Local Planning Authority Toolkit

Kent and Medway
Local Nature
Recovery Strategy

Making space for the county's nature

Contents

HOW THE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY WILL BENEFIT LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

It will:

- allow you to fulfil the statutory requirement of the LNRS in plan-making and planning decisions.

- 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 local plans, in terms of land use planning, and inform development management, in relation to biodiversity net gain.

- help align your emerging local 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.

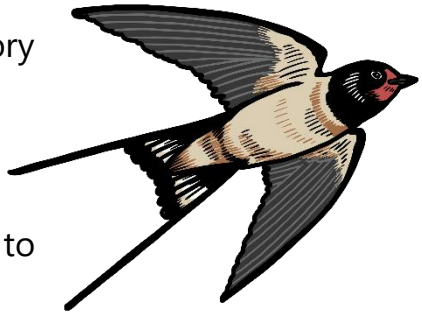
Priority species are species the Strategy has determined should be prioritised for recovery action. They were identified from an initial list of threatened and locally significant species.

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.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

In February 2025, the Government published updated planning 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**.

Role in Plan-Making

"Have Regard To" the LNRS:

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are intended to support local planning authorities in preparing local plans that conserve and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment, and local planning authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the relevant strategy for their area. Local planning authorities should consider the priorities set out in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy when determining how their local plan should contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment.

Safeguarding Areas:

Paragraph 192(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2024) states that local plans should identify, map and safeguard areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation. Local Nature Recovery Strategies, prepared by local partnerships, identify these areas and therefore provide an important and ready-made evidence base for the local plan requirements.

This means ensuring that local plans:

- **Acknowledge and consider** the priorities, measures and associated mapping within the LNRS.
- **Contribute to and enhance** the local and wider natural environment.
- **Promote the protection, restoration, enhancement and creation** of priority habitats and ecological networks.
- **Promote the protection and recovery of priority species.**
- **Identify and pursue opportunities** for securing measurable **Biodiversity Net Gain.**

"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 Planning Practice Guidance**)

It is advised that:

- LPAs should consider the **priorities** and **proposed actions** (measures) set out in the LNRS when determining their plan policies.
- They should consider what **safeguarding** would be appropriate to enable the proposed nature recovery actions to be delivered, potentially targeting stronger safeguarding in areas considered to be of greater importance for biodiversity.

Role in Planning Decisions

"Material Consideration":

The 2025 updated planning guidance states that 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.

This means:

- The LNRS is designed to be an **evidence base** and a **material consideration** in planning decisions, particularly where a Local Plan pre-dates the published LNRS.

- What constitutes a "relevant material consideration" remains with the **decision-maker** based on the individual circumstances of the case, 'on the ground' knowledge and local data.
- Have regard to the LNRS by **acknowledging and considering** the priorities, measures and associated mapping within the LNRS.

"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."(**The Planning Practice Guidance**)

It is advised that planners consider:

- That the **impact of development on nature** may be **greater in areas mapped within the LNRS Local Habitat Map**, particularly where it is close to existing habitats or may compromise connectivity between habitats.
- That developments in the mapped focus areas should take **particular consideration of how they can make a positive contribution** towards the recommended potential measures in that area. For example, if a development takes place in an area where woodland or wood pasture creation is mapped as a measure, the development could make additional effort to incorporate native trees and wooded corridors so as to make a positive contribution towards nature recovery.
- Even outside of the mapped focus areas, the non-statutory wider 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.

To note:

Many of the county's planning authorities already have in place revised local plans and policies, or are well advanced in their process of plan revision. In the absence of anything to the contrary in the February 2025 guidance, it is not expected that the Strategy will be applied retrospectively or supersede any land use decisions already taken, including allocated sites.

It is also important to note that whilst the Strategy has an important role in informing local plans and may be used by local planning authorities to identify areas they wish to safeguard, is not designed as a tool to prevent development nor do the identified "areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity" preclude development. Instead, it will guide development in maximising positive outcomes for nature.

The term safeguard, used throughout the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, does not imply a formal protection nor prevention of potentially impactful activities, unless already identified within an existing and adopted local plan or an already established legal protection. Safeguarding may be delivered by setting aside the land but also refers to the use of active management that prevents loss and damage, the use of buffers to minimise human impacts and connecting habitats to increase resilience. Where measures refer to safeguarding areas, this does not mean that nothing can happen in these areas; rather that appropriate action should be taken within these areas to support the habitats and species they are notable for.

For guidance on how the LNRS informs the Biodiversity Net Gain strategic significance metric and how to use the mapping tool to identify 15% strategic significance uplift, see: https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/bng/.

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 -

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

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.

