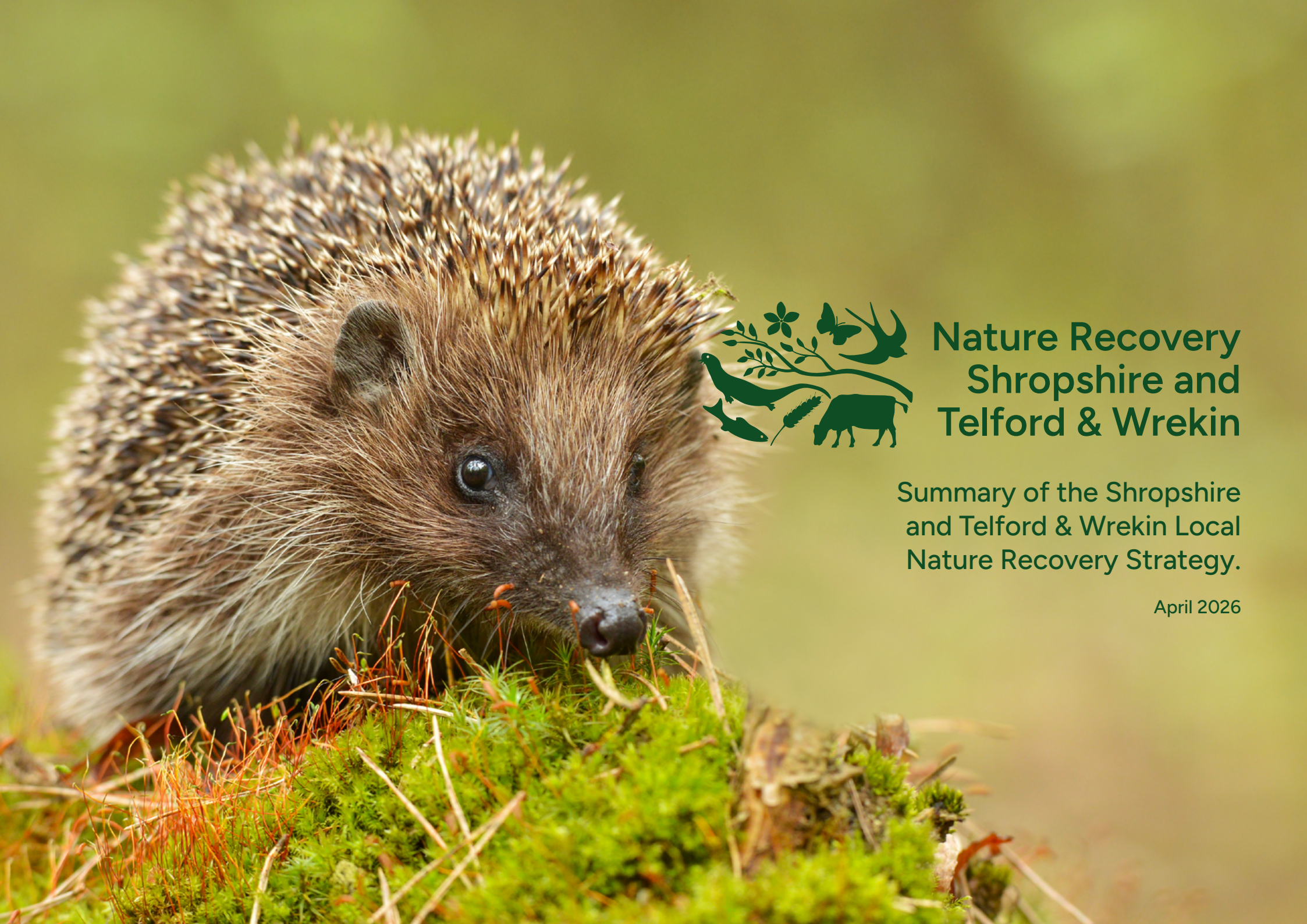


# Nature Recovery Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

## Summary of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

April 2026

# Summary of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy

This document summarises the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which aims to restore and enhance biodiversity across the county by driving better coordinated, more practical and focused action and investment. You can read the strategy in full and explore the interactive map, case studies and appendices online at: https://shropshire.gov.uk/lnrs

