

1. Introduction

LNRS guidance requires that strategies should consider both habitats and species when setting priorities for recovering or enhancing nature within the strategy area. To this end, it was advised that Responsible Authorities should follow a two-stage process to identify Priorities and Potential Measures for habitat recovery. This document outlines how this process was followed for the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham LNRS, as overseen by the Strategic Oversight Group of the LNRS.

For information on how the Species Priorities and Potential Measures were identified, please see Appendix 5.

2. Stage 1 – creating a 'LNRS Priorities and Potential Measures Longlist'

2.1 Process overview

According to the LNRS guidance, Responsible Authorities should follow a two-stage process: first by developing a 'longlist' of Priorities and Potential Measures, before narrowing down to a shortlist which excludes anything out of scope.

The guidance advises that Priorities for recovering or enhancing habitats to improve biodiversity should be based on the assessment of opportunities for nature recovery in the strategy area. This assessment can be found in Section 4 of the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

Key considerations outlined in the LNRS guidance for the development of the Priorities and Potential Measures longlist include:

- ▶ The importance of developing Priorities and Potential Measures with reference to 'other environmental benefits', such as how nature-based solutions can be implemented to address wider environmental issues.
- ▶ Opportunities to deliver 'co-benefits' through Priorities and Potential Measures, such as improvements to people's health and well-being by bettering access to nature.
- ▶ Potential Measures should include enough detail so that non-experts can understand their purpose and be able to seek further guidance or instructions (if necessary) to confidently carry them out successfully. However, they should not be detailed instructions on how to implement them.

- ▶ Priorities and Potential Measures must be expressed clearly, simply and in an accessible way for the range of people who will use them.
- ▶ Responsible Authorities should seek contributions from partners with ecological and environmental expertise and practical land management experience.
- ▶ Responsible Authorities should also seek contributions from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to encourage their support for delivering the strategy, including by gathering possible Priorities from existing published plans and strategies, and from engaging directly with locally active organisations and individuals.
- ▶ Most Potential Measures should be ways of enhancing existing habitat and creating new habitats, as these sorts of actions are the LNRS's main purpose
- ▶ Responsible Authorities should avoid including any Potential Measures that are not likely to be implemented in the foreseeable future.
- ▶ Responsible Authorities should engage with local partner organisations to find out what environmental projects are already planned or underway to see if the projects could be included as Potential Measures.
- ▶ Responsible Authorities should set out the potentially complex relationships between Priorities and Potential Measures as clearly as possible, to show:
 - Why particular Potential Measures are being proposed
 - How different Potential Measures can contribute to the same Priority
 - How a Potential Measure can achieve multiple Priorities

Appendix 3 – Process for developing Priorities and Potential Measures

2.2 Workshop preparation

Recognising the close and complex relationship between Priorities and Potential Measures for the Nottinghamshire LNRS, it was decided that a longlist for both should be devised at the same time. As Responsible Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council invited local partners and stakeholders to attend a workshop for the creation of the longlist in October 2024.

It was requested that one or two representatives from each organisation on the Strategic Oversight Group attend the workshop to contribute to the longlist. Attendees included ecologists, green space officers and planners from the local planning authorities, EMCCA, Natural England, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, the wildlife NGOs, Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University.

Prior to the workshop, attendees were sent copies of the 'Pressures and Opportunities' section of the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, a copy of the National Environment Objectives and detailed guidance as to how the Priorities and Potential Measures should be devised as recommended by DEFRA. Guidance provided to attendees detailed the definitions of Priorities and Potential Measures in the context of LNRSs and prioritisation criteria based on DEFRA guidance.

2.3 Priorities and Potential Measures Workshop October 2024

On arrival, attendees were given a presentation as a reminder of the LNRS process and to outline the expected outcomes of the workshop. The presentation emphasised the longlisting of Priorities and Potential Measures as a prioritisation process - thinking about the most important factors for nature recovery in Nottinghamshire.

When thinking about Priorities for the LNRS, stakeholders were encouraged to consider Priorities for each habitat, as well as overarching Priorities that might span the whole LNRS. Partners were asked to focus on how Priorities would link to existing strategies and plans (particularly those of their organisations) to ensure the LNRS reflected local concerns and utilised existing local knowledge. Prior to the workshop, a comprehensive list of existing plans and strategies in Nottinghamshire had been collated by the Responsible Authority, following a request to partners for relevant information in December 2023. This was referred to throughout the development of Priorities and Potential Measures.

Regarding Potential Measures, focus was on practicality and feasibility of actions within the context of the LNRS. Thinking ahead to stage 5 of the LNRS process (where Potential Measures would be mapped to specific locations) partners were asked to propose Potential Measures that would enable targeted delivery of the strategy. An example of guidance given to attendees focusing on the feasibility of potential measures is below:

Potential Measures need to be allocated to each of the Priorities, and should:

1. Include enough detail, but not be detailed instructions
2. Be ways of enhancing existing habitat and creating new habitats
3. A small number of Potential Measures may not involve creating or improving habitat, but which are necessary to achieve a Priority
4. Be avoided that are not likely to be implemented in the foreseeable future - LNRSs should be practical, realistic and deliverable documents
5. Have a positive effect on biodiversity if carried out correctly and in the right place
6. Be shaped so that they will deliver non-environmental co-benefits

Tables around the room were set out to cover six broad habitat types - watercourse and wetland, urban and post-industrial, woodland, heathland, grassland and farmland, as well as species and species assemblages (see Appendix 5). Each table covered two habitats/species groups and had a facilitator from the Responsible Authority to discuss ideas. Attendees rotated around tables throughout the day.