Biodiversity Net Gain Interim Strategic Significance Guidance

While the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was in development, Kent County Council provided the local planning authorities with Biodiversity Net Gain interim strategic significance guidance in order to support local planning authorities navigate the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain into the planning process. Since the publication of the LNRS, the Local Habitat Map and the potential measures that fall within this, supersede the interim strategic significance guidance for BNG and simplifies the strategic significance multiplier within the Biodiversity Metric. Updated guidance can be found, here: Biodiversity Net Gain for Kent and Medway | Making Space For Nature Kent

How will the Local Nature Recovery Strategy 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

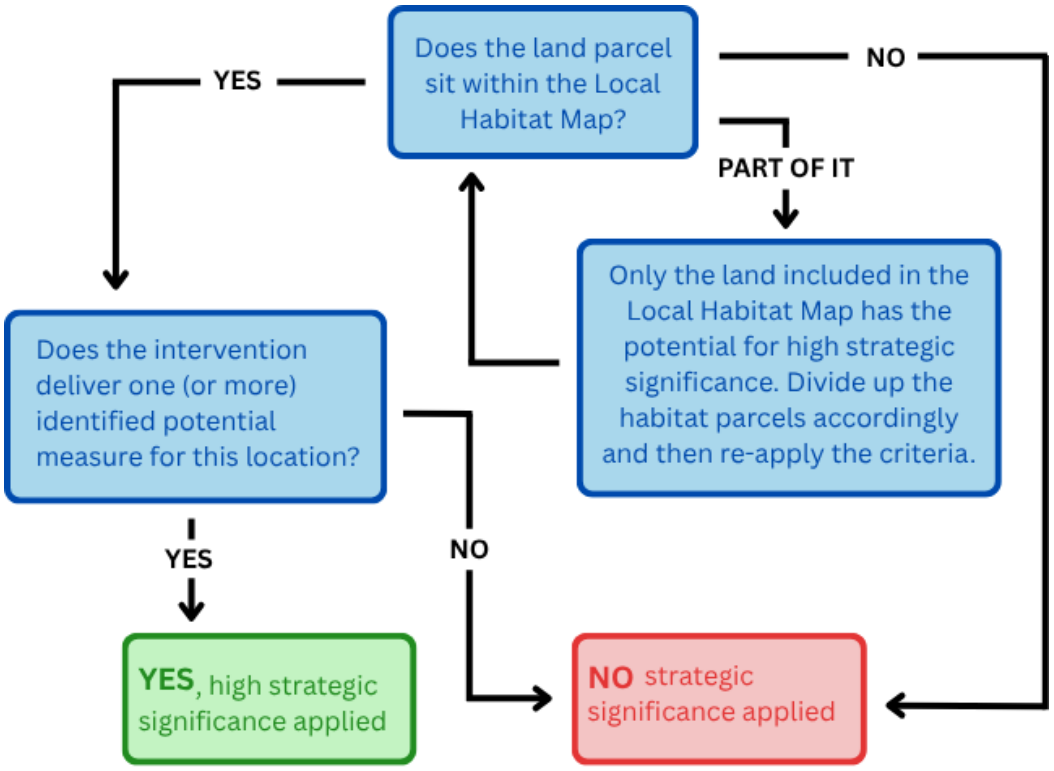
The Strategic Significance Multiplier

High strategic significance will be applied when the habitat parcel is located in an area proposed to help deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities AND the intervention is consistent with the potential measures proposed for that location.

The Local Habitat Map comprises of the APIB (Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity), ACIB (Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity) and potential measures (actions for nature).

1) **A site must be located within the Local Habitat Map** (view the APIB and ACIB)
2) **The intervention must be consistent with the potential measures proposed for the location**

If the land parcel is located in the local habitat map, it is not automatically given 15% strategic significance uplift - your nature recovery actions must also match a potential measure identified for that area. You can deliver a nature recovery action not identified here for biodiversity net gain but you will not receive the 15% strategic significance uplift.



You should always check the up-to-date government guidance as the eligibility for the strategic significance may change and there are certain nuances associated with areas mapped within the APIB- protected sites and irreplaceable habitats. See our BNG Toolkit for more information - Biodiversity Net Gain for Kent and Medway | Making Space For Nature Kent

For the latest government guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies and strategic significance see Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK

High strategic significance is only applied post-intervention, the baseline strategic significance values for habitat parcels should always be scored as low. National guidance also states that a medium strategic significance cannot be applied in a Local Nature Recovery Strategy Local Habitat area.

