

Local Nature Recovery Strategies: your role as a 'supporting authority'

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All local authorities have a key role to play in preparing and delivering [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) (LNRS), even if they are not a 'responsible authority'. Through LNRS, all local authorities, as place leaders for their area, have an opportunity to shape the future of the natural environment right now. This factsheet provides information about the role of 'supporting authorities' in LNRS and why they are important.

What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

LNRSs are a new system of spatial strategies for nature recovery, legislated for in the Environment Act 2021. The Defra Secretary of State has appointed 48 [responsible authorities](#) (in most cases county or combined authorities) to lead the preparation of the strategies over the coming year. Each strategy will agree priorities for nature recovery and the wider environment and propose actions in the locations where they would have the most impact in helping to deliver those priorities.

The current rollout of LNRSs across England presents an opportunity for all local authorities to help shape and implement the vision for nature in their area now.



View towards side pike from Blea Tarn, the Lake District

The supporting authority role for LNRS:

Every local authority has an important role to play in their LNRS. The LNRS legislation requires that responsible authorities involve all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), including National Park Authorities, and Natural England (collectively termed 'supporting authorities') in the preparation process.

This is so that key users are able to shape content and to ensure ambition and a degree of national consistency across the 48 LNRSs.

What does the supporting authority role entail?

As a supporting authority for your LNRS, you have the opportunity to:

- **Work closely with the responsible authority** and other supporting authorities in your area to help shape your LNRS so that it aligns with your organisation's needs and priorities.
- **Provide local data and input information from other relevant strategies**, such as Trees and Woodland Strategies and National Park and National Landscape Management Plans. Where this information is sensitive or contains commercial value, the responsible authority should work with you to establish how it could be used for LNRS preparation without the information itself being made more widely available.
- **Periodically review and agree drafts of the LNRS.** The Regulations provide all supporting authorities with the opportunity to review and agree drafts ahead of public consultation and publication to ensure widespread agreement on the content and approach.¹ Considering how your organisation will review your LNRS early on will help to avoid delays down the line.

How could supporting authorities use their LNRS?

It's important to get involved with your relevant LNRS early on to ensure you are happy with its direction and content. This is because supporting authorities will be key users of LNRSs, and because what's included in the strategies will help you deliver other organisational objectives more effectively:

For example, the relevant LNRS for your area will...

- **Inform the rollout of Biodiversity Net Gain**, by helping to guide where offsite habitat is created and enhanced.
- **Provide important evidence that you will need to consider when making your Local Plans.**

¹ The [Regulations](#) set out the procedure for handling disagreements where supporting authorities are not content with the draft copies of the strategies.

- **Be considered as part of your statutory duty to take action, consistent with your functions, to conserve and enhance biodiversity².**
- **Inform future National Park and National Landscape Management Plans.**
- **Inform how future funding and investment in nature recovery is targeted**, e.g. via initiatives like the [Water Restoration Fund](#).

As LNRs become available, Government will continue to explore join-up between elements of Environmental Land Management schemes and LNRs, as committed to in the [January 2024 Agricultural Transition Plan](#).



River Dee, Chester

LNRs and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

BNG has now gone [live](#), meaning all developments in England, including small sites, will need to deliver net gains for biodiversity. LNRs, once published, will be used to guide BNG offsite habitat creation and enhancement into strategic locations for nature. Specifically, the BNG metric includes a 15% “strategic significance” uplift in biodiversity units per hectare for delivering LNR proposals in the locations mapped by the LNR.

By engaging early with your LNR you can ensure you have a say on the location and type of projects delivered through BNG so that they meet the needs of residents in your area. For more information on how LNR and BNG will work together, see our recent post on the [Defra Environment Blog](#).

LNRs and local plan-making:

Getting involved with LNR preparation will help to ensure its priorities and proposals align with your own local planning objectives.

Defra and DLUHC are currently working on guidance for how LPAs should “have regard” to LNRs.

This will clarify how having regard to LNRs will work alongside existing requirements in the NPPF to consider nature recovery in Local Plans³.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act will also introduce a new duty to “take account” of LNRs in the plan-making process as part of wider reforms to the planning system. Planners will need to consider specific parts of their LNRs, such as the proposed locations to restore or enhance nature.

When is it best to engage with LNRs?

As the preparation of LNRs is already progressing across England, now is the best time to get involved. Ideally, you should already be working with your responsible authority to develop the LNR for your area. The responsible authority for your area should have also invited you to participate in steering and other relevant governance groups. Contributing as early as possible by sharing your views and providing information to responsible authorities will help to make sure every LNR is ambitious and deliverable.

There are several points in the preparation process when supporting authority input will be especially valuable. These include:

- **Agreeing priorities and actions** – by ensuring these align with your organisation’s objectives and existing strategies;
- **Mapping ‘areas of particular importance for biodiversity’** – by providing useful data to your area’s responsible authority;
- **Ahead of public consultation and publication** – when you have 28 days to provide comments, raise concerns, and agree to proceed with consultation and publication. You could also help to raise awareness of the public consultation to ensure the LNR represents the views of residents, businesses and other organisations in your area.

Links to further resources:

- LNR policy paper ([GOV.UK](#))
- LNR regulations ([GOV.UK](#))
- LNR statutory guidance ([GOV.UK](#))
- LNR explainer blog ([GOV.UK](#))
- Explainer blog on how LNR and BNG will work together ([GOV.UK](#))

² For more information on complying with the Biodiversity Duty, see ([GOV.UK](#))

³ See paragraph 185, [National Planning Policy Framework](#)