



Nature Recovery Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Consultation draft, July 2025

Appendix 1: Legislation and policy

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The development of the Local National Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a result of a framework of international treaties, national legislation and national and local policy.

30 by 30 biodiversity target

In 2022, the UK Government committed to the global biodiversity target of protecting and conserving 30% of land and sea for biodiversity by 2030. Known as '30 by 30', this ambitious target was agreed at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and forms part of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Scientists agree that protecting at least 30% of land, fresh water and ocean in this way, within this short timescale, is necessary if we are to address the biodiversity crisis and the threat of climate change.

In England, 30 by 30 will initially be delivered through existing designated sites and networks, including Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and areas of managed broadleaved and mixed woodland, which qualify as Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs). OECMs are voluntary areas, which must primarily be managed and protected

for the long term for biodiversity, as laid out in criteria set by the UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra).

The 30 by 30 target will be a key driver in reversing the decline of nature in the UK, by expanding and improving our protected areas and creating new areas for wildlife, allowing nature to spill over into the wider landscape. Achieving 30 by 30 is very important if we are to achieve the ambitions of the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#), particularly reversing species decline by 2030, creating and restoring large areas of new habitat and ensuring people have access to green space.

Criteria to determine what is counted in 30 by 30:

1. **Purpose:** 30 by 30 areas should be able to demonstrate that their purposes or management objectives will ensure the delivery of in-situ conservation outcomes.
2. **Protection:** 30 by 30 areas should be able to demonstrate that in-situ conservation will be sustained over the long term (at least 20 years) and that the area will be

protected against loss or damage to important biodiversity values, through legal or other effective means. This includes protected area designations, conservation covenants, long-term ownership and relevant long-term management obligations.

3. **Management:** 30 by 30 areas should be effectively managed and able to demonstrate overall progress towards in-situ conservation outcomes. Management should provide confidence that governance or ownership of the area has the mandate and capacity to achieve and sustain such outcomes.

Local nature recovery strategies are an integral part of achieving 30 by 30, but go further by mapping a greater area of opportunity. Regarding 30 by 30, there are important conversations to be had around appropriate management for conservation and how this aspiration fits alongside the clear need to maintain food production whilst enabling local farming and land management businesses to flourish.



The Environment Act 2021

The [Environment Act 2021](#) sets out the requirements for local nature recovery strategies and the process by which responsible authorities are appointed and strategies produced.

Statutory guidance provides further detail relating to the content of the LNRS and the process by which it is to be prepared, agreed and adopted. Requirements for engaging with local people, stakeholders and supporting authorities are clear, and a review will take place every 3 to 10 years as determined by the Secretary of State.

The Environment Act 2021 also introduces mandatory requirements for new developments to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and places a new, enhanced Biodiversity Duty on local authorities. The biodiversity duty is a pivotal mechanism for embedding nature recovery into the heart of local governance. Under Section 102 of the Environment Act (2021), all public authorities in England, including local authorities and town and parish councils must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Agree policies and specific objectives
- Act to deliver those objectives
- Review their actions at least every five years

This duty builds on the earlier Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 but significantly strengthens it by making biodiversity a statutory consideration in all public functions. Local authorities must now “have regard to” LNRSs and report on actions taken. This is not just about compliance, it’s a lever for embedding biodiversity into planning, procurement, land management, and service delivery. For example, biodiversity considerations can influence housing design, flood resilience, green infrastructure, and even public health initiatives.

Farming policy since the Second World War

Over 80% of land in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin is farmed, meaning farming policy has a significant influence on the county’s rural landscape. A business is incentivised by, and is at times required to comply with, aspects of government policy. Until recently, policies and rural payments encouraged more intensive farming systems with a focus on producing as much food as possible in response to food security concerns after the Second World War. More recently, Government policy has shifted, and payments are now being made to landowners for carrying out land management actions that benefit nature and wider society. From

a nature perspective this change is welcome. However, for these policies to deliver for nature, farmers and land managers need a period of sustained stability in order to have confidence in the new system and to adapt their businesses accordingly.

Key farming policies in recent decades:

1947: The Agriculture Act is introduced with the aim of increasing domestic production and encouraging more people into farming by securing farmer incomes through guaranteed produce prices. Importantly from a nature perspective, the Act financially rewarded landowners for removing their hedgerows.