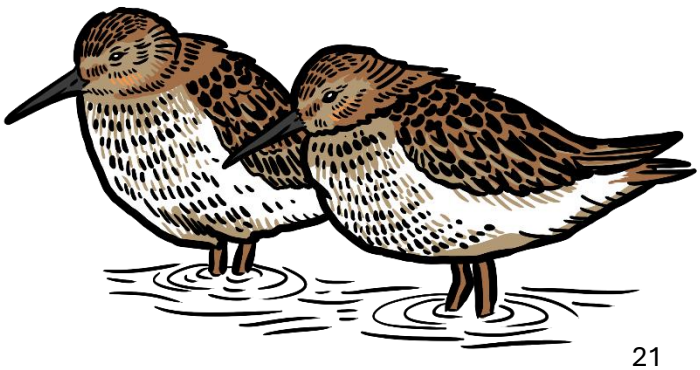
You should assess each individual habitat parcel, for on-site and off-site. You should split habitat parcels where they are intersected by:

- a boundary between two areas of different strategic significance
- a planning authority boundary

Find more detail here: The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (pages 27-28)

Find transitional guidance from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) here: LNRS and Strategic Significance Multiplier Transition Guidance

Guidance on how to use the mapping tool to identify 15% strategic significance uplift: Biodiversity Net Gain for Kent and Medway | Making Space For Nature Kent



INCORPORATING THE LNRS INTO EMERGING LOCAL PLANS

Safeguarding Existing Assets

- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies and maps **Areas that Could be of Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) and potential measures,** use these to determine if there are areas you wish to safeguard to maintain the habitat and its contribution towards connectivity.

Directing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

This is a primary mechanism for integrating the LNRS into the planning system:

- **Strategic Significance Multiplier:** The LNRS is the mechanism that determines where off-site BNG can receive the **15% strategic significance uplift** in the Biodiversity Metric. The location must sit within the Local Habitat map and the intervention must be consistent with the potential measures proposed for the location.
- **Local Plan Action:** The Local Plan's BNG policy explicitly refers to the LNRS's **Local Habitat Map** (areas with high potential for habitat creation) to **direct developers** to deliver their off-site habitat creation in these strategic locations, these off-site locations still have to be on the national BNG register. This ensures BNG contributions are **joined-up** and will be most impactful and beneficial to the Nature Recovery Network through a financial incentive via the BNG strategic significance multiplier.

Site Allocations and Development Requirements

- **Informing Allocations:** LPAs should use the LNRS to review proposed development sites and allocations, and where possible **direct development away from our mapped assets.**

- **Policy Detail:** Where a site overlaps with the ACIB, the Local Plan's allocation policy could explicitly require the development to **contribute to the LNRS's recommended measures** for that area.
- **Policy Detail:** Policies can include specific actions that align with the written strategy and mapping, such as:

    Requiring new housing developments to provide strategic tree planting, ecological corridors, or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that double as wetland habitats identified in the LNRS.

Green/Blue Infrastructure and Wider Benefits

- The LNRS's priorities extend beyond solely biodiversity and include broader benefits from **Nature-Based Solutions**, such as reducing flood risk, improving water quality, and increasing public access to nature. The mapping will help identify where these wider benefits could deliver.
- **Local Plan Action:** The local plan's **Green/Blue Infrastructure (GBI)** strategy is 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.

BIODIVERSITY IN PLANNING

Planning considerations

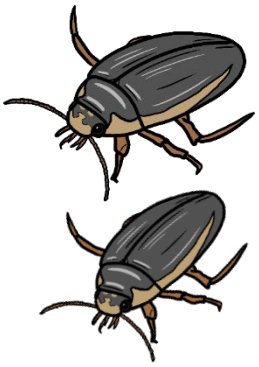
A healthy and functioning natural environment, with clean and plentiful water, good air quality and suitable green and blue infrastructure, should be the first consideration before any housing development goes ahead, as these wider benefits are essential for people as well as wildlife. Biodiversity supports 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.

It is advised that developers and planners consider:

- That the **impact of development on nature** may be **greater in areas mapped within the LNRS Local Habitat Map**, particularly where it is close to existing habitats or may compromise connectivity between habitats.
- That developments in the mapped focus areas should take **particular consideration** of how they can make a **positive contribution** towards the recommended potential measures in that area. For example, if a development takes place in an area where woodland or wood pasture creation is mapped as a measure, the development could make additional effort to incorporate native trees and wooded corridors so as to make a positive contribution towards nature recovery.
- 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.



The importance of development integrating green and blue infrastructure is evident throughout the local plans. Incorporating biodiversity into new developments, enhancing the green and blue infrastructure corridors, the use of urban greening, the retention of original trees and hedgerows and new open space provision are some shared approaches.

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.

Pulled from the potential measures and supporting information, below is a list of the ways developers can make a positive contribution to nature recovery and provide areas of discussion with planners and developers.

Biodiversity actions for developers

Developments present significant opportunities for nature through the good design of green and blue infrastructure and carefully considering the built aspect. This can range from hedges, planted verges and trees to fencing which allows hedgehog and other wildlife movements to the installation of bird, bat and bee/bug boxes. The mandatory requirement to leave more biodiversity than has been impacted, through biodiversity net gain, also positions new development as a key delivery mechanism for nature recovery. Below are suggestions of ways developers can incorporate nature within development.

