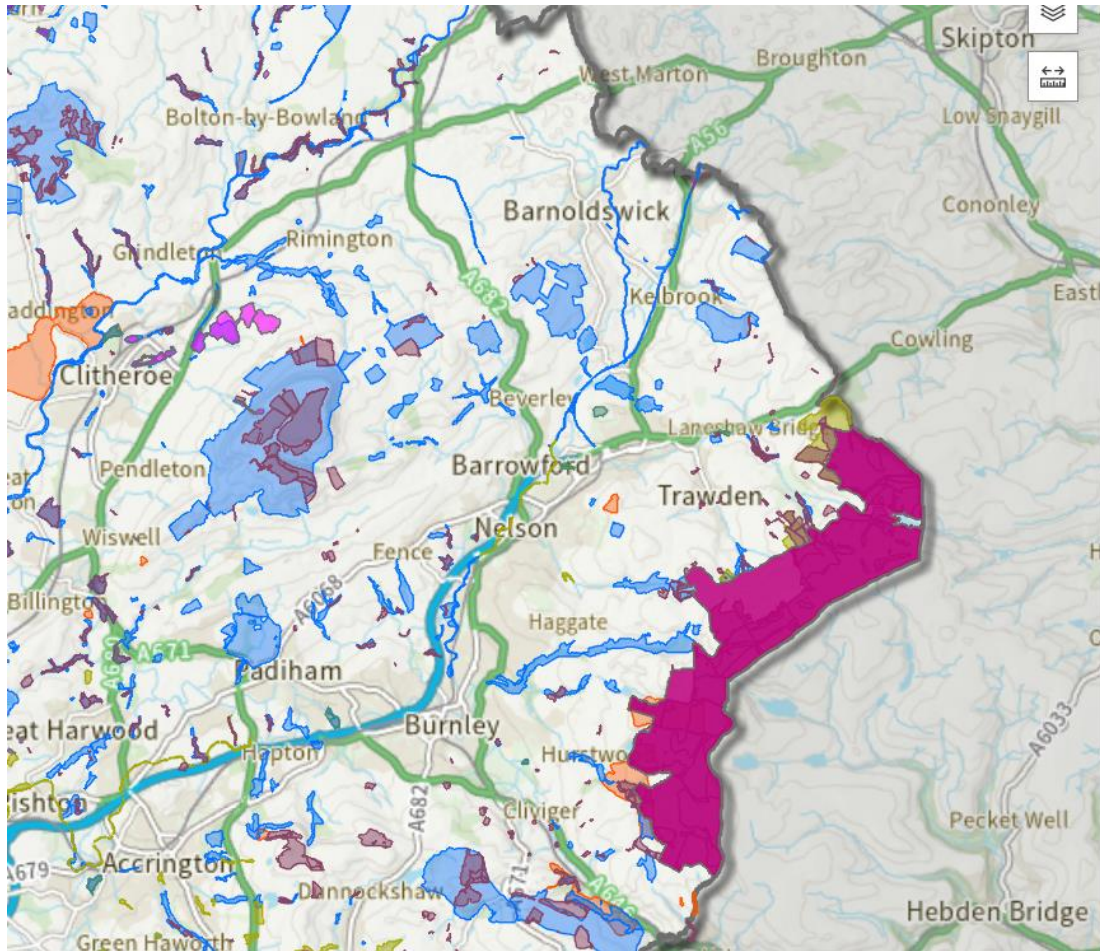
Content of the Draft LNRS

15. The draft LNRS contains an overall vision for nature recovery with 4 overarching aims. These are to halt loss and support species, conserve resources and build resilience to climate change, provide wider benefits for the people of Lancashire and to have partnerships that deliver nature recovery.
16. The document emphasises that it is not in itself a delivery plan. That will come later with Councils and other bodies working towards recovery. The precise vehicles for delivery will be developed in conjunction with the progress of the LNRS to adoption.
17. The interactive map contains the key sites of known importance in Pendle including the international, national and local designations. Areas of opportunity were then mapped such as opportunities for enhancement on sites adjacent to Nature Reserves. The measures are contained in the tables which identify the priority species than measures that could be taken to enhance these.
18. The depth of the information is such that we have not been able to go through every site in Pendle. There will be an opportunity for everyone to look at their sites as part of the public consultation process. The draft does however contain all known information on sites and maps out generally appropriate suggestions for potential future enhancement. It does this recognising our main areas of current ecological importance and sensibly suggests future areas for improvement.

Conclusions

19. The draft is an appropriate one to go forward to public consultation. It is recommended that Pendle supports the pre-consultation LNRS to go forward for public consultation.

Figure 1



IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The draft will lead on to policy development once adopted.

Financial: There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal: To comply with the requirements of the The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023

Risk Management: None arising from this report.

Health and Safety: None arising from this report.

Sustainability: The draft will lead to measures to enhance environmental sustainability.

Community Safety: None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity: None identified through this report.

APPENDICES

Draft LNRS

Evidence and Technical Information.

Habitat Map: [LNRS Local Habitat Map](#)