

Section 2: Working with Partners in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

2.1 Introduction

Derbyshire County Council (the council) was formally designated as the Responsible Authority for developing Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in June 2023. As such, the council must follow [guidance](#) from the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) when developing the LNRS and involve people and groups from across the public, private and voluntary sectors. This involves creating a governance structure for the LNRS development that is based on transparency, inclusivity, and clear communication.

In January 2024 a [report](#) and Public Information Memorandum was prepared for and approved by the council's Cabinet on how the LNRS would be developed and on the governance structure that would guide and support this process.

2.2 Who has been involved?

As the Responsible Authority, the council has been charged with preparing and publishing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This involved fulfilling the following requirements:

- Ensuring the LNRS is prepared in a collaborative manner.

- Using evidence to identify opportunities and then the priorities for enhancing biodiversity.
- Establishing an action plan to deliver the priorities, with an initial time-horizon to 2033.
- Undertaking a public consultation on the draft LNRS.
- Seeking approval for the LNRS from Derbyshire's designated Local Nature Recovery Strategy Supporting Authorities i.e. the county's district and borough councils, Derby City Council, the Peak District National Park Authority, the East Midlands County Combined Authority, and Natural England.
- The County Council's Cabinet approval to the LNRS.
- Publishing the LNRS (and then leading on its subsequent reviews).

To help govern the development of the LNRS, three core governance groups were established:

A Supporting Authorities Group

The Supporting Authorities Group includes representatives from all Supporting Authorities, as listed below. The purpose of the Supporting Authorities Group is to enable the involvement of these organisations in the preparation of the LNRS and make proposals for drafting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to the Steering Group (see below). The Supporting Authorities Group is also responsible coordinating briefings with elected members of their respective authorities and seeking organisational and political support for the LNRS.

Supporting Authorities:

- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- East Midlands Combined County Authority
- Erewash Borough Council
- High Peak Borough Council
- Natural England
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Peak District National Park Authority
- South Derbyshire District Council

- Derbyshire's district and borough councils
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Harworth Group
- National Trust
- The National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Peak District National Park Authority
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- The Devonshire Group
- The Institute of Quarrying
- University of Derby

A Steering Group

The Steering Group is chaired independently and includes representatives from a range of stakeholder groups including agriculture and farming, environmental regulators, trust and charity landowners, and the supporting authorities. The Steering Group's purpose is to provide technical expertise and oversight to the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and promote and help facilitate effective organisational and sector stakeholder involvement in its development. The Steering Group also makes recommendations to the Advisory Board (see below).

The following organisations are represented on the Steering Group:

- Country Land and Business Association (CLA)
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council

An Advisory Board

Chaired by the council's Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Environment, the Advisory Board includes political and officer representatives from Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority, as well as representatives from Natural England, the Supporting Authorities Group, and the Chair of the Steering Group.

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to make recommendations to council's Cabinet in respect to fulfilling its Responsible Authority duties, and in doing so, is responsible for reviewing and validating information referred to it by the Steering Group.

Working Groups

To assist in the development and refinement of key elements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, we established three small working groups, to develop and test our approach to these topics. These included a:

- **Priorities and Measures Group** – including representatives from the Peak District National Park Authority, University of Derby, Eastern Moors Partnership, Royal Society for the Protection on Birds (RSPB), the National Farmers Union (NFU), Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) and the Environment Agency (EA).
- **A Mapping Group** – Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Peak District National Park Authority, Natural England, Environment Agency, the National Forest, and Derbyshire County Council
- **A Species Technical Group** – including representatives from Derbyshire Biological Records Centre, Sorby Natural History Society, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society, East Midlands Butterfly Conservation Derbyshire Ornithological Society, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Peak District National Park., Derbyshire Bat Group, Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group, Derbyshire Flora Recorder, Mammal, fungi and lower plant experts, Natural England and Derbyshire County Council.

