

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Delivery

Update for responsible authorities

Summer 26

Welcome to the latest issue of the central LNRS team's newsletter for LNRS responsible authorities, covering national Defra Group updates, signposting useful resources, and sharing learning among RAs. In this issue...

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- Defra group support in delivery phase
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Delivery shared learning (p4-7)

- Lead and convene a delivery partnership
- Embed LNRS into local decision-making
- Identify priority strategic projects and facilitate project development

Latest updates for RAs

Progress – 42 LNRSs are now published!

Huge congratulations to everyone involved. We now have 94% of England covered an LNRS. A list of published LNRSs can be found on the [RA SPOL](#).

Defra group support in delivery phase

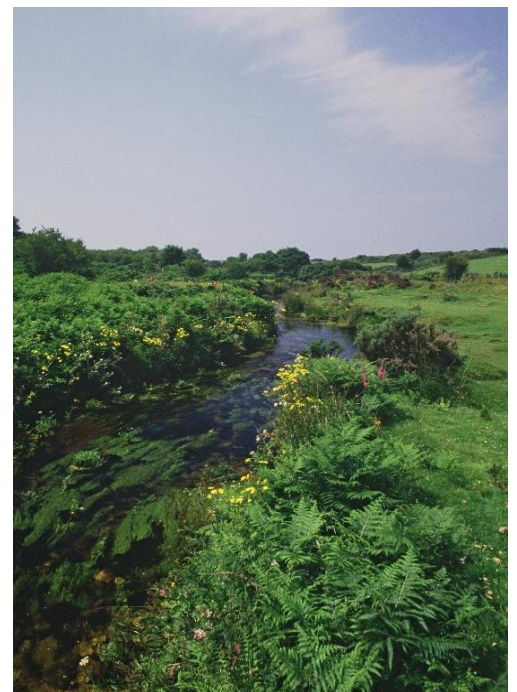
Following your feedback on the support needed during the delivery phase, Defra group plans to:

- Run **monthly webinars** focused on technical training, showcasing good practice from RAs, and providing opportunities for discussion and knowledge exchange.
- Establish **small, geographically based peer-learning groups**, facilitated by Natural England. These groups will align with the themes covered in the network-wide webinars and provide a space for RAs to share experiences, showcase work, and discuss challenges with peers.
- Continue sharing updates, learning and examples of good practice through the **RA newsletter**.
- Explore holding a further **in-person event** next year, building on the feedback received from attendees at the Leicester event in February.
- The next whole-network webinar will take place on **19 August**, featuring shared learning from several RAs and a more detailed discussion of how the peer-learning groups will operate. We'll be seeking your feedback on where regional groups already exist.

Recent RA webinar recordings

17 June – We discussed the RA delivery advice, funding, amendments to published LNRSs, and ALB offer of support, along with some shared learning from Liverpool. Watch the recording [here](#).

14 July – This call was focused on the nature recovery activity monitoring materials. Watch the recording [here](#). You can find the data model and standard materials, alongside the wider advice on the RA delivery role [here](#). You can provide feedback on the Local Nature Recovery Action data model and standard using [this MS Form](#). It should only take 10-15 minutes to complete and will help us to refine the model and standard further. The alpha version of the data model and standard is expected to be published in September.



De Lank River. Credit Natural England

Nature Permitting and Co-ordination (NPC)

The Environment Agency are delighted to announce the official launch of **Nature Permitting and Coordination (NPC)**, a new initiative designed to streamline and support nature recovery and restoration projects across England.

What is NPC?

NPC provides a dedicated, structured approach to permitting for large-scale and complex nature recovery projects. It offers applicants a single point of contact and ongoing, tailored support throughout the permitting process, ensuring that projects receive the guidance and coordination needed to secure multiple permits and licences efficiently. This approach enables us to manage our resources more effectively and deliver timely, high-quality advice to support the EA's ambitions for nature recovery and the EA2030 strategy.

Why is this important?

Nature recovery projects, such as rewilding landscapes, restoring rivers and wetlands, and enhancing biodiversity, often require permissions from multiple regulatory organisations, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry England, and Local Planning Authorities. NPC addresses the complexity of these projects by coordinating across regulatory regimes (such as Flood Risk Activity Permits, Water Resources licences, and Waste permits) and providing clear, consistent communication to all stakeholders.



Floating reed beds. Credit: Leanne Penfol

How does it work?

- **Early Engagement:** Projects can apply online for support from a Coordination Specialist in the Habitats Assessment Team, who will engage with applicants from the outset to understand their permitting needs.
- **Cross-Team Coordination:** The specialist works across multiple permitting teams to agree delivery timelines and allocate resources in advance.
- **Single Point of Contact:** Applicants receive regular progress updates from their dedicated specialist.
- **Transparent Process:** The service helps applicants understand what to expect, improves transparency, and ensures that permitting teams are given timely information to manage workloads effectively.
- **Fee Structure:** Applicants pay a fee to cover the cost of the service, supporting the sustainability of the offer.