Explore the LNRS map online

Discover the full LNRS here

# Why we need a strategy for nature recovery

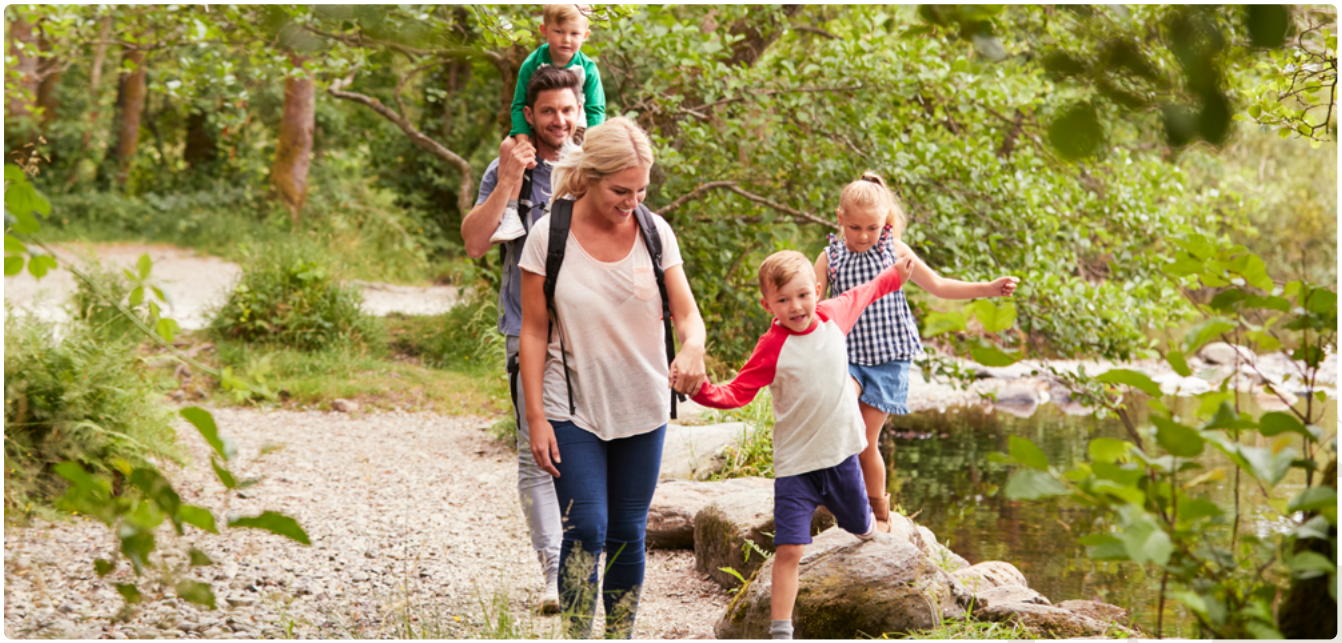
**Nature has intrinsic worth that goes far beyond its usefulness to humans. But it also provides us with the things we need to survive – clean air, water and food – as well as a whole host of other direct and indirect benefits, like flood management, crop pollination, shade for livestock, cooling in urban areas and carbon storage.**

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin has a rich and varied landscape made up of natural and historical features including ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, over 6400 km of rivers and more than 14,000 km of hedgerows. The county is home to rare and important species like Pine Marten, Curlew, Pearl Water Mussel, Nobel Chafer and Twaite Shad, and has many special areas that are protected under national and international designations – including the Midland Meres and Mosses Ramsar site, the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and 111 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

But as in the rest of the UK and around the world, nature in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin is under pressure. Habitats are increasingly fragmented and depleted, species are in decline and under threat, and the natural systems that we rely on are becoming less biodiverse (and less resilient as a result). In our 2024 survey, **78% of people told us they were concerned about the current and/or future state of nature in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.**

A major cause of species decline is habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. This is often due to land use changes – for example, urbanisation, the shift to more intensive agricultural systems and, to some degree, afforestation. But climate change and other threats, like pollution and disease, also affect biodiversity.

The continuing rise in global temperature is disrupting the timing of natural events, like hibernation and egg laying, and causing more frequent and more extreme weather events such as flooding and drought – both of which are problems in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.



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Changing temperatures, weather patterns and pollution are creating habitat conditions that are detrimental to certain species (such as nutrient-sensitive lichens) and favour others – including pathogens, pests and invasive non-native species, which further threaten local nature. In Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin, Grey Squirrel, deer, American Mink, American Signal Crayfish and Himalayan Balsam are particular problems for local species and habitats. And, like the rest of the UK, the county is also affected by avian flu as well as ash dieback, acute oak decline and other tree and woodland diseases.