Site Design:

Connectivity/site preparation:

- New developments should work around the established green and blue infrastructure networks, not fragmenting existing corridors.
- Establish wildlife corridors through the developed landscape by enhancing and extending, creating green and blue infrastructure.
- Enhance and safeguard existing green space and trees, they will provide key stepping stones between larger natural spaces that are either within or at the edge of urban areas.
- Ensure that landscaping provides wildlife corridors and passage across the development site, with connections out to the wider landscape, including natural grass lawns, shared green space with dedicated wildlife areas, native, uninterrupted hedgerows and a tree canopy.
- Prevent woodlands becoming isolated or cut off as a result of development – ensure there are access points.
- Before removing any in-river structures, consider the potential impact on downstream ecology.
- Avoid removing downstream in-river structures that are protecting White-clawed Crayfish from invasive Signal Crayfish and other non-native crayfish species.

Landscape:

- Integrate year-round wildlife habitat, shelter, forage and food in new developments by designing in, and retrofitting, features and landscaping that are maintainable, sustainable and appropriate to local species.
- To minimise the impact on species mobility in new builds, plant boundary hedgerows in new developments instead of fences and ensure any boundary features are passable (e.g. hedgehog highways).
- Features to support wildlife (all installed in accordance with best practice guidance) could include: Swift bricks, House Martin artificial nest cups, nest boxes, bat tiles, Hedgehog highways, bug hotels and reptile refuges.
- Particular priority should be given to Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species associated with the urban environment, where the population is locally significant or species known to be declining.

- Consider also typically urban species that are declining in numbers, such as House Sparrows and Starlings.
- Safeguard existing nest sites for building-dependent species, such as Swifts and House Martins. Provide mitigation where these cannot be safeguarded.
- Landscaping could include food plants, structural features for hibernation and overwintering, a mosaic of habitats and varied landforms and water features.
- New developments to deliver accessible greenspace with rich and varied habitats that meet local biodiversity priorities - dedicated wildlife areas, native, uninterrupted hedgerows and a tree canopy.
- Use natural grass lawns and permeable materials for driveways where possible.
- Establish native mixed hedgerows, street trees and wild verges/swathes to link urban green spaces.
- Plant the right trees, in the right place and with appropriate management to ensure their successful establishment.
- Plant appropriate plant species with appropriate management approaches that benefit wildlife.
- Install green roofs, walls and other features to new buildings where opportunities arise to provide additional areas of shelter, forage and food within built-up areas.
- Where appropriate, create ponds.
- Ensure that green corridors are pleasant for people and wide enough for wildlife strips, use buffers on the sides of roads and safe passageways for wildlife in appropriate locations.
- New lighting schemes with reduced light pollution impacts on wildlife.
- Ensure any measures are in keeping with the local landscape setting and character.

Nature-based solutions:

- SUDS schemes to maximise biodiversity gains in greenspace design.
- Nature based solutions installed with long term management in place that ensures the retention and maintenance of the benefiting features.
- Plant trees and hedgerows specifically to deliver air quality, temperature regulation/cooling and surface water management benefits.

- Prioritise the use of natural flood management/nature-based solutions over engineered, hard solutions, to manage areas at high risk from surface-water flooding.
- Reduce demand on water resources through implementation of water efficiency measures in all new developments and education of the public, retro fitting and use of alternative sources of water such as grey water, rainwater harvesting, and runoff. Consider storing water for later release to support flows and demand as needed.

Maintenance:

- Employ conservation cuts, minimise mowing and leave wild strips, buffers and corners on verges and grass areas.
- Manage areas of green space to maximise nature provision, providing a greater complexity of habitats, with year-round shelter, forage and food.
- Ensure that long term management is in place that ensures the retention and maintenance of wildlife benefiting features.
- Ensure long term management of nature-based solution features.
- Use minimal, and if possible do not use, pesticides and herbicides.

Engagement with residents:

- More support, advice and incentives for residents on the value of gardening for wildlife to with wildlife-friendly gardening measures, by retaining grass, hedgerows and trees, and ensuring any boundary features are passable.
- Use interpretation/public information to increase public understanding of wildlife features and wild management.
- Use interpretation/public information to increase public understanding of how nature is being used to deliver services and benefits.

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.

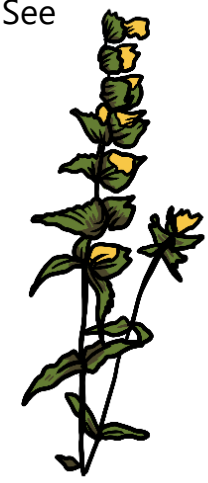
Biodiversity Duty

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).

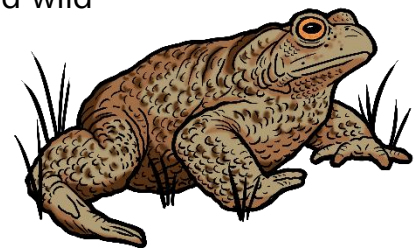


<u>Where new public access is required, consider:</u>

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.



<u>For new or existing greenspace, consider:</u>

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.

<u>Create new small habitats on council owned or public land:</u>

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.

<u>New developments:</u>

1) Consider adding biodiversity non-negotiables to policy for new developments.
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.