Other Project Partners

To support the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire, the County Council has also worked with, and taken specialist advice from, the following project partners:

- The University of Derby
- The Young Foundation
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Jacobs
- Diva Creative Ltd

Collaboration – the Involvement of People and Organisations

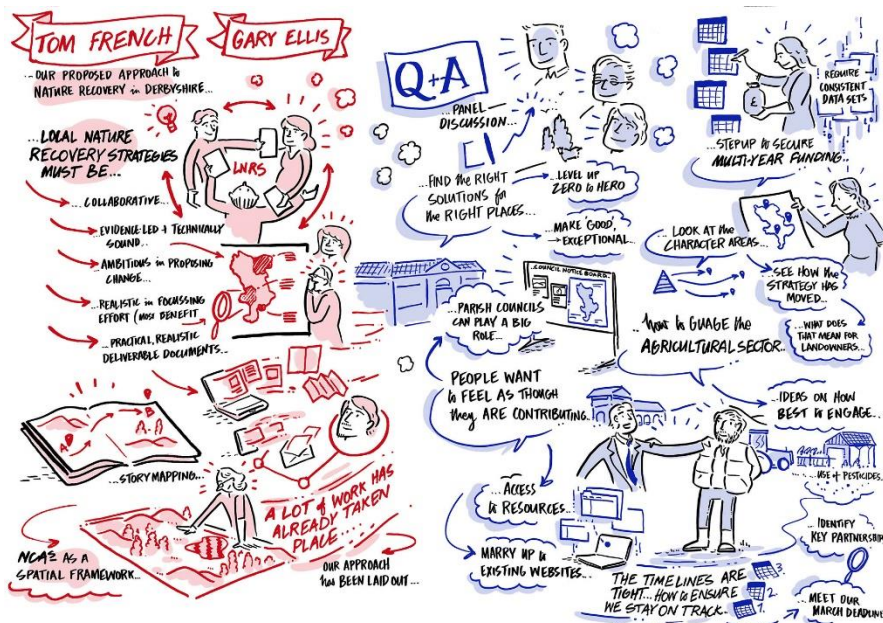
2.3 Starting the conversation

Working closely with relevant public, private and voluntary sector organisations to draw on their collective expertise has been a critical aspect in the preparation of the LNRS for Derbyshire. Hence the Local Nature Recovery Strategy reflects the collective local knowledge of relevant planned or ongoing nature recovery activity, enabling it to enhance integration between existing efforts to improve the environment in Derbyshire.

On Monday 29 January 2024 Derbyshire County Council hosted a Local Nature Recovery Strategy launch conference at County Hall, Matlock. The conference was attended by 120 delegates representing a wide range of organisations and sectors. Chaired by the council's Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment, the conference included presentations from organisations including Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the National Farmers Union (NFU) and students from the University of Derby.

As well as a series of informative presentations, the conference gave

delegates the opportunity to discuss the importance of open and transparent stakeholder engagement within the LNRS preparation process and review the use of National Character Areas as the baseline for analysing Derbyshire's habitat makeup, potential opportunities, and priorities.



Discussions and outputs from the conference have been used to shape the LNRS and helped to inform the wider engagement activities that commenced shortly after the conference.

2.4 Developing our evidence base

As set out much of the evidence base for the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is established and outlined in the statutory guidance and is the basis for the Step 1 mapping. The guidance document (para 40) states that it might be helpful to recognise sub areas within the strategy area that have similar topography, geology, and soil type, as these characteristics heavily influence where different habitats and land management can be supported. This approach has been adopted because there are obvious connections between those factors that define our landscapes and the habitats they support - our geologies dictate the landform and natural patterns of drainage, which in turn influence the overlying soils, and the type and distribution of natural vegetation cover. Landscape characterisation has been used as the spatial framework in Derbyshire through the lens of National Character Areas. In Derbyshire this national work is underpinned by the more detailed landscape character assessments prepared by Derbyshire County Council and Peak District National Park Authority.

