Nature Recovery Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LNRS and planning – June 2026

1. What the LNRS is – and what it is not

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a statutory, spatial evidence base prepared under the Environment Act 2021. It sets out agreed priorities for nature recovery and identifies where action will deliver the greatest benefit through mapped opportunity areas.

The LNRS:

- Provides strategic direction, not site-specific allocations
- Does not designate land, prevent development, or require landowners to act
- Identifies opportunities and priorities to guide planning, investment and delivery
- It covers the whole county of Shropshire including Telford & Wrekin
- Shropshire Council have to develop the plan but will need to work with partners across the county to deliver this. Much of the action will be taken on private land by interested landowners.
- Under the Biodiversity Duty, Shropshire Council, all town and parish councils, and all public bodies e.g. MOD and NHS ,must take action to enhance biodiversity wherever possible – similar policy to the Health in All policy.

2. Why the LNRS matters in planning

The LNRS has a statutory role across plan-making and decision-making. Local planning authorities must take account of the LNRS when preparing plans and determining applications. The LNRS provides a spatial and evidence-led framework that directly supports the NPPF's requirements for healthy communities, sustainable transport, climate adaptation and nature-based solutions, and should be used to inform site allocation, policy development and development management decisions.

For planners, the LNRS:

- Helps steer impacts away from areas of highest existing value
- Identifies where biodiversity enhancement will be most effective
- Provides a shared evidence base aligned with the Nature Recovery Network
- Supports delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and the biodiversity duty

3. Key components of LNRS

A. Priorities

Priorities describe the outcomes we want to achieve for nature (the "what"). They should be treated as the high-level goals against which plans, policies and proposals are tested.

B. Actions

Potential actions describe what could be done to deliver those priorities (the "how"). They are practical and achievable, but not mandatory. Some actions are mapped (included on the map) while others that are less linked to local conditions e.g. hedgerows or integrating nature recovery within new developments, are not mapped.

The priorities and all the actions are in the strategy document (will be updated with final version as soon as publication has been authorised).

C. Local Habitat Map

The map (the "where") shows:

- **Zone 1 – Existing Nature Network (Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity):** (e.g. designated sites, local wildlife sites, irreplaceable habitats) – similar to core SEN. Planning implications:
    - Likely constraints / strong requirement to avoid harm.
    - Supports refusal or redesign where impacts cannot be mitigated.
- **Zone 2 – Opportunity Network (Areas that Could Become of particular Importance).** Draws on lots of data. Being included in the map does not necessarily mean that there is good wildlife habitat there now, but instead that there is an opportunity to make this better for wildlife and enable wildlife to move through the county – similar to corridor and stepping stones in SEN. These mapped areas are opportunity areas, not new constraints. These areas identify where nature recovery actions could deliver the greatest benefits. Planning implications:
    - Strong steer for nature-positive design.
    - Supports use of SUDS, green/blue infrastructure, buffers, habitat creation and riparian enhancement.
    - Provides developers with clarity on how to achieve positive outcomes.
    - Locations where potential actions are prioritised

The map and the mapped actions are on the local habitat map

4. Using the LNRS in plan-making

Biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development (NPPF – overarching requirement).

National policy is explicit that biodiversity protection and enhancement is integral to achieving sustainable development. The local plan must demonstrate how biodiversity considerations have influenced the where and how development happens, as well as control impacts at application stage. It is expected that policies go beyond protection towards strategic enhancement.

- **Aligning with the NPPF requirement to map & safeguard ecological networks**

The NPPF requires plans to:

- Map and safeguard components of ecological networks and areas identified by partnerships for habitat creation/restoration.
- Pursue opportunities for measurable net gains.

LNRS maps directly supply this evidence. Safeguarding does not imply prohibition of development but ensuring opportunities for nature recovery are not unnecessarily compromised e.g. policies to safeguard network functionality (connectivity, buffering, expansion).

- **Using LNRS in site allocations**

Government guidance says that public authorities must use LNRS maps and priorities to inform site allocations and planning decisions. Embedding LNRS "areas of particular importance for biodiversity" directly into site assessment processes can strengthen the Local Plan's ability to:

- Steer allocations away from high-value ecological areas
- Guide masterplanning to integrate multifunctional green/blue infrastructure
- Ensure future allocations include space for nature recovery corridors

NPPF paragraph 159:

- Where land has been identified in an LNRS as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery, development proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

- This is a critical link: the NPPF itself requires development to support LNRS outcomes where relevant

- **Delivery of LNRS via Green and Blue Infrastructure**

With strong policies, their meaningful implementation and early consideration, green and blue infrastructure is where there is massive delivery potential for the LNRS through the development process. It is essential infrastructure for healthy and resilient communities.
The LNRS helps identify where habitats, green spaces, waterways and sustainable drainage systems can be better linked to support wildlife, manage flood risk, improve water quality and provide health and climate benefits for people. (More detail in section 8).

5. Using the LNRS in development management

The LNRS is a material consideration, particularly where an adopted local plan pre-dates the LNRS. The weight given depends on the circumstances of each case.
The LNRS can support development management officers by:

A. Identifying constraints and opportunities

LNRS maps help:

- Flag sensitive ecological networks early.
- Show where development could integrate nature recovery rather than undermine it.

Even outside mapped focus areas, LNRS unmapped actions in LNRS strategy document (e.g. Integrate nature recovery within new developments and hedgerows) can help inform proportionate nature-positive design.