**Nature recovery delivers wide-ranging and interlinked ecological, economic and health and wellbeing benefits.** For example, providing green space in urban areas helps to lower temperatures in towns and cities, increases the value of nearby houses and flats,[1] delivers cleaner air and other proven physical and mental health benefits,[2,3] and provides wildlife with an important stepping stone between habitats, helping to slow or even halt species decline.

**Local nature recovery strategies establish and map priorities for action in places where efforts will make the most difference.** They focus on the areas between existing pockets of good nature to create habitats that are larger, more numerous, better connected and more resilient and diverse.[4] and must reflect local priorities while also contributing to national environmental targets (such as '30 by 30').

Nature recovery works hand-in-hand with historic features to deliver public benefits, protect heritage assets and create resilient landscapes. Understanding historical land use ensures habitat restoration is appropriate while safeguarding cultural assets for future generations. Many historic landscapes are valuable habitats and link people with both nature and cultural heritage.

We need to take urgent action to help nature recover, and everyone can do something. **Local people and communities are at the heart of successful nature recovery.** They know the land best, they are long-term stewards, and they care. The LNRS offers options and guidance to help nature recovery efforts be as effective as possible

Taking coordinated and strategic action for biodiversity is not a new concept in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. By using evidence to identify the best options for nature recovery in particular locations, the LNRS aims to be a tool for people, organisations and communities to build on past projects, focus ongoing efforts and drive action across the county.

## Box 1: What is the LNRS?

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin is one of 48 statutory LNRSs that together cover all of England. It is made up of:

- a written strategy document
- a spatial map showing priority areas for nature recovery


Explore the LNRS map online

Discover the full LNRS here

# Opportunities for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

## Local priorities and opportunity areas

**The LNRS maps out priorities and suggested actions for recovering or enhancing biodiversity in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, both in terms of habitats and species. It is accompanied by a map, which shows the county's Existing Nature Network and the Opportunity Network – areas where action for nature could make a significant difference.**

The LNRS for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin identifies 16 priorities and 51 actions for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, as well as important species and species assemblages (see tables). Some actions are mapped to specific locations while other actions are not mapped as they are applicable more broadly and would deliver benefits wherever implemented.

Actions on the LNRS map are those that are the most appropriate according to the information we have from both data and landowner feedback. Neither mapped nor unmapped actions are mandatory, nor is action restricted to the marked LNRS opportunity areas; landowners or managers can choose to undertake identified actions if and as they wish. Here, we highlight the key opportunities.

## Key opportunities

### Farmers, farming and managed land

Farmers, landowners and land managers are essential to any nature recovery effort, but they are especially important stakeholders in the LNRS for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin given that 84% of the county's total land area is farmed land.[5]

Over the past century, farmers have had to adapt to shifting government policies, as well as changing climates and seasonal patterns. They have a track record of innovation and are already working with nature in mind. This strategy aims to support and build on these efforts.

Many of the opportunities for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are opportunities for farmers and farmed land. Approaches that support nature recovery can also help farm businesses. For example, reducing inputs like pesticides and wormers can bring down costs; planting and restoring hedgerows can benefit livestock; and creating ponds builds resilience as droughts become more regular. Other opportunities include wetter farming, which is being trialled on peatlands in North Shropshire, and agroforestry, for which there are numerous options within the Environmental Land Management Scheme.

**The LNRS is non-regulatory, meaning that it:**

- Does not mandate land use change.
- Does not impose restrictions on development.
- Does not designate new protected areas.
- Does not exclude action outside of mapped priorities.

**Explore the LNRS map online** **Discover the full LNRS here**

## Safeguarding insects

Arguably, the biggest impact that we can have is to reduce the pesticides in the environment and safeguard insects as a food source.

Pesticides don't just affect the weeds and pests they target; they also lead to the decline of invertebrates, meaning less food for insect-eating birds and mammals and disruption to essential pollination services. During times of high rainfall or flooding, pesticides can contaminate local water sources through run-off from fields, lawns and other land, too.

Many farms are already reducing their use of pesticides and herbicides by using an integrated pest management approach. When used strategically, in rotation and on a whole-farm basis, environmental options (like cover crops and faecal monitoring) reduce the need for inputs (and associated costs), boost biodiversity, enhance soil structure and water attenuation, mitigate flooding and muddy run-off, and improve the quality of food produced.

