

## **Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is an LNRS?**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are ‘a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature’s recovery and provide wider environmental benefits’, as set out by Government in the Environment Act 2021. The strategy will outline a strategic approach to provide opportunity for the restoration of nature across all parts of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, both urban and rural. The LNRS aims to be a practical and flexible tool that guides and supports voluntary and coordinated actions for nature recovery across all sectors and communities. It will help us to identify the most important areas and actions for nature, and to monitor and celebrate our progress.

### **2. What area will the LNRS cover?**

Each Local Nature Recovery Strategy will cover an area broadly the size of a county. 48 strategies are being developed across England. Of these, one LNRS will cover Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

Once the strategies are published, they will join together to cover the whole country. This is the basis of the Nature Recovery Network (NRN), an England-wide network of wildlife-rich places. The aim is to expand, improve and connect these places across our cities, towns, countryside and coast.

### **3. Why do we need an LNRS?**

Nature is in crisis. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world and Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin reflects this with a decline and loss of species and habitats. This is due to a huge variety of contributing factors.

There are many people already taking positive action for nature recovery across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. When we work collaboratively, we can be more strategic and ambitious in our approach and be better connected in achieving the best results for nature recovery.

### **4. What will the LNRS achieve?**

The LNRS will enable a bigger, better and more connected approach to nature recovery in our county.

It will clarify the vision for nature’s recovery in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, highlight stakeholders’ environmental priorities and, in addition, identify ways and means of things you can do to reach Nature Recovery goals.

### **5. Who is in charge of developing the LNRS?**

Shropshire Council is the ‘responsible authority’ or RA and is in charge of developing the LNRS. Each RA is supported by supporting authorities or SAs. In our case, the SAs are Telford & Wrekin Council and Natural England.

The strategy development is being guided by a steering group consisting of members from:

- Shropshire Council (Responsible Authority)
- Telford & Wrekin Council (Supporting Authority)
- Natural England (Supporting Authority)
- Country Land & Business Association
- Environment Agency

- Forestry Commission
- National Farmers Union
- Shropshire Hills National Landscape
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust

## **6. Who is funding the preparation of LNRS?**

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is providing funding to support the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

## **7. How can I contribute my views?**

During the consultation process everyone in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin will have an opportunity to contribute their views. There will be a formal public consultation of the draft strategy, but before this there will be surveys and other consultation opportunities arranged. These will take the form of webinars, workshops, one to one meetings and surveys. Email [lnrs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lnrs@shropshire.gov.uk) to register your interest.

## **8. How will the Local Nature Recovery Strategy integrate across the borders with neighbouring LNRSs?**

The LNRS team is collaborating with partners in neighbouring counties to ensure an effective integration of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy across these county borders. This collaboration aims to align strategies, particularly in terms of mapping, to create a harmonious interface at the border, ensuring cohesive efforts for nature recovery.

## **9. What does it mean for land identified in the LNRS?**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies will identify areas that are currently designated for nature conservation (such as nature reserves) and irreplaceable habitats as 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity'. They will also identify areas to focus funding and efforts going forwards to achieve our agreed priorities for nature as 'areas that could become of particular importance'. These areas will all be depicted on the LNRS map, known as the 'local habitat map.'

'Areas of particular importance for biodiversity' will map where the best opportunities to expand, recover or join up nature are. Areas that could become of particular importance will be identified through the LNRS process using a range of inputs, including feedback from stakeholder engagement.

These areas will indicate where action should be focused to make the greatest impact and will help inform decisions on land management. It is important to note that the LNRS does not give any level of protection; prevent alternative uses of the land; nor does it give permission to create habitat or alter land use without consulting relevant specialists, statutory consultees, or obtaining appropriate permissions. The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS won't dictate actions on land – as per section 4 of the statutory guidance.

Landowners, managers and farmers know their land better than anyone. They are vital stakeholders as they own or manage much of the land in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin where opportunities for nature's recovery will be found.

The LNRS priorities and actions to guide nature's recovery need to be informed and supported by local people. We will be reaching out to local landowners, land managers and farmers in lots of different ways to find out what opportunities they see on their land, and what they may have done already or are considering.

The key is to have dialogue now and for you to look and assess the impact of being involved or not involved. We are here to work with you and discuss your ideas for moving forward in the best ways possible for your aspirations for nature recovery on your land.

#### **10. Why Farmers and Landowners should be involved?**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will help direct future nature recovery effort and funding. The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS will assist in highlighting nature recovery opportunities for you and your land with enhanced access to funding and signposting opportunities.

Biodiversity Net Gain will direct funding into areas that will deliver the greatest benefits to nature, using the opportunity mapping within the LNRS. The strategic significance multiplier within the biodiversity metric, favours land that is part of the mapped LNRS opportunities.