B. Strengthening design expectations

Existing planning policy already requires habitat connectivity, SUDS, GI, low-light areas etc. LNRS gives a locally specific spatial rationale for requiring these in planning conditions, design codes, and negotiations.

C. Providing evidence for appeal or committee reports

Development management officers can reference LNRS as:

- Part of the evidence base demonstrating why a development should avoid, reduce or compensate impacts.
- Justification for locating BNG measures in specific strategic locations.

6. Supporting Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery

The LNRS plays a formal role in BNG by determining the "strategic significance" multiplier in the biodiversity metric. Only LNRS-identified potential actions, delivered in the mapped locations, are eligible for the BNG strategic significance multiplier (for further information on strategic significance please see the Strategic Significance guidance on the LNRS website). This makes the LNRS a practical tool to steer BNG into the best places:

- Creating habitat in LNRS priority areas can qualify for a 15% uplift in biodiversity units.
- LNRS spatial priorities help identify where off-site or strategic BNG units should be delivered.
- Helps direct BNG investment to where it delivers maximum ecological benefit
- Provides clarity for developers early in scheme design
- Supports consistent and defensible decision-making

7. Developer engagement & pre-application advice

The LNRS provides developers with:

- A clear framework for designing nature-positive sites (including unmapped actions)
- Early visibility of constraints & opportunities

Improving pre-app discussions, masterplan design quality and compliance with both the biodiversity duty and BNG requirements.

8. Integrating health, active travel and climate resilience into planning via the LNRS

While LNRS is an ecological strategy, its priorities directly align with NPPF requirements to promote healthy communities, climate adaptation and multifunctional green infrastructure.

A. Health, wellbeing and liveable neighbourhoods

LNRS opportunity areas can coincide with locations where development can deliver significant health and wellbeing benefits. Embedding LNRS priorities within plan-making and development management helps ensure that new development:

- Improves access to high-quality green and blue spaces, supporting physical and mental wellbeing
- Reduces exposure to air pollution, noise and excessive heat through urban greening and tree cover
- Contributes to healthier neighbourhood design in line with Local Plan policies on walkability and green space provision

B. Active travel and Green Infrastructure networks

LNRS mapping helps identify where green infrastructure can also function as active travel infrastructure. This includes river corridors, woodland edges and existing linear features that are well suited to walking and cycling routes.

Using LNRS evidence at the design stage supports planning policies that require development to:

- Deliver connected green routes linking new development with existing settlements and services
- Integrate walking and cycling routes with green infrastructure and SUDS features
- Create safe, attractive and traffic-free routes that encourage everyday active travel

This approach reinforces Local Plan objectives for sustainable transport, well-designed places and reduced car dependency, while maximising the multifunctional value of green infrastructure.

C. Social value and community health

Nature-rich environments contribute to wider social benefits, including improved mental health, reduced stress and stronger community cohesion. Targeting green infrastructure delivery in areas of deprivation can help address health inequalities, supporting Local Plan priorities around inclusive growth and social wellbeing.

Designing LNRS priorities into new development also encourages community cohesion, stewardship and local identity, strengthening long-term management and public engagement with green spaces.

D. LNRS as a tool for climate resilient planning

Climate resilience is a key justification for embedding LNRS evidence within Local Plan policies and SPDs. LNRS provides a spatial framework for delivering nature-based solutions that respond to the impacts of climate change.

- **Flood risk management**

LNRS identifies opportunities for riparian habitat creation, floodplain reconnection, wetlands and wet grassland restoration. These measures can be used to support planning policies and conditions that require development to incorporate natural flood management, reducing downstream flood risk and increasing landscape resilience.

- **Drought and water resilience**

Shropshire landscapes are already experiencing drought–flood cycles. LNRS priorities for soil moisture retention, agroforestry and catchment-scale interventions provide a clear evidence base for planning policies that seek to improve water resilience and safeguard long-term environmental capacity.

- **Heat resilience and urban cooling**

Urban and fringes areas identified in the LNRS provide a focus for strengthening green infrastructure to reduce heat stress, particularly in denser settlements such as Shrewsbury and market towns. Urban tree cover can reduce local temperatures by up to 5°C, which is increasingly important given climate projections indicating that summer temperatures could exceed 40°C by 2050. Tree planting and urban greening also support shaded walking and cycling routes, maintaining active travel in warmer conditions.

- **Wider nature-based solutions in development**

LNRS mapping supports the delivery of nature-based solutions through planning, including:

- SUDS features that function as wildlife habitats
- Woodland and hedgerow networks that slow overland flow
- Upland and catchment restoration that builds long-term resilience

This provides a defensible basis for Local Plan and SPD policies requiring strong green infrastructure provision, integrated SUDS and climate-responsive site layouts.

Notes on the Strategy's mapping and its limitations

Before using the Strategy mapping it is important to note the following:

- Mapping indicates areas where the potential actions could be delivered. In all cases, the mapped areas are indicative. The strategic nature of this document means that some actions 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 LNRS does not preclude that action from any necessary permissions, site assessments and other prerequisites before it is implemented.
- 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 April 2026 and show only one designation (e.g. where a site is a Local Wildlife Site and a National Nature Reserve, only one would be shown on the map). 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 Shropshire Local Wildlife Sites.
- 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 in the Opportunity network (Area that Could Become Important for 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.