

## Response ID ANON-9AVK-T53Y-G

Submitted to Local Nature Recovery Strategies: how to prepare and what to include  
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### Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:  
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2 What is your email address?

Email:  
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3 What is your organisation?

Organisation:  
Sussex Nature Partnership (Secretariat provided by East Sussex County Council) and Sussex Local Authority Network (including East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, South Downs National Park Authority, Adur & Worthing Councils, Arun District Council, Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council & Wealden District Council)

4 Would you like your response to be confidential?

No

If you answered Yes to this question, please give your reason.:

The procedure to be followed in the preparation and publication, and review and republication, of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

### Achieving collaboration

5 Which of the groups listed below do you consider essential for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

Local authority(s) other than the "responsible authority", where the Strategy covers more than one Local Authority area, Local authorities adjacent to the Strategy areas., Local Nature Partnership(s), where active and geographically aligned, Natural England, The Environment Agency, The Forestry Commission, Other public bodies e.g. Highways England, Environmental non-governmental organisations active in the Strategy area, National Park Authority(s), where present in the Strategy area and if not the "responsible authority", Area of Outstanding National Beauty organisation(s), where present in the Strategy area, Local Records Centre(s), where separate from any of the other groups listed, Local farming, forestry and landowning groups, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Utilities providers, such as water companies, Other local business representative bodies, Individual landowners and land managers (including farmers, both landowners and tenants), Individual businesses, Members of the public

6 Are there any organisations not listed above whose involvement you consider essential?

Yes

If yes, which ones and why?:

Parish and Town Councils (or body representing PCs), neighbourhood planning groups, developers, local health & wellbeing organisations, local research institutions (e.g. universities), tourism & user groups, Biosphere Reserve, business sector. Other public bodies should include MMO and IFCA, Health & Wellbeing and Community NGOs as well as Environmental. All of the existing partnership structures should be included in the consultation as the basis for future delivery; in Sussex we are currently mapping all the partnerships in the area for this reason.

The role of organisations such as the CLA and NFU will be vital for engaging their members in the process. These organisations will need additional support to provide this function.

Some eNGOs, especially smaller eNGOs providing specific species advice at a national level, will not be able to input into every local strategy and will need support to engage meaningfully at a local level.

### Achieving collaboration

7 Do you think that additional support should be provided to farmers, landowners and managers the land management sector to facilitate their involvement with the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

Yes

#### Achieving collaboration

8 If information on other types of local wildlife sites within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy area is not held by the responsible authority, do you think that if another Local Authority owns the information they should be obliged to provide it to them?

No

#### Achieving collaboration

9 Are you aware of specific locally-held information that would make an important contribution to the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies that you do not believe would be made available without a requirement to do so?

Yes

If yes, what information should be included? :

Species information, much of which is held by Local Record Centres and or local Species Groups. However, this information often includes sensitive data such as locations, personal information etc, and therefore cannot be made publicly available.

Information on landholdings and condition (the latter where it is held by developers) would be helpful to know as it would help identify stakeholders to engage with to target action.

#### Achieving collaboration

10 How do you think neighbouring Local Nature Recovery Strategy responsible authorities should be required to work together?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

All of the options listed should apply. However, there should be a pre-commencement agreement about how the process would work. It should not be left entirely to local discretion as there may be areas in the country where there is not the desire to act collaboratively across boundaries where there are not cordial relationships, or they want to work collaboratively but are following different processes which are difficult to align.

#### Achieving collaboration

11 Should draft Local Nature Recovery Strategies be subject to a local public consultation prior to publication?

Yes

#### Achieving collaboration

12 Should individual landowners or managers be able to decide that land they own or manage should not be identified by a Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area that could become of particular importance for biodiversity?

No

#### Achieving collaboration

13 Should anyone interested in the Strategy be able to propose additional areas that could become of particular importance if these can be shown to be making a sufficient contribution to the overall objective of the Strategy?

Yes

#### Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

14 How prescriptive do you think regulations made under clause 101 should be in setting out how the responsible authority should work with local partners?

Setting broad principles and specific requirements on who to engage or how

#### Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

15 Do you think that regulations made under clause 101 should establish a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

Yes

### Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

16 If you believe that regulations made under clause 101 should establish a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which of the following bodies do you think should be able to raise a dispute (including on behalf of others)?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

Key stakeholders should be involved on a steering group which should be able to define a clear process at the beginning which should reduce the potential for disputes. Depending on the nature of the issue, any of those organisations should be able to raise a dispute, either on their own behalf or on behalf of another stakeholder. Other potential bodies would be any other public body.