These strategies also open up conversations for enabling business diversification and developing climate change resilience.

The LNRS aims to incentivise nature friendly activities across the county landscape and is a local strategy for local people, coordinating financial investment into spaces for nature. Bigger, better and connected delivery ensures the very best results for one and all.

#### **11. How do I, as a farmer or landowner, feature in this process and how can I contribute my views?**

Farmers and Landowners are our key partners for delivery of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) – you know your land better than anyone and we recognise the priorities and outcomes need to be realistic and achievable.

High level LNRS evidence is being prepared for workshops including consultation maps and we plan to seek ongoing engagement with all landowners and farmers about opportunities for nature recovery and how they might be delivered.

We believe that an important part of the strategy is to highlight the good work you already do and we welcome input from you in this regard too.

We are not looking to dictate activity when something else could be more favourable all round i.e. grassland rather than woodland. Each individual and individual landowner or farmer has different opportunities and different goals where they can achieve biodiversity in different ways. Let's work together. The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS is not a restrictor or a constraint – it is to be an enabler and an opportunity for nature recovery.

#### **12. Do I have to participate in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?**

No, participation in the LNRS is voluntary. Government and the councils are keen that as many stakeholders as possible get involved so that the final documents reflect local views and priorities.

However, built into the process is the principle that all landowners have the ability to identify whether they want their land to appear on the final maps (or not).

You can be involved from the beginning if you would like to participate, but even if you can't – there will be a consultation on the final document at which point you can let us know whether you are happy for your land to be included.

We want to work with you on opportunity areas and discuss how we can achieve the best results together. The LNRS will help direct future effort and funding and we are also hoping to assist with signposting and updates to funding as the strategy is adopted moving forward. To talk to us about your land and opportunity areas then please contact the team at [lnrs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lnrs@shropshire.gov.uk) and we'll be back in touch.

It is worth noting that BNG will be worth more due to the Biodiversity metric's strategic significance multiplier. Delivery in locations proposed by the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS will be incentivised by the biodiversity metric.

### **13. Will anyone want to access my land for mapping/scoping?**

No, high level LNRS maps are being created as part of the process which will use existing ecological and land management evidence.

These will help show where local or nationally important habitats and species are/were, and where there might be opportunities to maintain, improve or create these habitats and species for biodiversity or for wider environmental benefits such as flood management, cleaner water or carbon sequestration.

We do not anticipate that detailed mapping of your land will be needed but your views are key to help ground truth the evidence that we'll have.

If you have information about your land that you think would be useful for us to know, please do email us at [LNRS@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:LNRS@shropshire.gov.uk)

### **14. Funding for LNRS activities**

The LNRS is expected to guide and focus a range of public and private funding mechanisms to deliver nature recovery in a coherent and thought-out way. While many organisations and individuals may be interested in increasing nature on their landholdings for a whole range of reasons, ultimately it will be necessary for nature positive land management changes to be a viable alternative for businesses that will actually generate sufficient return.

The government currently provides funding for a wide range of nature recovery activities to incentivise landowners and managers to make changes to how they use and manage their land for greater environmental benefit.

As LNRSs come online across England, the government is exploring how to align funding initiatives and the strategies. The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS will become a resource to signpost opportunities when bidding for funding, where most likely to succeed and how best to move forward with nature recovery on your land.

Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes will pay farmers and land managers for undertaking environmentally beneficial activities on their land.

The Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin LNRS will enable farmers and land managers to better understand and determine if there are actions that they could undertake that would have particular benefit in their areas on their land. The strategy will enable land managers to work better together across areas and join-up actions to help improve connectivity. They will be a useful resource for land managers to draw on to inform applications for funding, particularly those looking to undertake more spatially targeted action, including Landscape Recovery projects.

In terms of green finance, LNRS will support the development of ecosystem markets by identifying and prioritising actions for nature recovery and wider environmental benefits in an area. This will

help target the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain, as well as the development of other investable projects.

#### **15. Where can people go for advice on how to progress nature recovery on their land?**

The LNRS team and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy primarily offer strategic guidance for Nature Recovery across the county. If you require more specific advice, please email [lnrs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lnrs@shropshire.gov.uk) and we will do our best to signpost and / or provide guidance. Moreover, numerous environmental organisations within the county of Shropshire can provide specialised guidance on nature recovery efforts and initiatives.

#### **16. How will the LNRS impact on local planning?**

Under the Environment Act, local planning authorities now have a strengthened biodiversity duty. This means that as part of their statutory role, they must now consider how they can both conserve and enhance biodiversity. LNRSs have been designed with local area planning in mind (for example, they align with local planning authority boundaries).