Case Study: Waveney and Little Ouse Landscape Recovery (WaLOR)

The WaLOR project, part of Defra's Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Landscape Recovery pilots. Spanning over 1,650 hectares and involving 21 landowners across Suffolk and Norfolk, WaLOR demonstrates the value of coordinated permitting for complex, multi-site restoration efforts.

Responsible authorities or their partners may wish to apply for support from the NPC team when developing projects to deliver their LNRS.

Find Out More

- Apply for support via the [GOV.UK guidance page](#)
- For further information, please contact the NPC team at npc@environment-agency.gov.uk.

NE's new Enabling Nature Recovery Budget

Natural England is overseeing a new **'Enabling Nature Recovery'** budget, totalling £1.92 million this year. The fund is designed to enable LNRS delivery through funding novel research and development (R&D) including evidence-gathering and developing new methodologies to underpin future delivery on the ground. A small part of the budget can be used to support feasibility studies and engagement.

NE area teams are currently reviewing potential projects. R&D projects must meet various criterion: novel, creative, uncertain, systematic and reproducible. Where relevant, NE LNRS senior officers will be in touch to discuss potential projects. We recommend considering whether you have potential projects over the next 2 years and discussing with your NE contact.



Green community hub. Credit: Natural England

New Farmer Collaboration Fund launched

Defra is launching a new £30 million **Farmer Collaboration Fund** to help farmers and land managers work together, share knowledge and build stronger, more resilient businesses.

The fund will support groups to test new approaches collectively, reduce costs and spread risk. It will also help farmers access knowledge and opportunities that may be difficult to secure when working alone.

Funding will be provided through delivery partners, such as charities, non-governmental organisations and local authorities. These organisations will use their existing relationships with farmers and their local expertise to grow farmer networks and provide specialist advice. The guidance encourages applicants to look to LNRSs when developing their proposals, and this may lead to prospective FCF delivery partners getting in touch with you. RAs might also wish to consider applying themselves to be an FCF delivery partner.

- [Guidance on how to apply](#) was published on GOV.UK on 29 July.
- [This blog](#) sets out more information on the Fund, and includes links to two webinars for applicants.



Scottish blackface ewe with lamb. Credit NE

Shared Learning: Lead and convene a delivery partnership

Hyper-local nature recovery in Shropshire

Shropshire Council has developed a [workbook](#) in partnership with the Shropshire Association of Local Councils and Middle Marches Community Land Trust, to **help town & parish councils make their own nature recovery plan** linked to the LNRS. You can find out more about Shropshire's approach to hyper-local nature recovery in this British Academy [publication](#).

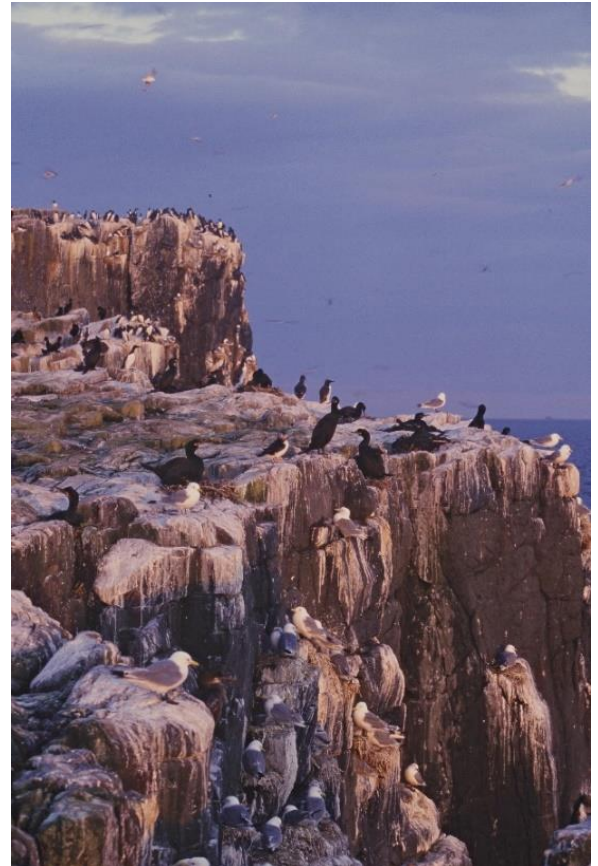
Stakeholder Engagement in Norfolk and Suffolk: developing the delivery partnership