Nature Recovery Case Studies

We will continue to add to a collection of case studies sharing nature recovery stories across Kent & Medway, on our website.

Including some great resources from Southern Housing, showing how we can achieve great things for nature recovery through development.

Biodiversity Pathway-2030
Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023-2026

Their Biodiversity Toolkit for Housing Providers is a great resource.
View other work on their website including what is being done to protect their 30 key species.

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

The importance of development integrating green and blue infrastructure is evident throughout the local plans. Incorporating biodiversity into new developments, enhancing the green and blue infrastructure corridors, the use of urban greening, the retention of original trees and hedgerows and new open space provision are some shared approaches.

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.

A Local Plan's Green/Blue Infrastructure (GBI) strategy should be developed to align with the spatial requirements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (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.

Natural England's **Green Infrastructure Framework** is a useful resource.

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.

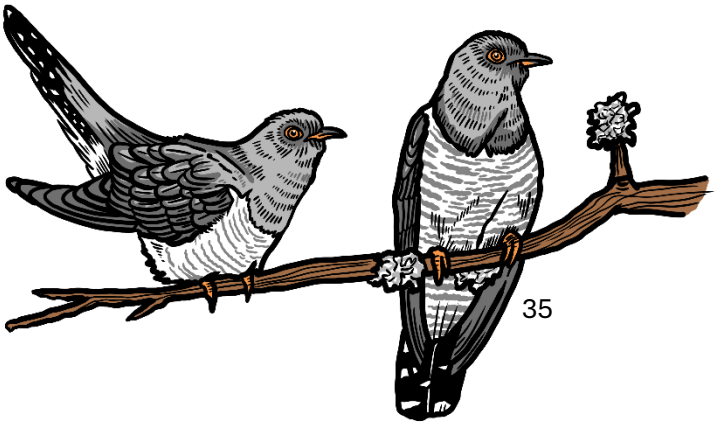
Kent Biodiversity Strategy, 2020:

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.

<u>Connecting people with the natural environment</u>

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.

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, the following are additional supporting measures that weren't considered critical to achieving the priorities and therefore not included in the strategy. Those that link to Local Planning Authorities are listed below, and you may find these useful for further direction.

Priority CON2 – Additional supporting measure for addressing fragmentation caused by major infrastructure:

- Motorways and other major roads to be integrated into landscape using sensitive, non-linear tree planting.
- Maintain a register of habitat fragmentation caused by major infrastructure to enable a pipeline of projects for funding and investment.

Priority CON3 - Additional supporting measures for connected habitats:

- Identification of key routes through the landscape, creating and maintaining "ecologically functioning" dark corridors.
- Assess the role public access routes are already playing for wildlife.

- Additional data and evidence measures for connected habitats:

- Develop better understanding, and map, priorities areas for road and verges that need improved management for the benefit of functional connectivity.

Priority NBS1 – Additional supporting measures for nature-based solutions:

- Assist developers to link Biodiversity Net Gain and carbon offset opportunities.

Priority NBS2 - Additional data and evidence measures for habitats delivering critical ecosystem services in the county:

- Identify areas of Kent where critical nature-based solutions are being delivered.

Priority NBS3 - Additional supporting measures for nature-based solutions:

- Education and technical support on importance of soil health and benefits of good soil management.

Priority LM2 - Additional data and evidence measures for nature-based solutions for climate resilience in farming:

- Identify farmland at greatest risk of climate change impacts and likely to benefit the most from nature-based solutions.

Priority LM3 - Additional data and evidence measures for water-quality management in farming:

- Identify rivers most sensitive to diffuse pollution and over-abstraction.

Priority LM4 - Additional supporting measures for delivering wildlife benefits alongside publicly accessible open space:

- Use of interpretation/public information to increase understanding of wildlife features and wild management.

Priority GL2 - Additional supporting measures for coastal and floodplain grazing marsh:

- Identify areas of coastal floodplain where tourism and recreation are having an adverse impact and implement appropriate management to minimise degradation and damage.

Priority GL3 - Additional supporting measures for lowland meadow:

- Utilise citizen science to help record and monitor species diversity in meadows.

Priority GL4 - Additional supporting measures for acid grassland and heathland:

- Educating people of the importance of these priority and rare habitats, especially within Kent. Including raising the profile of wood pasture habitat.