Organic farming practices go even further by eliminating synthetic pesticides altogether, relying on natural soil health and ecological balance to achieve similar benefits while supporting wildlife and pollinators.

## Connecting the landscape

The break-up of habitat has a significant impact on species and makes nature recovery efforts more difficult. But there are practical ways in which we can reconnect the landscape. Hedgerows – both new and existing – offer excellent opportunities for nature recovery. Already a quintessential feature of the Shropshire countryside, networks of tall and wide hedgerows provide important habitat and links between ecosystems.

Established hedgerows can be managed to benefit nature (e.g. through rotational cutting) and new hedgerows can be incorporated relatively easily, benefiting livestock and arable production without taking up too much land. We can also adapt how we manage roadside verges, railway embankments and National Trails, using these existing connections through the landscape to create long linear corridors for nature.

## Managing water

Residents of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin may be all too familiar with flooding, but many of the county's rivers also have low flow issues, affecting the supply of drinking water and water for irrigation as well as biodiversity within and outside of water bodies. Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin hosts a wide variety of water body habitats – from freshwater streams, rivers, lakes and ponds to peatlands, flushes and fens. But the condition of water bodies and catchments is generally poor, and this impacts the biodiversity they support.

Many actions for nature also have potential to deliver natural flood management, water quality improvements or both, and can provide multiple other benefits. For example, the restoration of peatland or other natural habitat close to watercourses could improve flood water storage and build in drought resilience. Reinstating hedgerows and creating riparian buffer strips on farmland close to watercourses could limit soil erosion and nutrient run-off during heavy rain.

The Severn Valley Water Management Scheme is investigating options for nature-based solutions upstream of Shrewsbury, to reduce flooding in the town, and the Shropshire Groundwater Scheme is used to augment the river at times of low flow, alongside large reservoir releases. There are also ongoing cross-industry catchment partnerships and catchment-sensitive farming schemes, which are supporting actions to address both flooding and drought issues throughout the county.

**Explore the LNRS map online**

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## Planning and development

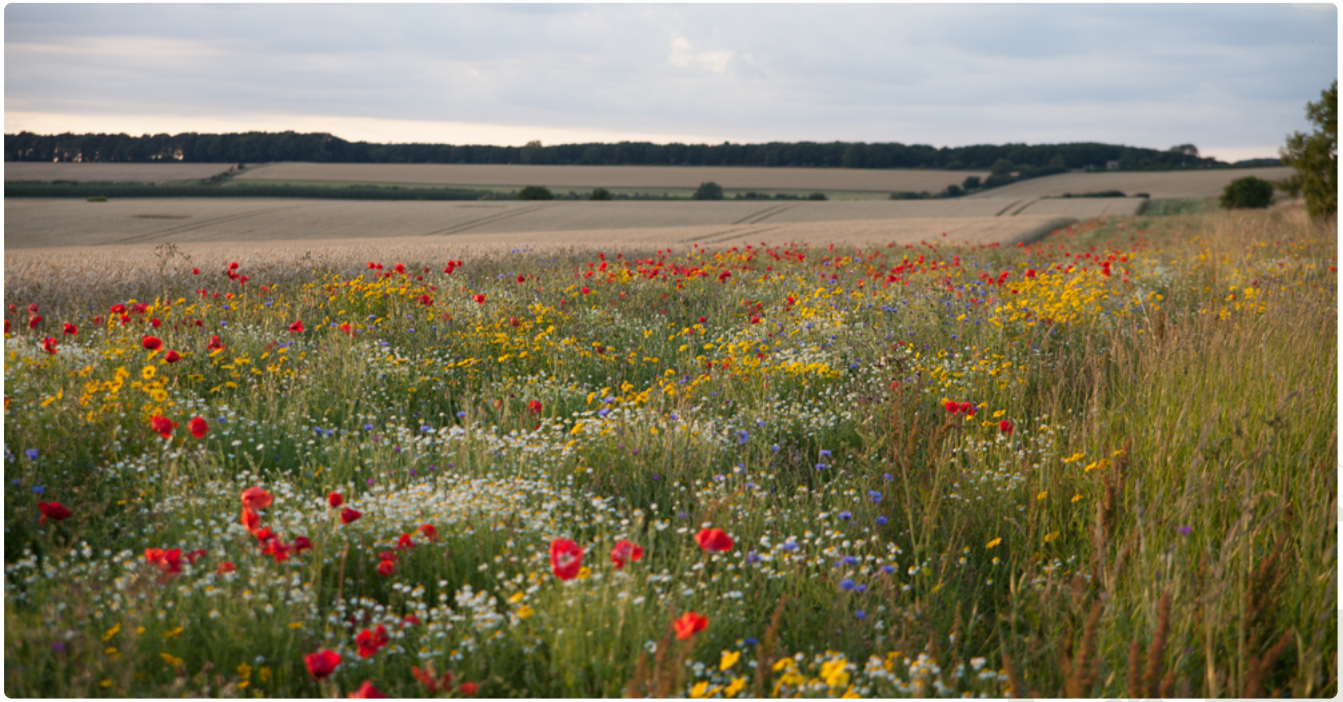
Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin is mostly rural, but there are built environments and urban landscapes throughout the county supporting human settlement and economic activity. And, like other councils, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council have a duty to provide new homes and associated infrastructure.