*"Following publication of the **Norfolk and Suffolk** LNRSs in October 2025, we reviewed our engagement and governance arrangements to better support delivery.*

*Our approach now combines a Governance Group with **specialist Partnership Action Groups (PAGs)**, bringing together nature recovery partnership members, Supporting Authorities and representatives from a wide range of sectors.*

The publication of the LNRSs has also increased interest from organisations seeking to support nature recovery. Supported by strong regional networks, we continue to expand engagement through initiatives with schools, community organisations, libraries and arts and culture partners, helping embed nature recovery across communities. Recent work includes working as a Climate Ambassador role within STEM activities in schools, a focussed Community Naturescapes programme working with the Norfolk Deaf Association and alignment to a Pollinate and Create programme with Suffolk Libraries and linking communities via a potential sculpture trail across public rights of way."

- Jen Burlingham of the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership



Farne Islands. Credit NE

Working with major landowners: a different approach to governance in Hertfordshire

*"**Hertfordshire County Council** has established the **Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Delivery Partnership** to help accelerate LNRS delivery. The partnership brings together HCC, Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and Gascoyne Estates (a major local landowner), with governance provided by a board representing founding partners, key stakeholders, independent experts and an independent chair. Gascoyne Estates acts as the lead partner for the purposes of managing funds and hosting Partnership staff. This governance model enables agile decision-making while maintaining strong accountability and reporting links to HCC and its elected members.*

While HCC retains responsibility for embedding the LNRS in policy, decision-making, monitoring and reporting, the partnership focuses on attracting blended finance to support landscape-scale nature recovery. Initial work is centred on a pilot project within a Hertfordshire chalk river catchment, using an established farm cluster to develop and test a finance model. Lessons from the pilot will inform future projects, creating a pipeline of investment opportunities and an investable landscape prospectus for nature recovery across the county."

- Jeremy Clarke, Hertfordshire County Council

Nature Recovery through Social Enterprise

The **Skill Mill** is a multi-award-winning social enterprise that creates life-changing opportunities for young people involved in the criminal justice system by providing genuine work experience, qualifications and support whilst improving local environments. It has demonstrated a proven track record over more than ten years through outcomes-based commissioning. The Skill Mill was born from an early partnership with the Environment Agency, when a youth justice pilot engaged young people in environmental projects such as watercourse maintenance and flood-risk reduction. The success of this collaboration laid the foundations for The Skill Mill as a social enterprise, with the EA remaining one of its longest-standing and most valued partners.



Credit: Skill Mill

The Skill Mill provides participants with practical skills and employment, and improved access to future employment opportunities, whilst developing their self-confidence and sense of responsibility. At the same time, the programme delivers tangible benefits to their local communities and the environment. Participants' work at The Skill Mill is commissioned by a range of clients, including local authorities, businesses, and non-profit organisations.

In March 2026, The Skill Mill and its partners launched the UK's largest social outcomes partnership by delivery areas, working with up to 22 local authorities. There could be an opportunity for Skill Mill to help delivery on the ground LNRS projects. For more information please visit their [website](#).

Shared Learning: Embed LNRS into local decision-making



Mute swans with cygnets. Credit NE

Aligning SFI and CSHT actions with LNRS priorities in Hull & East Yorkshire

In **Hull and East Yorkshire**, the local nature partnership has developed **tools to help align SFI and CSHT actions with LNRS priorities** ([explore the ELMS / HEY LNRS alignment tools](#))

"Our main advice would be to engage your NE senior advisors early to understand what support they can offer. It's also important to be clear about what the tool is and isn't. We've emphasised that it is intended to inform decisions and is not an SFI requirement, as this was a point of confusion for some users."

We'd also like to add it as a layer to our mapping work. While a simple matrix linking measure codes to option codes would have been easy to upload to GIS, it wasn't particularly user-friendly because it relied on codes rather than descriptions. With over 160 measure codes and around 70 SFI codes, accessibility quickly becomes an issue. We therefore chose to focus on a spreadsheet that includes clear descriptions of both measures and options. There may be a more effective approach, and we'd welcome suggestions from colleagues"

- John Pemberton, East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Supporting our Supporting Authorities in Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Combined Authority recently held a well-attended **LNRS webinar for district councils** to support LNRS embedding in draft local plans. For other RAs looking to do something similar, they recommend extending the invite to other departments in local authorities beyond development management to encourage a collaborative approach to nature recovery. Take a look at their [slides](#) and a [recording](#) of the session.