1973: From 1973, the UK support system that had been established under the 1947 Agriculture Act, is subsumed into the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), introduced in the European Union in 1962. The CAP aimed to increase agricultural productivity, ensure a fair standard of living for farmers, stabilise markets, ensure the availability of supplies, and ensure reasonable prices for consumers. For most of its existence, the CAP provided income support to farmers by supporting the prices they were paid for produce.



1984: Farms are so productive that they are growing more food than is needed. The policy is widely criticised for encouraging overproduction, leading to 'wine lakes' and 'butter mountains' – produce that was then often dumped in third markets, with adverse impacts on local agriculture.

1992: The CAP shifts from market support to producer support. Price support is scaled down and replaced with direct payments to farmers. Farmers are encouraged to be more environmentally friendly.

2003: A major CAP reform cuts the link between subsidies and production. Farmers now receive an income support, on the condition that they look after the farmland and fulfil food safety, environmental, animal health and welfare standards.

2014: The CAP is reformed to strengthen the competitiveness of the sector, promote sustainable farming and innovation, support jobs and growth in rural areas, and to move financial assistance towards the productive use of land.

2021: Following the UK's exit from the European Union ('Brexit'), the UK Government introduces the new Agriculture Act 2020 to set up a domestic framework based on a payment system of 'public money for public goods' in England.

The Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme (Sustainable Farming Incentive, Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Landscape Recovery) is introduced in late 2021 to replace the CAP. The ELM aims to improve the environment by paying farmers for specific environmental benefits, rather than on the basis of amount of land farmed.

2021–2027: The transition to the new system is taking place over a number of years.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

The [25 Year Environment Plan \(2018\)](#) sets out UK Government ambitions around nature recovery networks and the development of a new strategy for nature in England. It was mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It establishes the principles of the 2010 Making Space for Nature review (the 'Lawton Report') as the basis for nature recovery. It also sets out the process by which LNRS were piloted in certain areas of England and details how the pilots informed the national approach.

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23) is the first statutory revision of the UK's 25 Year Environment Plan and primarily applies to England, as environmental policy is devolved. It sets out a five-year delivery roadmap to restore nature, improve environmental quality, and support sustainable prosperity.

The plan is structured around 10 interdependent goals, with "Thriving plants and wildlife" as the apex goal. EIP23 contains legally binding targets and includes the rollout of local nature recovery strategies and biodiversity net gain to guide habitat creation and restoration.

There is some funding to support these commitments, for example over £750 million is being channelled into tree planting and peatland restoration through the Nature for Climate Fund.



National planning policy

There is a requirement in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) for local plans to protect and enhance biodiversity. Local nature recovery strategies should be used by plan-makers to inform the way they address this NPPF requirement. The key aspects are as follow:

Paragraph 159. The improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules [which refer to housing on land currently designated as greenbelt] should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

Paragraph 192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider

ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity [68]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation [69]; and

- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

...

[68] Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

[69] Where areas that are part of the Nature Recovery Network are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them.

Local planning policy

The Government expects that local planning policy, including new local plans, will take into account local nature recovery strategies going forward. There is a duty upon all local authorities to have regard to the LNRS, and it is expected that this would include measures of protection for the areas identified as having the highest potential for nature recovery. The current adopted local plans for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin do not refer directly to LNRS in policy, but future iterations will be required to do so.



Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Nature Recovery and the Nature Restoration Fund)

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which was introduced to Parliament in March 2025, aims to “speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure”. The intention is to introduce a ‘Nature Restoration Fund,’ which will be new way for developers to discharge environmental obligations. The fund would provide developers with an option to pay into a centralised ‘fund’ to relieve them of certain obligations relating to protected species and protected sites. Mitigating action would then be taken by Government.

The Land Use Framework

From 30 January 2025 to 25 April 2025, the UK Government ran a consultation on land use, to inform the development of the Land Use Framework. The framework will be a key element of how national and local policy, 30 by 30, LNRS, BNG and aspirations around food production and renewable energy are integrated, prioritised and controlled. The intention is to have in place a strategic plan for land use that is overseen nationally and would set out principals by which government would manage principles the competing demands upon land in England.