In addition to this work, Derbyshire also has a recently completed a Natural Capital Strategy to assist in understanding the present-day value of its natural assets as well as understanding the key ecosystem services that they provide. Full details of this work can be found on the County Council's website at <http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/lnrs>

A key output of the Natural Capital Strategy was the production of a comprehensive, county-wide Habitat Asset Map showing the spatial distribution of the main habitat types as defined in the UK Habitat

Classification system. This data has been used to understand and illustrate the distribution of broad habitat types within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area.

The habitats mapped are:

- Cropland – arable crops and horticultural land.
- Grassland – natural and semi-natural grasslands, pasture, meadow, and other neutral and modified grassland as well as temporary grass and clover leys.
- Heathland and shrub – hedgerows, shrubs and scrub, as well as lowland and upland heathland and dwarf shrub heath.
- Rivers and lakes – inland surface water and freshwater habitats, including rivers and streams; lakes, ponds and pools; canals, reservoirs and flooded gravel pits.
- Sparsely vegetated land – unvegetated or sparsely vegetated land, cliffs, scree, rock faces and calaminarian grassland.
- Wetland – wet and waterlogged habitats such as blanket bog, as well as reedbeds, flushes, swamps, fen, marsh, and rush pasture.
- Woodland – woodland of all kinds.
- Urban – built up areas, developed land, gardens and artificial habitats.

Alongside our understanding of “Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity” reflected through various designations, the landscape character framework has assisted in understanding the spatial distribution of habitats across the county and where the greatest opportunity exists to enhance and extend these main habitat types and improve the ecosystem services that the natural environment provides.

As appropriate, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy process has drawn on other relevant spatial plans such as Local Plans or river catchment management plans, as well as the additional information provided by our key stakeholders through the various engagement phases.

2.5 Phase 1 engagement

Derbyshire County Council as the Responsible Authority for preparing Derbyshire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy is required by the government to take reasonable steps to involve all the county’s Supporting Authorities, and such persons and organisations that appear to be appropriate so doing. Such engagement is important to ensuring that the LNRS is designed through true collaboration.

The County Council is committed to developing and delivering the LNRS in this co-produced way and this is illustrated through the approach taken to, and outcomes from, stakeholder engagement throughout the strategy’s preparation process.

Preliminary dialogue was undertaken during April and May 2024 with a focused cohort of representatives from the Supporting Authorities, Derbyshire’s agricultural sector and land estate owners, and the county’s environmental non-governmental organisations and community sector.

This engagement was facilitated by The Young Foundation, in partnership with the University of Derby, and the outcomes provided important content to the emerging LNRS and learning on how the next phase of more in-depth stakeholder engagement and public consultation was best undertaken.

The preliminary dialogue involved **67 individuals** representing **43 organisations** and took place **over 7 workshops and meetings**.

The preliminary dialogue provided the opportunity to share and test the LNRS knowledge held by the Council, whilst also building relationships with a wide cohort of individuals and organisations and establish a joint working ethos. The outcomes are highlighted below and provided in full in a Preliminary Dialogue Learning Report.

- **The co-creation of a set of principles for guiding the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy:** this helped to set out what, collectively, we wanted the LNRS to achieve and its vision and ambition, and also how an inclusive and collaborative approach to its preparation was crucial.
- **Describing the LNRS area and its biodiversity and exploring opportunities for nature recovery (LNRS Step 3):** workshop participants contributed significant tacit knowledge and experience to reviewing, discussing, updating, and making suggestions on the format of the contextual information drafted by the Council in respect to progressing Step 3 of the LNRS preparation process.
- **Refining LNRS priorities and identifying potential measures (actions for their delivery) (LNRS Step 4):** engagement included exploring a draft long-list of priorities and measures prepared by the Council and proving feedback and constructive suggestions for developing this work further.

