

1. Introduction

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to ensure that it is locally led, transparent, and collaborative.

The LNRS guidance and regulations require Responsible Authorities to work together with partners when preparing their strategy, so that it provides a single vision for nature recovery that all parties have been able to contribute to. This will help to build and strengthen local partnerships which will be important for delivering the strategy when it is published.

This appendix provides a brief overview of the stakeholder engagement undertaken in the development of the LNRS. All the engagement work undertaken, and the feedback we received has been used to inform the priorities and measures developed for this strategy.

2. Comms & Engagement Working Group

A Working Group was set up to provide a steer on public engagement, consultation, and awareness-raising, so that the LNRS can draw on diverse perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders.

2.1 Key Activities and Outputs

- ▶ Review draft stakeholder engagement plan.
- ▶ Recommend methods for effective engagement and communication with a diversity of stakeholders, within capacity and remit
- ▶ Advise on accessibility and inclusivity of engagement resources and approach
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of engagement approaches and recommend improvements required as part of the ongoing LNRS development
- ▶ Report findings, progress and delivery to the LNRS Advisory Group

2.2 Membership

- ▶ Nottinghamshire County Council – LNRS Coordinator and Comms rep
- ▶ Nottingham City Council - Comms rep
- ▶ Natural England - Comms rep and LNRS lead contact
- ▶ Contracted LNRS engagement consultant

The Working Group has met monthly to guide the engagement process.

3. Our Approach

The Working Group reviewed the stakeholder engagement plan that had been drawn up during development work undertaken in 2022. The aim of this plan is to ensure that the LNRS development process is as inclusive and effective as possible, so that the best outcomes can be achieved for both wildlife and people in Nottinghamshire. Stakeholder categories were identified, informed by learning from the five national LNRS Pilot Projects, and to ensure there was a wide spread of interest groups.

We considered it was important to include organisations who have been working in nature recovery, with significant knowledge of the county and its key habitats and species. Also key to the development of the LNRS is the involvement of farmers and landowners and we have worked through the main farmer and landowner association representatives, as well as taken advice from local farm cluster coordinators.

In May 2024 we appointed RSK Nature Positive to provide support for the stakeholder engagement process. The focus of the contract was on 3 main groups - stakeholder organisations, farmers and landowners, and the public/residents – and would be split into 2 key stages:

- 1. pre-consultation engagement to help develop the draft strategy**
- 2. main public consultation period on the Draft LNRS.**

4. Engagement Activity

Working with RSK Nature Positive, a programme of engagement activity was drawn up to enable different groups to participate in identifying priorities for nature recovery in Nottinghamshire. The stakeholder list was refined into a series of workshops – mainly in person but some online - within the time and budget available, with invitations sent to representatives of those organisations.

Between May to October 2024 the following activities were held:

- ▶ seven workshops for: local authority planners, environmental NGOs working in Nottinghamshire, organisations that operate at landscape scale (such as Environment Agency and Forestry Commission), green space and community partnership groups, parish councils, and large landowners (such as NHS, National Grid), for a total of 104 people.
- ▶ two meetings and a stand at two Ploughing Matches (North Notts and Southwell) for farmer and landowner engagement
- ▶ a stand at two public events: Nottinghamshire Day (85 people) and inside the Victoria Shopping Centre in Nottingham (121 people)
- ▶ an online survey on the Participtr platform which involved a series of questions (127 respondents) as well as a map-based element (85 respondents, 177 comments)

4.1 Workshops

The engagement events were designed to be specific for different stakeholder groups, but with underlying similarities so that comparisons could be drawn across different groups, bearing in mind that the attendees could be everyone from specialist experts through to a general public audience. The questions and prompts were designed to achieve two things: firstly to help inform the drawing up of a list of priorities and measures for nature recovery; and secondly, to explore the barriers and enablers for nature recovery in order to help shape the delivery stage of the LNRS. It is essential to be able to draw up a strategy in such a way that it has the best chance of gaining broad support and being deliverable.

One of the elements used consistently across all groups and modes of engagement was a series of images to respond to. These were used in two image groups:

1 – Images of urban or semi-urban 'local' green spaces



2 - Images of the wider landscape of the county



Appendix 1 – Statement of Engagement

This is because urban green spaces and the wider landscape are thought about and used in quite different ways by different groups of people. This pictorial approach did not rely on understanding any particular terminology, or having any ecological knowledge – just an opinion on what people would like spaces to look like in the future, and it helps to reveal what people value about these spaces.

The vision for the future revealed through the choice of images, and the rationale for those choices, showed that, for urban green spaces there was a desire for nature-rich spaces, with clear accessibility (paths, benches, etc) and with an appearance of being looked after: not too manicured, but certainly with a sense of being monitored and maintained to some extent. Water was also a strong element of choice. There was acknowledgement from some groups that some ‘green’ spaces need to be much more managed – mown grass for example – for people to sit or play on.

For the wider landscape there was a slightly greater spread of preference, but again a recognition of competing land use: there was a definite desire for wilder spaces, as natural as possible, but with agricultural production and renewable energy sensitively integrated. The two biggest challenges that emerge for nature recovery are how to develop the housing and infrastructure projects that are national priorities, and how to reconcile the need for agricultural production with enhancing nature.

4.2 Online platform

The online engagement platform (Participatr) was set up to be accessed via a link from the County Council LNRS webpage and is branded as the “Notts Nature Recovery” website. This is the online platform for accessing people’s views at the 2 key stages. It provides information on the LNRS, case studies on existing nature recovery projects, and enables people to respond to a survey or drop a pin on a map to highlight a specific site/location for existing or proposed activity.

4.3 Other Events or Meetings Attended

The LNRS Coordinator attended a number of other events or meetings around the County to give presentations on the LNRS to raise awareness of the strategy and the process, and advise stakeholders how they could input into the process.

Farmers & Landowners

- ▶ Catchment Sensitive Farming events held in Little Morton and Woodborough – August and September 2024
- ▶ CLA Branch meeting - November 2023 and updates for e-newsletters
- ▶ Trees for Climate Farmers Breakfast in Caunton – January 2024
- ▶ Notts County Show - May 2024

Business

- ▶ Fast Forward to Net Zero event – July 2024
- ▶ East Midlands Chamber Sustainability Summit - September 2024
- ▶ Home Builders Federation Midlands Planning Forum – October 2024

Environment

- ▶ Lower Trent and Erewash Catchment Partnership – December 2023 and updates for e-newsletters
- ▶ River Idle Management Partnership – September 2024 and updates for e-newsletters
- ▶ Sherwood Catchment Partnership – updates for e-newsletters
- ▶ Notts BAG Annual Forum – March 2024
- ▶ Notts BAG Delivery Group online meetings

5. Next Steps

We have created an engaging video about the LNRS which is on the LNRS webpage. It will be used as a tool at public consultation stage to raise awareness of the LNRS, by sharing on social media platforms. We want to be very clear about the scope of the LNRS and do not want to raise expectations amongst the general public about what the LNRS can do in their local area.

Our intention is to focus on awareness raising at the public consultation stage and then build on this as we move to the delivery phase, working with partner organisations who are already well connected with local communities, to continue to disseminate key messages.

We will continue to work with our Supporting Authority partners and local environmental organisations. We will also continue to work with representative organisations for farmers and landowners and build up ongoing communication channels.