17 Which of the following do you think might be reasonable grounds for raising a dispute about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy preparation process?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

If the process was defined at the beginning, should avoid dispute. Requirement for proper project planning. Much could be resolved through provision of sufficient resourcing and capacity and realistic timescales, recognising the complexity of the strategy area. Need commitment from key stakeholders at the start.

### Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

18 At which points in the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy do you think it should be possible to escalate procedural disputes for external consideration?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

There should be early and regular consultation. Phased consultation could help resolve all potential conflict situations.

### Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

19 Do you think that Local Nature Recovery Strategies should also be "signed off" by a body other than the responsible authority before they can be published?

Yes – as well as a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation process

20 If yes, which bodies should be given sign-off responsibility?

Other Local Authorities in the Strategy area, Natural England

If other, please specify.:

If the LNRS is to be used by Local Planning Authorities to direct biodiversity net gain, then all Districts and Boroughs within the area should sign them off. If it is to be used to direct ELMS, Natural England should also sign them off.

21 On what grounds could a body refuse to sign-off a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

On any reasonable grounds, Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

Conflict resolution will come down to the skills and expertise of the project team which will require adequate resourcing. Need to encourage people to be ambitious in setting their strategies.

### Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

22 Should the Defra Secretary of State be able to appoint a separate body to consider disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and if so, which body or bodies?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

It is vital that any dispute resolution is made in the context of an LNRS delivering its statutory purpose (to support nature's recovery). Therefore, any body appointed should have the mandate to uphold that purpose, and have the powers to do so. The only logical separate body in that instance is therefore the Officer for Environmental Protection, or perhaps Natural England. We would have concerns if it was the Planning Inspectorate because their mandate is much wider and is not to specifically support nature's recovery as a priority. Hence, decisions could be skewed by other priorities such as housing delivery.

## Achieving consistency and resolving disagreements

23 In resolving disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies should the Secretary of State be able to:

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

It depends on the nature of the dispute. There may be specific circumstances where changes to the strategy are required, e.g. where it is clearly insufficient to secure nature's recovery, but the first step should be to repeat any problematic parts of the process to ensure achievement of consensus. Any change may require additional resources.

## Publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

24 Do you think that each local habitat map should adopt the same data standards and be published in the same format to facilitate national collation?

No

25 If yes, how should this level of consistency be established?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

This needs to recognise that every county will be starting from a different baseline with their data; some counties may require investment to bring all counties up to a similar baseline standard. Sufficient resources need to be invested in Local Record Centres, who have existing protocols in place to protect sensitive information, and good relationships with a network of local recorders. Data cannot be collated nationally because of privacy and/or resolution issues, and therefore national data has to be the lowest common denominator.

Some consistency in how maps are presented, especially with the terminology used, would facilitate national and cross-border collaboration. In practice, maps are likely to be similar in format with GIS layers consisting of different themes identified by the LNRS, but the themes are likely to vary between LNRSs. This was the case with the pilots and it is important that Responsible Authorities can use the most appropriate geography for conservation needs within the local area; National Character Areas are only one option.

## Publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

26 Do you think that each statement of biodiversity priorities should also be published in a similar format?

There should be some specific requirements but the responsible authority should keep some discretion over presentation

## Publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

27 Do you think that all Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be published together on a single national website as well as being published locally by the responsible authority?

Yes

## Publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

28 Do you think that a published Local Nature Recovery Strategy should:

Not be changed unless it's part of a scheduled review process (see next page)

## Review and republication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

29 Do you think that all Local Nature Recovery Strategies across England should be reviewed and republished at similar times or should there be local discretion to decide when is the best time?

Decided locally

30 If you do think all Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be reviewed and republished at the same time, do you think that this should happen to a fixed cycle?

Not Answered

### Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

31 Do you think that all responsible authorities should take a consistent approach to describing the biodiversity in their Strategy area?

No

32 If yes, do you have a preference as to how sub-areas based on similarities in biodiversity should be identified?

Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

This response falls within a theme in this consultation around national consistency versus local flexibility. The answer is not as simple as a yes/no/don't know - and lies in a mixture of both consistency and local flexibility.

We see the national value in consistency on description of biodiversity value (and the threats and pressures to it) across LNRSs and this will certainly assist in 'join up' across adjacent boundaries. However, there may be locally relevant approaches to the description of biodiversity value (and opportunity) that will not be replicated elsewhere but are necessary locally to capture the level of analysis and understanding that already exists.

For example, across the South East of England it is very likely that all counties will seek to include 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' (BOAs) within any LNRSs produced. These BOAs were originally identified in 2009 as part of the Regional Planning process but remain relevant as important 'envelopes' across the landscape for targeting priority habitat restoration and creation. They are actively used in many counties to plan activity and provide an effective mechanism for identifying where cross-boundary collaboration will be required. A national prescribed approach to description would risk excluding such information and analysis which would be unhelpful at the local scale.