Ecosystem gangs: making nature recovery relevant to other sectors in West Yorkshire

*“Working with the local Chamber of Commerce sustainability group, **West Yorkshire** LNRS explored how to present nature recovery in a way that resonates with businesses. The result was the “Ecosystem Gangs” approach: grouping nature recovery priorities around the outcomes they deliver, such as noise reduction, climate resilience, staff wellbeing, and sustainable travel. By starting with the benefits organisations want to achieve and then linking them to nature recovery actions, the approach helps make the case for investment and action.*

While developed with businesses in mind, the concept can be applied across sectors, helping partners identify the nature recovery measures that best support their own objectives. The approach has proven a useful way to make LNRS priorities more tangible, relevant and engaging.

[Read more](#) about West Yorkshire’s work on ecosystem gangs.”

- Tamsin Constable, West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Recovering Nature to deliver Health Outcomes

Natural England has recently launched 2 new tools: the **Index of Multiple Environmental Deprivation (IMED)** and the **Environmental Equity Index (EEI)**.

Built collaboratively over 18 months, they map environmental pressures and health inequalities across England, helping decision-makers target green infrastructure investment where communities face the greatest combined environmental, socio-economic and health challenges.

Find out more by reading [this blog](#).

Shared Learning: Identify priority strategic projects and facilitate project development



Eurasian beaver. Credit NE

Developing projects with partners in Leicestershire

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland’s LNRS is moving from strategy into delivery, with a range of projects already underway and [good practice habitat management guides](#) to support partners.

“Using LNRS funds, partners are supporting a rare plant gene-banking and site management programme to help prevent up to 66 threatened species from local extinction, a captive glow-worm breeding project at Twycross Zoo, and a pilot equipment hire scheme to support meadow management by parish councils and community groups.

A new communications campaign, backed by local authority lead members and delivered in partnership with NatureSpot, is encouraging residents to record sightings of the 100 LNRS indicator species and contribute directly to monitoring nature recovery. Work is also underway to explore a dedicated LNRS website with enhanced functionality and opportunities for interactions.

At a larger scale, the LNRS Steering Group, including supporting authorities, arm’s-length bodies, the Wildlife Trust and NFU have identified six landscape focus areas to coordinate investment and deliver nature recovery at scale, including two potential cross-boundary opportunities with neighbouring authorities. To strengthen delivery capacity, recruitment is underway for a LNRS Environmental Land Management Officer and a LNRS Engagement and Skills Officer.”

- Paul Killip, Leicestershire County Council



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment
Agency



Forestry Commission

Connecting businesses and investors with nature recovery projects

West Midlands's Combined Authority recently launched their [Nature Investment Hub](#), designed to connect businesses and investors with high-quality nature recovery projects across the region and deliver the LNRS.

They are also developing a climate vulnerability and risk toolkit for the priorities and measures set out in the West Midlands LNRS. Where habitats are identified as being vulnerable to climate extremes, the tool will recommend appropriate management interventions.

More examples to explore:

- [Investment Projects - Cheshire Local Nature Partnership](#)
- [How L&G's investing to create new UK woodland | Legal & General Group](#)
- [Cornwall Natural Capital Exchange](#)
- [Carbon and Nature Market for the North East](#)
- [LINC York and North Yorkshire](#)

In the **West of England**, Businesses from across the region recently joined Mayor Helen Godwin at a nature breakfast roundtable, exploring the growing economic opportunity in embedding action for nature. The event coincided with the publication of the [West of England's State of Nature report](#) – the most ambitious study of the region's wildlife ever undertaken – and the launch of a new [£5 million Nature Fund](#) specifically for LNRS projects.

"The £5m Nature Fund is being developed and delivered in collaboration with our primary LNRS delivery partner, the West of England Nature Partnership, and is part of our LNRS delivery pipeline and blended finance approach."

To complement the West of England £5m, we have launched the Mayor's [Community Nature Fund](#) and accompanying crowdfunding platform. This is designed to support small-scale, community-led projects that improve local green spaces and help people connect with nature. The Community Nature Fund is specifically aimed at community groups, including those with little or no previous fundraising experience, and provides practical support through the free platform alongside grants of up to £6,000 per project, covering up to 50% of a project's fundraising target. Eligible projects include initiatives such as community gardens, tree planting, pollinator-friendly spaces, habitat creation and improvements to parks and green spaces."

- Hannah Cochrane, West of England Combined Authority.



Bathscape. Credit: Dan Merrett

Green finance resources and links

Delivering the nature recovery network will require a blended approach to its financing. This is an emerging work area, and there is space for innovation. We are aware that many RAs are looking to build knowledge and skills in green finance, so the following links are offered as some useful reading – if you have further resources to share, please get in touch with the LNRS team.

- [LINC \(Local Investment in Natural Capital\)](#)
- The Green Finance Institute: [GFI Hive](#) is a good source of information, particularly the [Investment Readiness Toolkit](#)
- Finance Earth [Home - Finance Earth](#)
- [Nature market benefits: lessons from the Evenlode project – The Farming Blog](#)