- **How to best engage with stakeholders:** feedback from the preliminary dialogue helped to design and shape future engagement practices, particularly for lesser heard groups, such as farmers and landowners.
- **Identifying further stakeholders to involve in next steps:** the preliminary dialogue identified a wider cohort of stakeholders that needed to be engaged in the LNRS, it also set key lines of enquiry to be used in subsequent engagement and flagged constraints that need to be overtly addressed in the next stages of the LNRS development.

This early engagement allowed the Steering Group to review and reflect on the starting principles for the LNRS allowing key stakeholders to focus on 'What' we want the LNRS to achieve and 'How' this might be done.

What do we want to achieve with the LNRS?

Principles

1. Grounded in evidence and knowledge, with a clear vision
2. Connecting and enhancing...
 - Nature
 - Economy
 - People
 - Landscape
 ... by building a framework that enables us to create healthy ecosystems that empower, protect (and recover) nature.
3. Ambitious but focused, realistic, scalable and sustainable for the future.
2. Contextual – the appropriate intervention into the appropriate landscape – who decides what's appropriate?
3. Deliver benefits for people and communities – communities of place (locality) and communities of practice (e.g. farmers) providing support for people to navigate change and combat fear.

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How might we achieve it?



Principles

1. Inclusive and collaborative whilst recognising and addressing power dynamics – "people own what they help create", drawing experience both locally and nationally.
2. Listen to understand!
3. Everyone has a valid view and contribution – "start anywhere and follow everywhere".
4. Work at pace (balancing the sense of urgency with reflection).
5. Practical, accessible and actionable with a clear call to action – provide frameworks, tools and mechanisms to maximise impact and reduce risk. Set out short-, medium- and long-term action plans.
6. Meaningful engagement (by appealing to people's motivations).
7. Build understanding: "if you don't know, you can't do anything about it".
8. Learn together.
9. Shift mindsets/culture, acknowledging the systemic nature of the work.

2.6 Phase 2 engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Events

Building on findings from the preliminary engagement activities, the Council worked again with The Young Foundation and the University of Derby to deliver a series of wider stakeholder engagement events during September 2024. The aim of these events was to bring the learning from the preliminary dialogue together with the diverse perspectives from partners, communities, and residents across Derbyshire and Derby to:

- Help co-create a vision for nature recovery
- Validate the technical information developed by the Council on the description of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area
- Identify and rationalise nature recovery priorities and measures.

Five place-based in-person events were held in locations across the county:

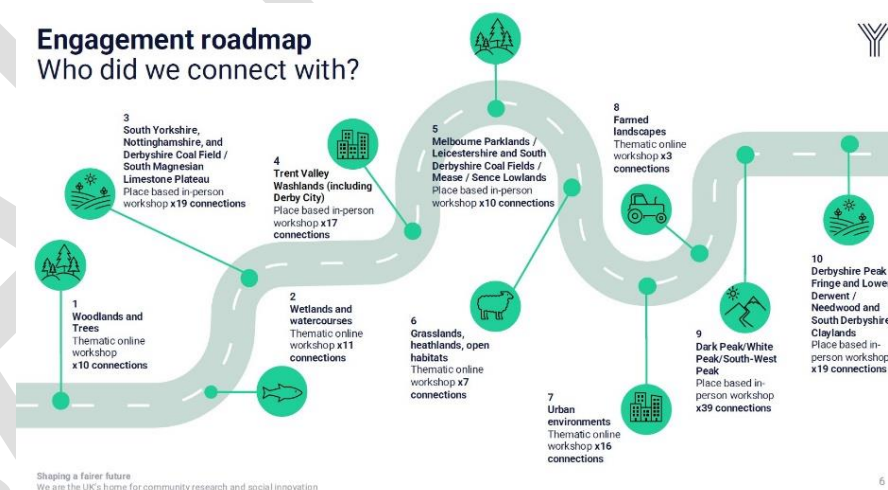
1. Hasland, Chesterfield – for East Derbyshire landscapes
2. Derby City – for Derby and the Trent Valley
3. Newhall, Swadlincote – for the National Forest area
4. Buxton – for the Peak District landscapes
5. Ashover – for West Derbyshire landscapes

These in-person events enabled attendees to discuss what, from a nature recovery perspective, resonates most for the respective geographical areas, discuss the potential for nature recovery in the area, and identify associated and specific nature recovery priorities and measures.