  - Additional data and evidence measures for acid grassland and heathland:

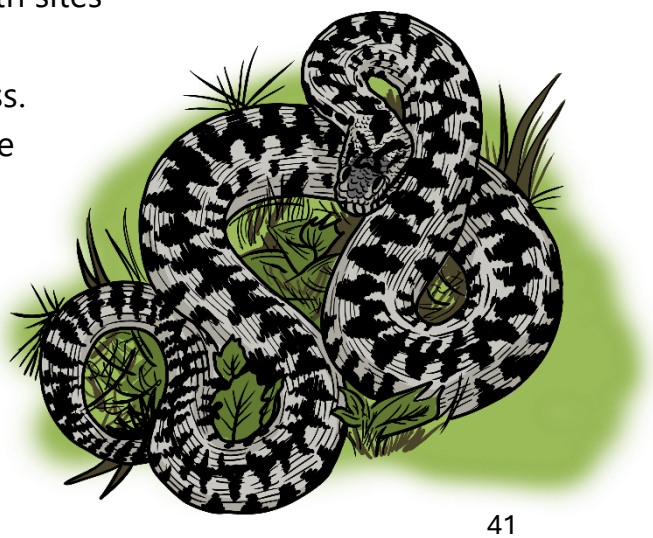
- On dry heaths, incorporate resilience measures for fire risks.

Priority GL5- Additional supporting measures for arable wild plants:

- Improve awareness and understanding of arable wild plants with landowners and farmers.

Priority SH1 – Additional supporting measures for open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield):

- Survey Kent's open mosaic habitat/brownfield sites to identify the county's best and most significant sites.
- Local plans to use OMH survey results to identify open mosaic habitat areas important for priority species, with sites safeguarded.
- Monitor management to review success.
- Educate planners and developers of the worth and vulnerability of OMH.
- Take fly tipping and contamination of these sites seriously and discourage using the term 'waste' land.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of



successional habitats and the worth and vulnerability of open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land.
- Raise awareness about the importance of open mosaic habitats – use example sites to educate and promote awareness around the importance of this habitat.

Priority SH2 - Additional supporting measures for scrub/successional habitat:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of scrub habitats.

Priority WTH1 – Additional supporting measures for woodland and trees:

- Greater understanding and consideration of trees in local planning authorities through tree officers and ecological support.
- Improve public understanding of woodland management needs and approaches.
- Support and advice for woodland volunteer groups.

Priority WTH2 – Additional supporting measures for increasing canopy cover:

- Increase in the number of local tree nurseries.
- Retrofit urban trees on industrial estates and other sealed areas.
- Encourage tree planting in private gardens and educate residents in beneficial species and management of them.
- Improve financial and practical support for woodland creation and management, including the creation of markets for local wood-based products (e.g. coppice).
- In urban areas, and where appropriate to local setting and character, plant hedgerows in new developments instead of built infrastructure.
- Use old quarry sites and similar industrial areas to establish woodlands as part of a creation of a mosaic habitat (woodland creation to not be at expense of priority habitat already present).
- Provide guidance on the right kind of planting in new developments.

- Additional data and evidence measures for increasing canopy cover:

- Mapping to establish appropriate sites, and suitable trees, for woodland creation/expansion, to identify nature-based solution opportunities and to set tree targets at local level.

Priority WTH4 – Additional supporting measures for woodland resilience:

- Prevent woodlands becoming isolated or cut off as a result of development – ensure there are access points.
- Increase in the number of local tree nurseries.

Priority WTH5 – Additional supporting measures for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees:

- Reference made to veteran and ancient trees maps in local plans.
- Education for landowners and managers, local authorities and developers, to ensure best management practices that are both ecologically and economically sustainable and intrinsic value of trees is understood.

- Additional data and evidence measures for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees:

- Detailed mapping and identification of all veteran and ancient trees, through combined efforts between landowners, community, local authorities and land managers.

Priority WTH8 – Additional supporting measures for hedgerows:

- In urban areas, and where appropriate to local setting and character, plant hedgerows in new developments instead of built infrastructure.
- "Hedgeucation" to support all aspects of planting, managing and restoring hedgerows; the funding available; and the benefits of hedgerows.
- Advice and training aimed at not just farmers but also highways, non-farming landowners (including horse owners, small holdings and urban gardens) and contractors. Also include public education.

Priority WTH9 - Additional supporting measures for traditional orchards:

- Raise awareness of role of traditional Kentish orchards as part of our heritage and as a habitat for wildlife.
- Review success rate of previous community orchards before setting up new ones.
- Support orchard establishment and management through diversification of use, such as memorial trees, green burials.
- Connect local orchards to each other to share knowledge, resources, volunteer help and equipment.
- Develop advice on selection of species, development of new traditional orchards to take account of climate change, pests and disease.
- Raise awareness of role of traditional Kentish orchards as part of our heritage and as a habitat for wildlife.
- Support orchard establishment and management through diversification of use, such as memorial trees, green burials.
- Connect local orchards to each other to share knowledge, resources, volunteer help and equipment.
- Develop advice on selection of species, development of new traditional orchards to take account of climate change, pests and disease.

- Additional data and evidence measures for traditional orchards:

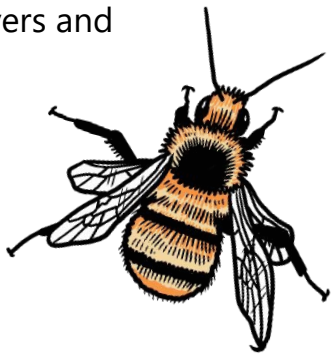
- Identify areas for the establishment of new community and reestablishment of traditional orchards.

