

GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Lincolnshire

1. OBJECTIVE AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies for nature, which was introduced in the Environment Act 2021. They will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits. Each Strategy will, for the area that it covers:

- agree priorities for nature's recovery
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The production of each LNRS will be evidence-based, locally led and collaborative, to create a network of shared plans that public, private and voluntary sectors can all help to deliver. This will underpin the Nature Recovery Network and will help achieve wider environmental objectives (like carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change or managing flood risk) and contribute to green economic recovery objectives.

2.2 There will be 48 LNRS covering the whole of England. Each LNRS will have a 'responsible authority' that will lead the production of the strategy for their area. The responsible body will have a duty to produce the LNRS for the area it covers within a two-year timescale, then report on the progress against the priorities on a five-year cycle thereafter.

2.3 Regulations, guidance and funding towards LNRS preparation are expected from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) over the next few months.

2.4 The SoS has proposed that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) be the 'responsible authority' for the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS. The geographical area covers LCC, North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) and North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) administrative areas.

3. DETAIL OF OPTIONS/PROPOSAL

3.1 It is proposed that although LCC will be the responsible authority it will work closely, in partnership, with NLC and NELC to lead the production of the LNRS. In turn the three local authorities will work collaboratively with all district authorities and partner organisations to develop the strategy.

The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) is a formally constituted partnership of 49 organisations, including all the Greater Lincolnshire local authorities, statutory bodies, non-government organisations. Over the last two decades, priorities, targets and action plans for habitats and species have been set out in the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) Nature Strategy (previously known as the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership Biodiversity Action Plan).

Given the presence of a strong existing partnership with a track record of coordinating and delivering action for biodiversity in Greater Lincolnshire, there would be clear benefits in working collaboratively with the GLNP to establish the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS. Although there are already 49 members in the GLNP there will still be a need to include many more stakeholders, organisations and land managers to ensure that it will be a truly collaborative well-functioning partnership to develop the LNRS.

4. RESOURCE AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 In March 2022 LCC received £16,304 from Defra. This is seed funding to be used to be enable the partnership to begin the process of developing the LNRS and help fund any identifiable gaps in skills, data, or stakeholder capacity building. Additional Burdens funding will be forthcoming from DEFRA in 2022. The amount is unknown at this stage.

Officer resource from each of the three authorities and the GLNP will be required to develop the strategy and ensure it is complete within the two-year timescale set out by the Environment Act 2021.

Natural England has employed LNRS advisors to aid the process.

5. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES (INCLUDE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IF RELEVANT)

5.1 There are no risks or equality issues arising directly from this report. Full assessment will be carried out as part of the development of the LNRS.

5.2 A critical issue for the partners will be to balance the needs to deliver the LNRS against development and investment priorities. This will be an important aspect of the initial scoping of governance arrangements including clarity on scope of work including links with the statutory planning processes.

6. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Full consultation and engagement will occur as part of the detailed development of the strategy

7. GOVERNANCE – DECISION(S) FOR MEMBER COUNCIL’S REQUIRED (in accordance with the Joint Committee’s Terms of Reference).

7.1 Detailed governance implications will be addressed as part of the development of the strategy to ensure appropriate responsibilities and accountabilities entered into by each authority

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Greater Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Oversight Committee support the proposed approach and agree that LCC will be the responsible authority for the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS as proposed by DEFRA.

8.2 That the Greater Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Oversight Committee confirm that LCC, NLC and NELC work collaboratively with the GLNP to develop the strategy.

8.3 Whilst we wait for the guidance from DEFRA to progress the strategy, the partnership can still be working towards its development and the following actions can be undertaken:

- Scope governance arrangements, including Terms of Reference between LCC, NLC, NELC and the GLNP
- Establish a core LNRS Task Group from local authority officers, Natural England, GLNP and key partner organisations
- Identify additional works that will be required, gaps in skills / knowledge and work with Natural England to address these
- Identify additional key stakeholders
- Raise awareness of the LNRS with local authority officers, politicians, GLNP partners and potential additional stakeholders, to develop shared understanding of the purpose of LNRS.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Andy Gutherson, Lincolnshire County Council

Address: Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln

Post Code: LN1 1YL

Author: Andy Gutherson

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