Urban development in general has a negative effect on the environment, as rural and natural ecosystems are damaged or replaced by artificial surfaces to create built environments and amenities. But urban areas are not nature deserts; in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, there are green and blue spaces such as gardens, golf courses, ponds and parks. If thoughtfully planned and implemented, development in certain circumstances can present opportunities to increase the overall benefit for nature.

Long-term restoration plans for minerals extraction present particular opportunities (see page 8), and development to mitigate and manage the risks we face from climate change – like installing solar panels and wind turbines – can be done alongside nature enhancements. For nature benefits to be realised, long-term outcomes need to be agreed and planned for from the outset of any development project or change in land use. Thinking about nature as an afterthought will not mean decisions are any quicker or easier and won't maximise benefits for nature or communities.

The LNRS is not a planning designation itself but can help developers and local authorities to identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity. And, by integrating LNRS in local plans and policies, local authorities – including town and parish councils – can reap the multiple benefits of nature recovery and align with other agendas such as climate adaptation, flood resilience and public health.

Public authorities must use LNRS maps and priorities to inform site allocations and planning decisions. While current local planning policy for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin does not refer directly to LNRS, future iterations will be required to do so. Developers must comply with existing planning policy that requires them to build with nature in mind and have a legal duty to deliver 'biodiversity net gain' (BNG) when developing land. Developers and landowners will qualify for a 15% 'strategic significance' uplift in BNG units if they create or enhance habitat in line with LNRS priorities, within LNRS priority areas.



**Explore the LNRS map online**

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## Restoration to semi-natural habitat

### Plantation on ancient woodland sites

Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are areas where former ancient semi-natural woodlands were cleared and replanted with non-native tree species including conifers. Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin has a number of PAWS, which cover 2689 hectares within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape alone.[6] PAWS retain complex soils, seed banks and microhabitats developed over centuries, and are often home to ancient and veteran trees – like those on Wenlock Edge. Restoring PAWS to semi-natural woodland is high-impact, cost-effective and policy-aligned, and it enables income generation from the sale of timber.

### Former coalfields, quarries and industrial areas

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin was central to the Industrial Revolution in the late 1700s. The county has a rich and varied geology, which includes deposits of coal, sands, gravels and rock, and extensive industrial and extraction activities were widespread here until the mid-20th century. The county's industrial heritage is visible in its landscape: mines and pit mounds, former factories and works, spoil heaps and quarries, depressions and exposed rock, which all provide potential site for nature recovery. Some of these areas have already evolved into rich mosaics where nature can thrive – either through deliberate regeneration (like Lightmoor, Granville Country Park, Dawley Hamlets, Llanymynech Rocks, Pam's Pools and Dolgoch Quarry) or being left to revegetate naturally.

## Planting trees

### In farmed landscapes

There are numerous agroforestry options within the Environmental Land Management Scheme, which could present opportunities for businesses to incorporate more trees into their grazed or cropped land areas – providing income and increased resilience to climate changes. There are also grants for natural regeneration of woodland, whereby woodland is established simply by installing fencing to exclude grazing near adjacent sources of tree seed; this can work well in less productive areas.

### In urban areas

Tree planting in urban areas can help to address heat stress, air pollution and health inequalities, presenting an opportunity for local authorities and developers to meet social and environmental goals. Any tree or woodland planting should follow the 'right tree, right place' principle.