To maximise the engagement opportunities over a short space of time, five online sessions focussing on specific themes were also held to gather people with expertise in five specific landscape types:

1. Woodlands and trees
2. Wetlands and watercourses
3. Grasslands, heathlands, and open habitats
4. Urban environments
5. Farmed Landscapes

Engagement roadmap Who did we connect with?



The findings from the stakeholder engagement activities were fully analysed by the Council and used to develop the priorities and measures in the LNRS as well as to inform the LNRS's overarching vision, principles, delivery mechanism and approaches. The full learning report can be found in **Appendix xx**, with key high-level themes from this engagement being:

A total of 151 individuals participated in these in-person and online events, representing over 60 stakeholder organisations across a range of sectors.

A systemic approach to nature recovery is needed: Nature recovery efforts can impact on other social and economic systems. For example, an increase in land used for nature recovery could mean a decrease in land available for livestock and crops, impacting the capacity and self-sufficiency of the UK's food production. Therefore, a systemic approach to any action taken is needed to ensure unwanted results in other interconnected systems aren't created and that co-benefits are maximised.

There are many different perspectives on what nature recovery looks like: Working towards nature recovery requires different views and experiences to be understood and navigated. Areas of compromise are inevitable and bringing together collective knowledge and understanding is crucial to enabling widescale nature recovery.

Education is an important part of this work: Awareness raising, and the provision of creative and accessible educational resources and activities, are vital parts of nature recovery. Furthermore, the ways in which people want to interact with nature might be counterproductive to nature recovery and therefore require education and awareness raising – having access to paths for dog-walking which could upset wildlife, for example.

Opportunities for ongoing collaboration: Opportunities for stakeholders to come together, listen and shape nature recovery

should continue long after the LNRS is published. By strengthening connections, organisations and individuals can find common ground, fill knowledge gaps and increase their understanding of the system as a whole which, in turn, will provide a joined-up approach to the delivery of the LNRS.

Public Survey

Led by the University of Derby on behalf of the Council, an online public survey was launched on 19 August 2024 to gather views from residents in Derbyshire and Derby on nature and its importance and condition, on the causes and effects of nature's decline, and on potential actions to improve and enhance nature. The survey was promoted through a press release, media articles, social media activity and the LNRS website. The Steering Group and Supporting Authorities Group also promoted it through their channels and networks. Additionally, posters were placed around County Hall and the University of Derby's main campus to encourage participation.

The survey closed on 10 October 2024 and attracted over 1,000 responses from the public.

It provides a baseline of the public's opinion of and relationship with nature and provides insights into nature recovery priorities and potential actions for consideration in the LNRS. Full survey findings can be found in **Appendix xx**, with key highlights being:

- **Survey respondents generally have a strong positive relationship with nature:** 99% of the survey respondents stated that nature makes them happy, and 98% stated nature is important for their health and wellbeing. 87% of respondents have noticed loss or damage to nature.

- **Survey respondents generally have good access to nature:** 97% reported there is a green space withing walking distance of their home and 49% reported accessing nature every day.
- **Survey respondents want to spend more time in nature:** 81% of respondents would like to spend more time with nature and just over 60% would like to visit more and different types of nature.
- **There are key factors limiting access to nature:** Respondents cited poor weather, lack of time and travel difficulties as being the biggest barriers to spending time in nature.
- **Respondents are concerned about nature depletion:** The highest areas of concern are extinction or decline of species, reduction in natural pollinators, poor water quality, increases in extreme weather events, and increases in carbon emissions.
- **Respondents showed clear nature recovery priorities:** The top five priorities for nature recovery in Derbyshire and Derby over the next five years are (shown in order of priority):
 1. Healthier rivers, lakes, streams, springs and wells.
 2. Protection of engendered species.
 3. Improved condition of habitats.