In addition to the enhanced Biodiversity Duty, The Environment Act specifically states that public bodies, such as local planning authorities, have to 'take account of' LNRSs in their decision-making.

LNRSs have been designed from the outset with the planning system in mind. They will support development plans and provide closer alignment with the planning system. They will enable better environmental outcomes and improve long-term development planning.

Given the above, LNRS will have a direct influence on local plans by providing evidence of areas across the district of importance for biodiversity and for investment in nature or nature-based solutions to problems such as flood risk, water quality, access to nature and so on. They will thus be used to inform how a local plan interprets existing policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires them to protect and enhance biodiversity.

#### **17. Link between LNRS and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

There is a clear link between LNRS and BNG. [BNG is a planning policy that requires development to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place. From February 2024 there has been a legal requirement that most developments will need to deliver a minimum 10% BNG, if not onsite then offsite.] The idea behind BNG is that the environment does not suffer as a result of development, and that there will be more, higher-quality places for wildlife to thrive and for people to enjoy. The LNRS will show where opportunities for nature's recovery will have most benefit and so will help to direct BNG funding.

Land in the LNRS priority area will generate 15% more biodiversity, as measured by the Defra metric, than the same area of land outside of LNRS priority area. This financial incentive has been designed to help attract funds to priority areas in the county.

LNRSs can support a strategic approach to off-site BNG delivery, agreeing evidence-based locations to expand and connect existing habitat and provide wider environmental benefits. This will support BNG in creating locally driven, joined-up outcomes for nature.

#### **18. I'm already involved in a nature recovery initiative or scheme. Does the LNRS replace those?**

No. There are lots of great nature recovery initiatives already active in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, including the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme, Stepping Stones project, farmer

clusters, catchment partnerships and Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme to name just a few, and we do not want to stall, stop or hamper their progress.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy may want to incorporate what is being done or is being considered in these other initiatives or schemes, and may even look for ways to expand them or connect them to others.

At the same time, not all local initiatives may end up being reflected in the, as this depends on what priorities are identified and agreed through the LNRS process.

### **19. How will the LNRS regard previous environmental strategies and how will it differ from them?**

This is the first time there has been a coordinated requirement across the country to produce a strategy for nature and wider environmental benefits, including a requirement for extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation prior to its agreement. As such, the LNRS will provide a collaboratively agreed way forward to restore and enhance nature, while taking into account nature's other benefits and what is valued by those who live and work in the area.

The LNRS will build on the many initiatives that have come before and the knowledge and expertise of many of those involved in them, but it does have some differences. Every part of the country will have an LNRS, so it will introduce some consistency of approach with regards to nature recovery. While biodiversity-led, the LNRS will also consider other environmental benefits (such as regulating flood risk and climate change), and wider benefits (such as health and wellbeing). In addition, the LNRS will be a highly collaborative product, with input from a wide range of people and organisations.

The LNRSs will also link into other policy areas such as Environment Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in signposting where the greatest opportunities are for nature and so where the focus of funding might be best placed.

### **20. How will species be considered within the LNRS?**

The statutory guidance states that the LNRS must 'identify the existing or potential species (or groups of species) in the area that the strategy could make a particular contribution to enhancing or recovering.' There is a Species Task and Finish Group supporting the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS that is following the Defra guidance and working to produce a priority list of species for the LNRS.

### **21. How does the LNRS work for tenants?**

Many tenant farmers, like landowners, are already doing a lot for nature in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. Those who work the land also have the best understanding about what opportunities exist to improve, maintain or create habitats and support key species in their vicinity. Because of this we're really keen to hear from land managers and tenants as well as landowners as part of the LNRS process.

Taking action for nature can be difficult for tenants due to the contractual nature of their tenancy agreements. However, this is being recognised by government. In May 2023, Government made a

commitment to ensure tenants are at the heart of plans to improve the rural economy. Recent changes to SFI include enabling tenants to apply without landlord consent and to sign up to shorter, three-year agreements which can be ended without penalty.

We want tenants to be part of the LNRS process and to help identify how they can play a role. This is the first iteration of LNRS so we will learn as we go about the experience for tenants; it may be the case that future iterations of the LNRS will provide even more opportunity for tenants to get involved.

## LINKS

LNRS Statutory Regulations: [The Environment \(Local Nature Recovery Strategies\) \(Procedure\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

LNRS Guidance: [Local nature recovery strategy statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

LNRS Pages on the Shropshire Council's website: [Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy | Shropshire Council](#)

Government pages on Environmental Land Management Scheme [Environmental Land Management \(ELM\) update: how government will pay for land-based environment and climate goods and services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Government pages on BNG: [Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)