**Explore the LNRS map online**

**Discover the full LNRS here**

## Working together

Across the county, there are well established networks of organisations, individuals and groups coming together to take action for nature. There are huge potential benefits from partnership working and collaboration – particularly when exploring different concepts and trialling approaches to test what works. Shropshire's rich and varied natural landscape reflects the care and commitment of its people. Farmers who have invaluable local knowledge and work with nature in mind, community groups who give their time to local green spaces, ecological recorders who track vital trends, strategic partners who collaborate on large-scale landscape projects, and individuals who spark action and inspire others.

*We all have a part to play. And if we work together, we can make a lasting difference.*

### Box 3: Guiding principles for Shropshire's LNRS

- Action is broad, inclusive and long lasting
- Build with nature in mind
- Guidance, education and knowledge sharing strengthen the action we take together
- Habitats are diverse
- Land managers are empowered to choose solutions which work for them
- Multiple benefits are delivered
- Nature-based solutions lead the way
- Nature recovery works for everyone
- Production and nature work together
- Right habitat in the right place
- Special species thrive
- Water is key

**Explore the LNRS map online**

**Discover the full LNRS here**

# Summary of LNRS priorities and actions

## Habitat priorities and actions, by theme

### Farmed land

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Enhance nature alongside food production | Establish farmer groups | A1.1 | |
| | | Enhance soil health and nature on arable land | A1.2 | |
| | | Enhance soil health and nature on pastures | A1.3 | |
| | | Create, restore and manage nature-rich farmland mosaics | A1.4 | |

### Hedgrows

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Restore, enhance, expand and appropriately manage the hedgerow network | Restore and manage the existing hedgerow network | A2.1 | |
| | | Create more connectivity in the landscape by establishing new hedgerows | A2.2 | |



Explore the LNRS map online

Discover the full LNRS here

## Water and wetlands

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Re-naturalise rivers and stabilise flows | Improve water quality | A3.1 | |
| | | Reduce both flood risk and low flows | A3.2 | |
| | | Remove physical barriers | A3.3 | |
| | | Restore streams and rivers to a more natural state | A3.4 | |
| | | Create, enhance and appropriately manage riparian buffers | A3.5 | |
| 4 | Restore peatland and wetland mosaics | Restore existing areas of high-quality peat, fen and bog habitat | A4.1 | |
| | | Restore, connect and expand areas of wetland mosaic habitat | A4.2 | |
| | | Restore ability of catchment headwaters to 'act as a sponge'. | A4.3 | |
| | | Target regularly flooded land for wetland creation and grazing marsh | A4.4 | |
| 5 | Create, restore and manage ponds, glacial pools and meres | Enhance existing ponds, pools and meres | A5.1 | |
| | | Create new ponds | A5.2 | |
| 6 | Enhance canals for wildlife and people | Enhance canals for wildlife and people | A6.1 | |

## Trees, woodlands and woody habitats

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Safeguard and enhance veteran trees | Identify, appropriately manage and safeguard the future of veteran trees | A7.1 | ● |
| | | Secure continuity of veteran trees in the landscape | A7.2 | |
| 8 | Restore and expand nature-rich woodlands | Restore and expand nature rich ancient semi-natural woodland and long established broadleaf woodland to connect and buffer ancient semi-natural woodland | A8.1 | ● |
| | | Improve condition of deciduous, mixed and wet woodlands | A8.2 | ● |
| | | Restore plantation on ancient woodland sites | A8.3 | ● |
| | | Create new woodlands | A8.4 | ● |
| 9 | Restore and expand nature-rich woody habitats | Restore and expand wood pasture | A9.1 | ● |
| | | Restore parkland | A9.2 | ● |
| | | Plant and manage mosaics of scrub | A9.3 | ● |
| | | Establish new, and safeguard traditional, orchards | A9.4 | ● |
| | | Plant more trees in the farmed landscape | A9.5 | |

## Grasslands

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Restore, connect and expand species-rich grasslands across the county | Set up infrastructure to support grassland restoration and creation | A10.1 | |
| | | Safeguard and enhance traditional hay meadows and other existing species-rich grasslands | A10.2 | ● |
| | | Create and restore species-rich grassland | A10.3 | ● |
| | | Restore grassland on roadside verges and alongside paths and tracks | A10.4 | ● |