4. More trees and woodland.
5. More hedgerows.

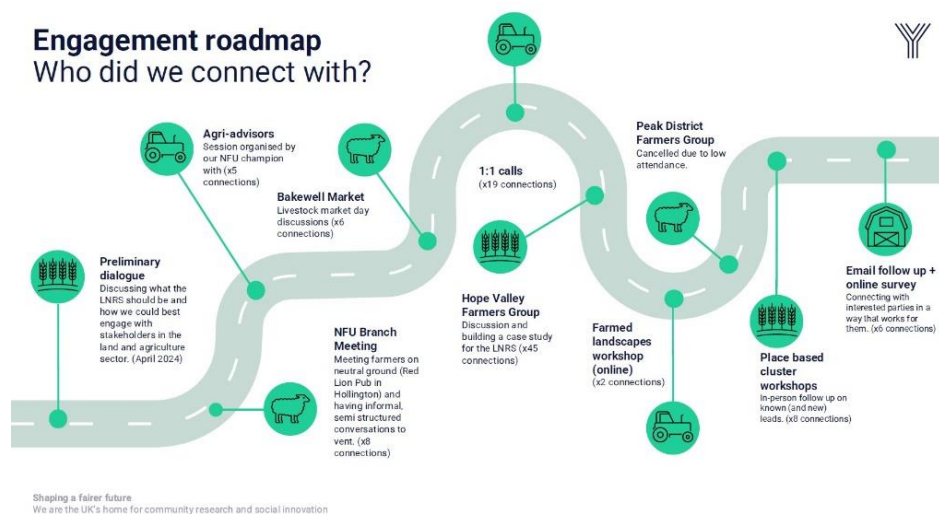
- **Nature recovery is already happening at a small scale:** 93% of respondents said that they try to encourage wildlife in the garden 75% try to encourage pollinators, and 45% reported that they have built bird/bat/bug houses, or similar.
- **Respondents want to do more to help nature recovery:** 40% of respondents said that they would volunteer their time to help nature recovery projects and over 50% said that they would welcome more information on how to encourage biodiversity and protect nature locally.

Engagement with Farmers and Landowners

Between July 2024 and September 2024, the Council worked with The Young Foundation and the University of Derby to engage with farmers and landowners across the county to better understand the opinions and experiences of this important sector and generate practical ideas for nature recovery, thereby informing the priorities and measures for inclusion in the LNRS.

Engagement roadmap

Who did we connect with?



Being conscious of the time pressures faced by the sector, an adaptive, creative, and flexible approach was applied to this engagement.

This included:

- Going to where the farmers are already (e.g. farmers markets) rather than expecting them to come to organised LNRS events.
- Visiting farmers at their own farms at convenient times.
- Being flexible to conduct 1-2-1 phone calls around their availability.
- Hosting events online, as well as in-person.
- Attending existing and well attended sector events, and utilising existing and trusted forums and networks.
- Sending emails/texts for those who can't devote time to a full conversation but can answer a few questions.

- Communicating with the sector that this is just the start of a longer, more meaningful relationship and there will be other opportunities to provide input in the future.