In Sussex, in addition to the BOAs (see above), National Character Areas will provide a useful framework as these are being used by the South Downs National Park Authority as the basis for much of its work on nature recovery. They are also used by neighbouring counties (e.g. Surrey) for a similar purpose. Thus they provide a common mechanism for identifying opportunities for coherence across the wider Sussex area and beyond. The work that has been done by Natural England on NCAs will also be helpful as part of the evidence-base for any LNRS. River Catchments, where these have partnerships in place to guide work, will also be useful and again may provide opportunities to identify where cross-boundary priorities have to be addressed by all relevant LNRSs.

33 To ensure that the statement of biodiversity priorities provides an accurate and useful description of the Strategy area that can inform the setting of realistic and appropriate priorities, what else should the description consider in addition to describing existing biodiversity?

Climate change scenarios, How land use/ habitat distribution has changed over time, Anticipated future pressures on land use (e.g. broad indications of housing and infrastructure need), Environmental issues in the Strategy area that might be addressed through nature-based solutions, Existing significant nature or environment projects (e.g. landscape scale work), Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

Existing natural capital assessment.

### Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

34 How should the statement of biodiversity priorities describe opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity without mapping them?

Identify particular rarer habitats/species that the strategy area is suitable for supporting, Assess the potential to contribute to national priorities for nature recovery, Describe the relative opportunity for creating more areas of key habitats as well as making them bigger, better and joined up, Indicate broad areas where creating improving habitat may be more achievable, Assess the potential for use of nature-based solutions, However the responsible authority finds most useful, Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

Fundamentally the LNRS should be based on accepted paradigms, i.e. Lawton approach, species requirements etc.

### Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

35 Do you think that all Local Nature Recovery Strategies should follow the same priority setting process or that each responsible authority should decide for themselves how priorities should be set?

Strategies should follow the same high-level principles but with local discretion

36 How should national environmental priorities be reflected when setting Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities?

Responsible authorities should show how they have considered national priorities

If other, please specify.:

In addition, there needs to be support from Natural England nationally to understand how the local area helps to deliver national priorities. That context is not always known at the local level.

37 Should Local Nature Recovery Strategies identify only those outcomes for nature recovery and environmental improvement that are of priority or also include those that are positive but of lower priority?

List priorities and other relevant lower priority outcomes

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

38 How should priorities identified in other environmental spatial plans in the Strategy area be incorporated into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

Don't Know

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

39 Do you think that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy should include potential measures for conserving and enhancing biodiversity and making wider environmental improvements that cannot be mapped as well as those that can?

Yes both

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

40 Should there be a standard list of potential measures for responsible authorities to choose from?

There should be a list of suggestions

Local Habitat Map

41 What sort of areas, outside of national conservation and local wildlife sites, might a responsible authority reasonably consider to be of particular importance for biodiversity?

Ancient woodlands, Flower rich meadows, Priority habitats in good condition, Areas used for feeding or resting by animals or birds from a nearby national conservation site, Any areas the responsible authority chooses, Other [please specify]

If other, please specify.:

We don't really understand why this question is here. Any LNRS should include areas of importance for biodiversity despite their level of designation or legal protection. This should be an unchallenged starting point for all processes to get away from the traditional model of islands of habitat protected within designated sites. Furthermore, priority habitats should be included regardless of their condition. In many cases, Responsible Authorities will not have data to differentiate condition attributes for priority habitats, and current priority habitat audits may vary in terms of completeness. It is therefore naïve to suggest that only habitats in good condition should qualify as areas already of importance for biodiversity.

Local Habitat Map

42 Should all responsible authorities follow a standardised process for mapping potential measures to identify areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity or other environmental benefits?

No

Local Habitat Map

43 Do you think that all responsible authorities should seek to identify a similar proportion of their Strategy area as areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity or wider environmental outcomes?

No, this should not be set and decided locally

Local Habitat Map

44 Do you think that when Strategies are reviewed and republished, they should map where appropriate action has been taken to make areas of increasing importance for biodiversity?

Yes

## Consultee Feedback on the Online Survey

45 Overall, how satisfied are you with our online consultation tool? Please give us any comments you have on the tool, including suggestions on how we could improve it.

Dis-satisfied

Please give us any comments you have on the tool, including suggestions on how we could improve it. :

This consultation has been too narrowly focused on issues relating to the drafting of regulations and was thus a missed opportunity to gather insights into views on how LNRSs should be used and the capacity/funding needed to ensure they can be prepared and maintained/reviewed over time. These issues are of critical importance to those who will be involved in their preparation and implementation at a local level.