**Explore the LNRS map online**

**Discover the full LNRS here**

## Open habitats

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Restore, connect and expand heathland sites | Establish effective management regimes for heathland sites | A11.1 | ● |
| | | Restore heathland where geology allows to increase habitat connectivity | A11.2 | ● |
| 12 | Increase the area of ffridd habitat | Enhance areas of ffridd habitat | A12.1 | ● |
| | | Create new areas of ffridd habitat to benefit a wide range of species | A12.2 | ● |
| 13 | Enhance the wildlife value of open mosaic habitats | Create, enhance and appropriately manage close mosaics of open habitats on former coal, mining and post-industrial sites | A13.1 | ● |
| | | Enhance open mosaic habitats on brownfield sites | A13.2 | |
| | | Retain the wildlife value of scree | A13.3 | ● |

## Built environment and amenity spaces

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Bring nature into towns, villages and amenity spaces | Integrate nature recovery within new developments | A14.1 | |
| | | Create wildlife-friendly gardens at homes and businesses | A14.2 | |
| | | Enhance wildlife value of multifunctional green space | A14.3 | ● |
| | | Effective water management in the built environment | A14.4 | |
| | | Reduce the adverse impact of light pollution on wildlife | A14.5 | |
| | | Increase canopy cover in the built environment | A14.6 | |

## Invasive non-native species

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Reduce invasive non-native species across whole catchments | Prevent the spread of invasive non-native species | A15.1 | |
| | | Implement a targeted programme to reduce invasive non-native species | A15.2 | |

## Public access, health and wellbeing

| # | Priority | Action | Code | Map |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Enable more access to and connection with nature for health and wellbeing | Enable access to nature-rich sites | A16.1 | |
| | | Create a more comprehensive network to enable active travel | A16.2 | |
| | | Enhance peoples' connection with nature | A16.3 | |

# Species priorities

The LNRS for Shropshire identifies 29 individually named species and nine species assemblages that need specific actions or groups of actions beyond those identified under the habitat priorities. The methodology for identifying species priorities is set by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).[7]

## Species assemblages

- Deadwood species assemblage
- Woodland species assemblage
- Species reliant on arable land
- River species assemblage
- Species reliant on bog and other wetland habitats
- Plants requiring growing from seed for planting out
- Inland rock and open habitat species assemblage
- Species reliant on heathland and grassland mosaics, including ffridd
- Bat species assemblage

## Individually named species

| Taxon | Species | Scientific name |
|---|---|---|
| Mammal | Dormouse | *Muscardinus avellanarius* |
| Mammal | Hedgehog | *Erinaceus europaeus* |
| Mammal | Pine Marten | *Martes martes* |
| Mammal | Water Vole | *Arvicola amphibius* |
| Bird | Curlew | *Numenius arquata* |
| Bird | Dipper | *Cinclus cinclus* |
| Bird | Lesser Black-backed Gull | *Larus fuscus* |
| Bird | Nightjar | *Caprimulgus europaeus* |
| Bird | Pied Flycatcher | *Ficedula hypoleuca* |
| Bird | Red Grouse | *Lagopus lagopus* |
| Bird | Swift | *Apus apus* |
| Bird | Wheatear | *Oenanthe oenanthe* |
| Bird | Willow Tit | *Peocele montanus* |
| Plant | Green-winged Orchid | *Anacamptis morio* |
| Invertebrate | Pearl-bordered Fritillary | *Boloria euphrosyne* |
| Invertebrate | Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary | *Boloria selene* |
| Invertebrate | a hoverfly | *Cheilosia semifasciatus* |
| Invertebrate | Kentish Glory moth | *Endromis versicolora* |
| Invertebrate | Noble Chafer | *Gnorimus nobilis* |
| Invertebrate | Grayling Butterfly | *Hipparchia semele* |
| Invertebrate | Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly | *Ischnura pumilio* |
| Invertebrate | Wall butterfly | *Lasiommata megera* |
| Invertebrate | Scarlet Malachite Beetle | *Malachius aeneus* |
| Invertebrate | Slender Mud Snail | *Omphiscola glabra* |
| Invertebrate | Silver-studded Blue | *Plebejus argus* |
| Invertebrate | Grizzled Skipper | *Pyrgus malvae* |
| Invertebrate | Black Darter | *Sympetrum danae* |
| Invertebrate | Lilljeborg's Whorl Snail | *Vertigo lilljeborgi* |
| Invertebrate | Desmoulin's Whorl Snail | Vertigo moulinsiana |

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