Priority WTH10 - Additional supporting measures for Deer management:

- Awareness raising on the need to manage the impacts of deer and grey squirrel population numbers.

Priority FW1 – Additional supporting measures for naturalised rivers and streams:

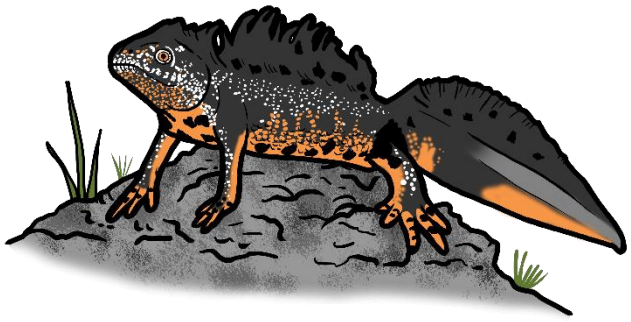
- Support identification of landownership on project sites or make ownership data more transparent, to allow cross-holding projects to happen more easily.

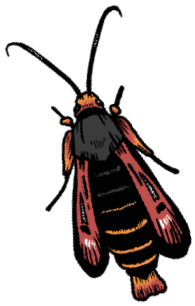


- Promote best practice for design and construction of features with potential to impact watercourses, such as bridges, to reduce impact on the ecosystem.
- Educate residents and landowners on floodplains to create a better understanding of natural processes, for example the need for functional floodplains and 'slow the flow' measures, to create support for these measures.

Priority FW2 – Additional supporting measures for clean water:

- Reduce and prevent the release of untreated sewage into all watercourses, including to establish tertiary treatment wetlands wherever possible on sewage treatment works, by working with water industry.
- Ensure mitigation of potential surface water pollution by safeguarding water availability in water bodies, including where wetlands are created to address nutrient neutrality requirements.
- Address polluting road runoff outfalls through working with agencies responsible for highways and roads management and maintenance to map.
- Address misconnections and private sewage treatment works (e.g. septic tanks, cesspits, package treatment works, blackwater from houseboats) that impact water quality in surface and groundwater bodies through engagement and education. Consider requiring new septic tank installations to be registered by homeowners.
- Ensure appropriate disposal of chemicals by providing facilities and education around risks, impacts and options for disposal.
- Ensure sufficient monitoring of water quality across rivers (including those not included in the WFD monitoring) and habitats providing water quality benefits such as reedbeds and other wetlands, including through the use of engaged citizen scientists.
- Clearly map source of pollution incidents including sewage, litter and pesticides to directly address issues at source.





- Clean up litter from rivers, including metal waste, and prevent rubbish from entering rivers by managing high risk fly tipping spots and providing alternatives.
- Address misconnections and private sewage treatment works (e.g. septic tanks, cesspits, package treatment works, blackwater from houseboats) that impact water quality in surface and groundwater bodies through engagement and education. Consider requiring new septic tank installations to be registered by homeowners.
- Assess potential infiltration features such as ponds, wetlands, SuDS located in source protection zones for their pollution risk to prevent groundwater contamination.
- Raise awareness of the toxicity of pet flea treatments and how they impact river wildlife.

Priority FW3 – Additional supporting measures for freshwater supply:

- Reduce demand on water resources through implementation of water efficiency measures in all new developments and education of the public, retro fitting and use of alternative sources of water such as grey water, rainwater harvesting, and runoff in industry, agriculture and housing. Consider storing water for later release to support flows and demand as needed, e.g. augmenting flows from farm reservoirs and investigate opportunities for water trading.
- Provide real time information about demand and availability, and support sustainable abstraction plans to safeguard water supply and set an appropriate target for streams through working with water industry and non-public supply abstractors (e.g. through Water Resources South East, Courtauld Water Roadmap Signatories).
- Create awareness of surface water-groundwater link and particularly vulnerable areas such as source protection zones and groundwater safeguard zones with key stakeholders including councils, landowners and local communities and highlight the information available on groundwater and best practice approaches.
- Use riparian corridors as wildlife corridors to encourage other species especially in urban areas, for example by installing bat and bird boxes and including wildlife ponds along river corridors. Make use of wide river corridors to ‘rewild’ areas and consider introducing ecosystem

engineers where appropriate and space is available, combined with a clear communication, landowner engagement and management strategy before any action commences.

- Consider impact of engineering and construction projects or aggregate industry on abstraction/groundwater tables e.g. sump pumping to dewater areas.
- Create awareness of surface water-groundwater link and particularly vulnerable areas such as source protection zones and groundwater safeguard zones with key stakeholders including councils, landowners and local communities and highlight the information available on groundwater and best practice approaches.

- Use riparian corridors as wildlife corridors to encourage other species especially in urban areas, for example by installing bat and bird boxes and including wildlife ponds along river corridors. Make use of wide river corridors to 'rewild' areas and consider introducing ecosystem engineers where appropriate and space is available, combined with a clear communication, landowner engagement and management strategy before any action commences.

