

PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Strategic, Local Planning and Infrastructure
REPORT FROM:	Assistant Director: Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services
To:	Executive
Date	18th July 2025

Report Author:	Neil Watson
Tel. No:	01282 661736
E-mail:	neil.watson@pendle.gov.uk

LANCASHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- (1) To inform the Executive of the consultation on the draft Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and to agree the comments of the Council

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Executive endorses the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) as published.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The LNRS is an appropriate document for the ecological needs of Pendle and is acceptable as drafted.

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 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 Executive agreed not to object to the LNRS going out to formal publication in a report considered in February 2025. That draft strategy has now been taken forward for this formal consultation. This runs from 23rd June until 3rd August 2025.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (“LNRS”) Content

5. The LNRS has 4 principal objectives:
 - Halt local biodiversity loss and support thriving species populations, which can move more freely through the landscape.
 - Conserve natural resources and build resilience to climate change.
 - Provide wider benefits for the people of Lancashire including increased and equitable access to green and blue space.
 - Reinvigorate existing partnerships and establish new ones to deliver nature recovery in the places and spaces that need it most on a landscape-scale.
6. 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.
7. The overall purpose is to identify and map all of the known elements of the ecosystems in Lancashire into a single coherent document. This identifies what natural resources there are and leads onto considering what potential opportunities exist to enhance what has been a rapidly depleting resource.
8. As discussed in the February report thematic groups were set up to consider what, after research, were considered coherent themes for the LNRS to concentrate on. These have been translated into the final draft and are:
 - Aquatic and Wetland
 - Peatlands
 - Urban and infrastructure networks
 - Coastal and Estuarine
 - Rocky Habitats
 - Grasslands
 - Woodland habitats and trees

9. These were supported by a species technical group and a team bringing together mapping and collecting data and evidence. The LNRS identifies what existing pressures there are on each of these habitat types and predicts what pressures on them there will be going forward.
10. In addition to habitat types twenty four species which are the most rare in Lancashire have been identified and named as “target species”. These have special attention given to them with the goal of reversing decline and improving habitat. These include Mammals, Fish, Birds, Plants and Invertebrates.
11. Three Universal Priorities are identified:
 - i. Minimising the build-up of different types of pollution from nutrients such as sewage, and from soils and silt - for example following flooding events and pollution from industry and development
 - ii. Biosecurity (measures aimed at preventing the introduction or spread of harmful organisms) and the control of invasive species, and
 - iii. Minimising the impact of recreational activities e.g. limiting access to sensitive areas during nesting seasons
12. A long list of priority habitats are included and criteria based factors have been devised to consider the pressures on the most important species. The final priorities were agreed using a matrix. The matrix was based on the National Environmental Objectives which are targets set under the Environment Act 2021.
13. One of the main goals of the LNRS is to provide a framework whereby actions leading to the recovery of nature can be devised. The action plans have been devised around the 7 themes. Tables 5 to 17 (inclusive) set out local objectives to secure improvements and these are framed against national objectives and targets.
14. In addition to the actions associated with the 7 themes areas the LNRS sets out measures to improve the 24 target species. This is contained in table 19.
15. As detailed in paragraph 11 above there are also universal priorities that are to be striven for across all habitats. These are assessed within the framework in table 20. For example a priority is to secure access to nature for all but whilst respecting sensitive sites and preserving species and habitats.
16. One of the most important elements to the whole LNRS is the map that has been produced that underpins the data that is the basis of the whole strategy. This includes details of the areas of opportunity for nature recovery. It is this information that will be of practical help when Councils start to assimilate the information and use it to make policy decisions going forward. This is an interactive tool and allows for a significant amount of information to be looked at by users in a practical way for their spatial area of interest.

Implications for Pendle

17. The LNRS needs to both contain up to date data of areas of ecological importance not only to understand better what Pendle has but also to facilitate the development of policy for its future enhancement. The Fourth edition Local Plan is currently being examined. It contains policy DM04 which considers biodiversity net gain and refers to the LNRS. More specifically policy DM05 places a requirement for development to have regard to the LNRS and the ecological networks it has identified. Further practical development of how this will be achieved will follow should the Local Plan be adopted.
18. The mapping is extensive but for Pendle does contain relevant information on our ecological assets. Significantly though it also contains areas of potential improvement that will be used to

try and secure ecological improvements as part of future policy development and through planning applications.

Conclusions

19. The draft LNRS is a comprehensive document. Pendle has been part of the steering group that has put the strategy together. It is a comprehensive document that covers the key ecological components found in the Borough. There are no specific comments or objections that are proposed to be made to the consultation draft.

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 Webpage: [Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Lancashire County Council](#)

Draft LNRS: [lancashire-local-nature-recovery-strategy.pdf](#)

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