The findings from this engagement were fully analysed by the Responsible Authority and applied to the LNRS. The full findings report from this engagement can be found in **Appendix xx**, with key findings summarised below:

- **Sustainable farming practices:** Funding and incentives need to focus on making the shift to sustainable farming practices financially viable for farmers by subsidising lost income in the transition and making a switch to sustainable farming practices attractive in the long-term. Opportunities to focus on could include circular farming schemes (e.g. using food chain residues to feed livestock), promoting agroforestry and hedgerow management on farms, and reducing emissions by promoting low carbon feed and methane reducing feed additives, and organic fertilisers.
- **Pollution reduction and improved water quality:** The LNRS should support the reduction of pollutant run-off into watercourses through encouraging incentives and subsidies that support farmers to adopt practices that support improvement to water quality and pollution control.
- **Increased carbon sequestration and climate resilience:** The LNRS has an opportunity to promote the introduction of new and strengthened schemes and funding for farmers on activities to reduce emissions and build climate resilience,

such as tree planting and peatland restoration, and for investing in carbon sequestration technologies (such as manure harvesting and carbon capture systems).

- **Nature-based land use and multi-functional landscapes:** The farming community can work in collaboration with local stakeholders and communities to foster a joined-up approach to nature recovery across different landscapes. Opportunities for community land projects, such as planting schemes, pollinator gardens, or recreation areas, can promote farmer involvement as can grant funding for multi-functional land use and community-led projects.

Farmer, landowner and land manager survey

Led by the University of Derby on behalf of the County Council, an online public survey for farmers, landowners and land managers was launched on 10 October 2024 to gather views from the sector on the current challenges facing the sector, nature and its importance and condition, and on potential and existing actions to improve and enhance nature. The survey was promoted through a press release, media articles, social media activity and the LNRS website. The LNRS Steering Group and Supporting Authorities Group also promoted it through their channels and networks.

The survey closed on 30 November 2024 and attracted 158 responses from the sector.

Full survey findings can be found in **Appendix xx**, with the headlines being:

Xxxx – to be completed prior to public consultation

LNRS website

To enable the Council to effectively engage partners, residents, communities, businesses and wider stakeholders in the preparation of the LNRS, and to provide a location for the LNRS and its supporting materials and content to be hosted, a dedicated Derbyshire LNRS website was launched in August 2024: <https://derbyshirenaturerecovery.co.uk/>. The website has been used successfully to promote stakeholder engagement events and surveys, share information on the LNRS preparation process and timeline, and to promote the formal public consultation process.

2.7 Approach to Species

Local Nature Recovery Strategies have a critical role to play in delivering the national ambition to increase species abundance and reduce risk of species extinctions.

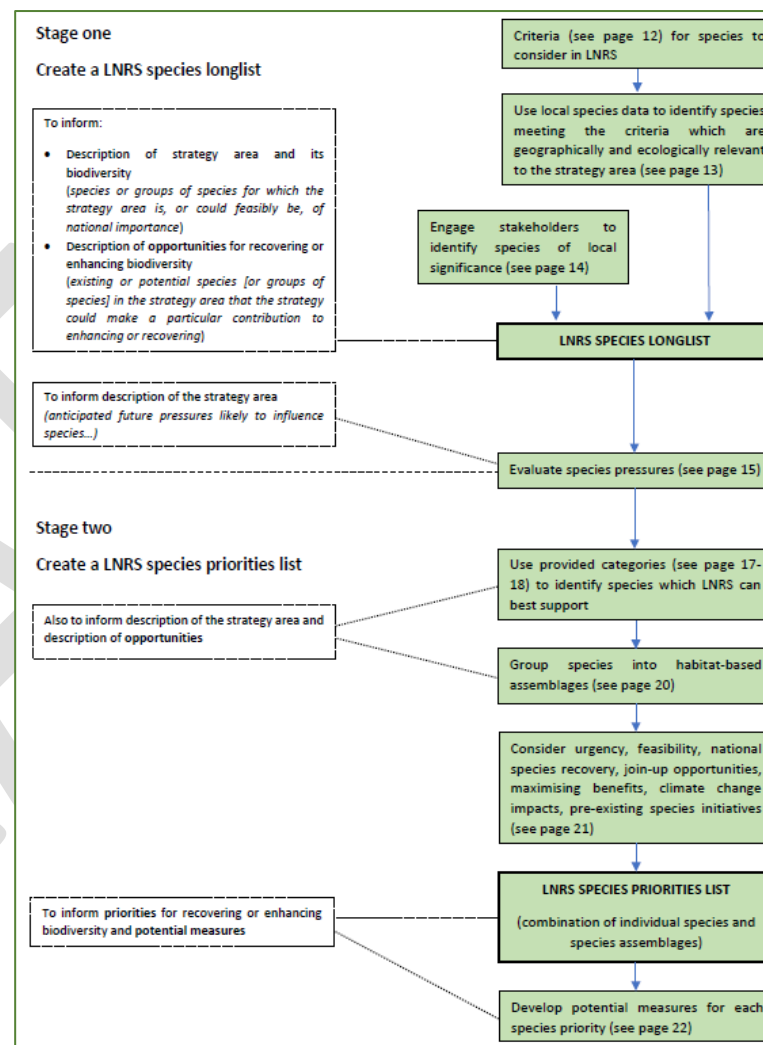
The government has set legally binding targets to:

- **Halt the decline in species abundance** by the end of 2030
- **Increase species abundance** by the end of 2042 so that is greater than in 2022 and at least 10% greater than in 2030
- **Reduce the risk of species' extinction** by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022

The LNRS system aims to deliver a coordinated approach for planning a nationwide network of more, bigger, better, and better-connected habitat across England. Many species are likely to benefit

from this greatly improved habitat network delivered by LNRS measures, supporting species recovery and resilience. This will help to halt the decline in species abundance and should deliver increased species abundance over time.

However, to contribute to the government’s extinction risk target, Responsible Authorities were advised to follow a process to identify species conservation priorities for their area. The first part of this process involves identifying species at a high risk of extinction in England that occur in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area, species that could be reintroduced to the area, and other locally significant species, to create a ‘species long-list’. The second part of this process is to identify which of these species are local conservation priorities, and to then propose specific measures and actions to support the recovery of those species.



Process to identify conservation priority species in an LNRS
[\[LINK to guidance\]](#)

The Derbyshire Biological Records Centre (hosted by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust) began work to compile the initial draft species long-list, working with Natural England, the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council. We then formed a broader 'Species Technical Group' to support the development of the species opportunities, priorities, and potential measures. The Species Technical Group consisted of a small number of local experts and organisations who hold local expertise in the major species groups (amphibians and reptiles, birds, bryophytes, fish, fungi, invertebrates, lichen, mammals, vascular plants) found in Derbyshire.

The Species Technical Group included representatives from:

- Derbyshire Biological Records Centre
- Sorby Natural History Society
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society
- East Midlands Butterfly Conservation
- Derbyshire Ornithological Society
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Peak District National Park
- Derbyshire Bat Group
- Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group
- Derbyshire Flora Recorder
- Mammal, fungi and lower plant experts
- Natural England
- Derbyshire County Council

Through a series of online workshops, the Species Technical Group considered and reviewed 758 individual species, identifying 475 species to include on our species long list. They then reassessed the species on that list to identify a shorter list of 185 species that they felt the Derbyshire LNRS had the greatest potential to support. The Species Technical Group then re-examined those species, to identify those species that share habitat requirements, which might thereby benefit collectively from the same recovery measures. Species with similar needs were grouped into habitat-based assemblages where possible. Some species however will require specific, individual species recovery measures, and so those species were not included within assemblages. This resulted in the identification of a pool of 15 potential priority species assemblages, and a further 23 species that did not fit into assemblages.

Finally, that list potential priority species and assemblages was reviewed using criteria (urgency, feasibility, national species recovery, join-up opportunities, maximising benefits, climate change impacts, pre-existing species initiatives) to select a combination of assemblages and individual species to constitute the LNRS species priorities list for Derbyshire – see Chapter 4 for details.

2.8 Mapping of priorities and measures

[NOTE - Discussion of methodology and collaborative working to be provided once mapping is completed]