Priority FW4 – Additional supporting measures for buffered rivers and streams:

- For new developments, prevent encroachment of floodplains and river corridors, including physical modifications to the channel and sealing of surfaces in floodplains.

Priority FW5 – Additional supporting measures for buffered rivers:

- Support understanding of the importance of the headwater stream network by identifying headwater streams and associated drainage areas and mapping them clearly, including in local plans to safeguard them from modification.
- Reduce impact of abstraction and discharges on headwater streams.

Priority FW8 – Additional supporting measures for natural reedbeds:

- Focus for pond restoration should be directed to historic ponds currently overgrown which will deliver the best, proven ecological outcomes.
- Where appropriate, create ponds in new developments and schools to educate and engage the public about pond management and address perception of ponds as health and safety risk.
- Include ponds in site restoration plans for old quarry sites and similar industrial sites.
- Link to existing pond creation schemes such as Great Crested Newt Ponds.
- Provide resources for landowners and the general public on design principles for ponds.

Priority FW9 - Additional supporting measures for freshwater wetlands:

- Public and landowner engagement on the value of wet areas and the need to re-wet them.

Priority FW10 - Additional supporting measures for naturalised rivers and streams:

- Education about the value of reedbeds in water management and support the development of traditional reedbed management skills.

- Additional data and evidence measures for naturalised rivers and streams:

- Identify suitable project sites across the county for reedbed creation, including floodplains, industrial sites, quarries.

Priority URB1 – Additional supporting measures for addressing habitat fragmentation in the urban and built environment:

- Support the development of urban and per-urban agriculture.

- Where habitat connectivity measures are being established within urban areas, include opportunities to increase human connection with wildlife.
- Education and awareness raising on the importance of gardens and permeable gardens in supporting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement in urban areas.
- Education on the need for wild areas and increase understanding on why green areas may be left unmanaged/unmown.

- Additional data and evidence measures for addressing habitat fragmentation in the urban and built environment:

    - Identify and map existing barriers to wildlife movement in the county's major towns.

Priority URB2 – Additional supporting measures for supporting wildlife recovery in the urban environment:

- Development providing high quality green and blue infrastructure, trees and hedgerows with long term management in place that ensures the retention and maintenance of these wildlife benefiting features.
- Swift bricks, bat tiles, bird boxes and hedgehog highways installed as standard on all new development.
- In urban areas, and where appropriate to local setting and character, plant hedgerows in new developments instead of fences and walls.
- New developments working around the established green and blue infrastructure networks, not fragmenting existing corridors.
- New developments deliver accessible greenspace with rich and varied habitats that meet local biodiversity priorities.
- Green corridors are pleasant for people and wide enough for wildlife strips, use buffers on the sides of roads and safe passageways for wildlife in appropriate locations.
- Advice for developers, landscapers and public space managers/contractors on appropriate plant and tree species and management approaches that benefit wildlife.
- More support, advice and incentives for residents on the value of gardening for wildlife.

- New developments to reduce light pollution impacts on wildlife. Where possible, impacts of existing urban lighting schemes to also be addressed.
- Use of interpretation/public information to increase understanding of wildlife features and wild management.

Priority URB3 – Additional supporting measures for nature-based solutions in the urban environment:

- Education, guidance and advice around the use and benefit of nature-based solutions to communities and developers.
- Nature based solutions installed with long term management in place that ensures the retention and maintenance of the benefiting features.
- SUDS schemes to maximise biodiversity gains in their design.
- Install green roofs, walls and other features to new and existing public buildings where opportunities arise.
- Mapping of priority areas that have severe heat stress, in order to target the use of green infrastructure.
- Nature-based solutions installed with long term management in place that ensures the retention and maintenance of the benefiting features.
- Use of interpretation/public information to increase understanding of how nature is being used to deliver services and benefits.
- Education, guidance and advice around the use and benefit of nature-based solutions to communities and developers.

- Additional data and evidence measures for nature-based solutions in the urban environment:

- Identify and map priority areas that have severe heat stress, in order to target the use of green infrastructure.

Priority CL1 - Additional supporting measures for the open coast and estuaries:

- Establish a strategic management approach which recognises, minimises and mitigates the likely loss of one habitat over another as a result of managed realignment.
- Identify opportunities for retreating coastal defences and softening defences – seek areas outside of these already designated.

Priority CL7 - Additional supporting measures for vegetated shingle:

- Education and awareness raising of vegetated shingled site users and visitors of the habitats fragile nature and importance of using allocated routes.

Priority CL8 - Additional supporting measures for sand dunes:

- Restrictions on use of jet skis in sensitive areas.
- Map existing key and vulnerable sites and consider management such as fencing, increased buffers, and footpath rerouting.

- Additional data and evidence measures for traditional orchards:

- Identify and map key and vulnerable sites in order to better target preventative measures.