

**CABINET – TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2025**

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	applications.
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	The purpose of the report is to present to Cabinet the final Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, approved by Leicestershire County Council on 2 July 2025, and to seek Cabinet's endorsement of the strategy.
<b>Reason for Decision</b>	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new statutory duty placed on local government in England, as part of the Environment Act 2021. It requires local authorities to work together to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies across 48 areas in England.</p> <p>Under the Environment Act 2021, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs appointed Leicestershire County Council as the 'responsible authority' for the development of a LNRS for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.</p> <p>The development of the final LNRS fulfils part of the duty.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>THAT CABINET:</b></p> <p><b>ENDORSES LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY FOR LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER AND RUTLAND.</b></p>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Cabinet report of 17 December 2024 (see link above) provides details relating to the Government's introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). Sections 2 and 3 of the Cabinet report explained how the LNRS had been developed and provided an overview of the document's contents. Section 4 of the report provided brief details of the draft LNRS approval process.
- 1.2 At Cabinet on 17 December 2024, members approved the draft LNRS to go out to public consultation.

## 2.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

- 2.1 Details of the public consultation and feedback received following the consultation can be viewed on the link to the County Council's report on 2 July 2025 in the background papers above.

## 3.0 CONTENT OF THE APPROVED LNRS

- 3.1 Members are advised that under Regulation 15 of the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, supporting authorities, which included the Council, had 28-days to raise an objection with the responsible authority

regarding the final LNRS. The Council raised no objections and at Leicestershire County Council's meeting on 2 July 2025, the final LNRS was approved. The strategy has been submitted to the Secretary of State for DEFRA approval to publish. The final strategy (along with local habitat maps) was published on 1 August 2025. The approved LNRS and Local Habitat Maps can be found on the following links:

[Approved Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)

[Local Habitat Maps](#)

- 3.2 The content of the LNRS is largely prescribed in the 2023 Regulations and guidance, with draft strategies required to meet certain criteria in order to be approved by Natural England for consultation. The LNRS consists of two key components: the LNRS strategy document, and the auxiliary webpages that include an interactive copy of the Local Habitat Map and the supporting information.
- 3.3 Members are advised that the important elements of the Strategy document are:
- a) The eight strategic aims of the Strategy (Section 4) which are to:
    - i. Increase the area and diversity of land and water managed for wildlife in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland (make more space for nature).
    - ii. Increase biodiversity by improving the ecological condition.
    - iii. Reinststate natural processes, make space for water and utilise nature-based solutions to support nature and climate resilience.
    - iv. Protect and enhance green and blue spaces within urban habitats.
    - v. Promote sustainable agriculture and support local food systems.
    - vi. Improve ecological connectivity by establishing coherent and resilient ecological networks at scale.
    - vii. Reduce major pressures and threats to nature including invasive non-native species.
    - viii. Improve understanding of the state of nature and actively monitor habitat/species change over time.
  - b) The area description of the natural landscape and how people have shaped it;
  - c) An assessment of the state of nature across the area (including a presentation in map form of the existing areas of particular importance for biodiversity, to be published on the LNRS webpages);
  - d) The key environmental considerations, such as the future pressures and wider environmental issues (Section 8);
  - e) A presentation in map form of the areas that could become of importance for biodiversity and the wider environment (also to be published on the webpages);
  - f) Main biodiversity priorities and measures to take place within the priority areas as well as the landscape scale (area-wide) action;
  - g) Key factors needed to support the delivery of the LNRS;
  - h) Appendices with supporting information and technical detail.

- 3.4 The LNRS ultimately serves as a call to action for everyone to play a role in the recovery of nature, ensuring that the biodiversity and the natural beauty of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland can thrive for future generations, while at the same time supporting the lives and livelihoods of the people and communities that live and work there.
- 3.5 If members endorse the LNRS, it will be used as an evidence base in the preparation of the Council's emerging Local Plan and may be a material consideration to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.6 Further guidance and training on how to use the LNRS will be provided by Leicestershire County Council in due course.

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications that arise from this report, although the impact of the strategy on the resources of the Planning Service in having to take account of the LNRS in Local and Neighbourhood Plan making and in decision making on planning applications will need to be kept under review.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and regeneration</li> <li>- Communities and housing</li> <li>- Clean, green and Zero Carbon</li> <li>- A well-run council</li> </ul>
Policy Considerations:	LNRSs are a new statutory duty being placed on local government as a result of the Environment Act 2021. All local authorities have a role to play in preparing and delivering them. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are intended to support local planning authorities in preparing local plans that conserve and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment, and local planning authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the relevant strategy for their area. Local planning authorities should consider the priorities set out in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy when determining how their local plan should contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment.
Safeguarding:	None identified.
Equalities/Diversity:	None identified.
Customer Impact:	An eight-week public consultation exercise took place from 6 January to 28 February 2025. The draft LNRS, a summary version, and the associated Local Habitat Maps were all available for comment. Comments could also be added to an interactive map. In addition to the online consultation, a total of 24 in person and online events were held across the area. This was all

	publicised via local newspapers and the usual social media channels.
Economic and Social Impact:	None identified.
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon:	The LNRS will map the most valuable existing areas for nature, establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and wider environmental benefits.
Consultation/Community/Tenant Engagement:	As detailed above in Customer Impact.
Risks:	Impact on the resources of the Planning and Development and Policy team in terms having to take account of the LNRS in Local and Neighbourhood Plan making and in decision making on planning applications.
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