Appendix 3 – Process for developing Priorities and Potential Measures

Following initial discussions, partners worked together to complete a spreadsheet capturing the proposed Priorities, Potential Measures, links to other strategies, links to NEOs, links to Pressures and Opportunities and whether they were potentially mappable or not (stage 5 mapping of Measures).

Following the workshop, each facilitator sought to rationalise the Priorities and Potential Measures arising from their table, recognising that a number of suggested Priorities and Potential Measures were similar or overlapped with other Priorities and Potential Measures. The outputs from each table were then collated into a single spreadsheet to produce a longlist.

3. Stage 2 – creating a ‘LNRS Priorities and Potential Measures Shortlist’

3.1 Process overview

The shortlisting process took place through the Advisory Group of the LNRS in early November 2024. As per the LNRS guidance, it was important to ensure that partner contributions had been fully considered and that feedback was delivered transparently. Advice from DEFRA on the shortlisting process recommended that:

- ▶ Following the longlisting process, Responsible Authorities should then exclude any suggestions that are out of scope before narrowing down to select a shortlist of Priorities that the Responsible Authorities consider critical for the strategy to address.
 - ▶ Responsible Authorities should be transparent when deciding which possible Priorities to select from the longlist. This involves showing local partners and helping them to understand how they considered their contributions.
 - ▶ Decisions should be evidence-based and lead to a manageable number of agreed Priorities for the strategy.
 - ▶ Priorities should reflect a balance of suggestions from local partners and support national environmental objectives.
 - ▶ LNRSs should be practical, realistic and deliverable documents. So, Responsible Authorities should avoid including any Potential Measures that are not likely to be implemented in the foreseeable future.
- With this in mind, partners were asked to consider which Potential Measures would be selected for the shortlist of Priorities and Potential Measures, applying criteria-based and preference-based methodologies. Key questions asked during this process included:
- ▶ Does a priority specifically contribute to national environmental objectives?
 - ▶ Does it respond to specific pressures and/or opportunities already identified by the LNRS process?
 - ▶ Does it contribute significantly to the delivery of existing plans and strategies?
 - ▶ Is it urgent that we get to work on this in the short term (i.e. within this LNRS period of 3-10 years) or can we leave this till later?
 - ▶ Does it make a specific contribution to delivering more/bigger/better/ joined sites and priority habitats?
 - ▶ Does it help to support recovery of priority/ threatened species?
 - ▶ Does it support recovery of a locally important/ significant habitat or species not already covered by the two criteria above?
 - ▶ Does it deliver ‘other environmental benefits’ including nature-based solutions that address wider environmental issues?
 - ▶ Is its delivery feasible (putting aside issues of funding/resources) within the timescales of the LNRS?
 - ▶ Is it likely to be successful into the future (e.g. does it make sense in relation to future climate change)?

The approach taken at the workshop resulted in a well-defined longlist with what was considered to be a manageable number of Priorities, such that it was determined that little work was needed to refine it into a shortlist.

Following this, the shortlist was worked into a spreadsheet called LNRS Priorities and Potential Measures, which accompanies this Appendix. This spreadsheet provides a detailed matrix for all Priorities and Potential Measures, capturing links backwards and forwards between different Priorities and Potential Measures and across different habitat groupings, as well as links to the National Environmental Objectives, co-benefits and nature-based solutions, and whether or not the Potential Measure was likely to be mappable or not.

3.2 Stakeholder feedback and second workshop

Attendees of the workshop were sent the LNRS Priorities and Potential Measures spreadsheet for review and comments following the October workshop, which resulted in changes to wording and categorisation of some of the Priorities and Potential Measures through an iterative process.

A second workshop, involving members of the LNRS Advisory Group, was held at the start of November 2024 to review, amend (where deemed necessary), and ultimately agree the finalised list of Priorities and Potential Measures.

4. Finalising Priorities and Potential Measures

A small number of minor amendments to the wording of the Priorities and Potential Measures were subsequently made during the preparation of the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, particularly in response to the practicalities of mapping certain Potential Measures.

Appendix 3: LNRS Priorities and Potential Measures

Step 4 in the preparation of the LNRS is 'agree LNRS priorities and identify potential measures', which then form part of the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities. The recommended process for doing this is set out in "Identifying and agreeing priorities and potential measures within Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Advice for Responsible Authorities" Version1: November 2023.

Definitions:

Priorities are "the end result that the strategy is seeking to achieve"; in most cases these are relevant to habitats, or species. Priorities should generally not include site-level locations, and should determine what should be the focus of nature recovery activities in Nottinghamshire.

Potential measures are "specific practical actions to achieve the priorities"; they are suggested activities that benefit a particular habitat or species or provide wider environmental benefits, and help to deliver the agreed priorities.

Habitat groupings:

Priorities are grouped by broad habitat types, recognising that some habitats don't fall neatly into one particular grouping, and that some potential measures apply to multiple priorities and therefore may appear under a different habitat. An 'Overarching' grouping seeks to capture priorities which apply across all habitat groupings.

Species and species assemblages priorities:

The species assemblages priorities have been dropped into the relevant habitat grouping, but individual species priorities appear as a separate grouping

Links to potential measures/proposed priorities, and to other potential measures/proposed priorities:

The coding system used captures links backwards and forwards between each priority and potential measures in the habitat grouping

The coding system also captures links backwards and forwards between priorities and potential measures appearing in other habitat groupings, where relevant.

The codings system is designed as follows:

1. An arbitrary letter is assigned to each habitat grouping, so B is for woodland
2. P is used to indicate a Priority, and these are numbered - therefore A/P1 is the first woodland priority
3. The Potential Measures are coded similarly, with M used instead - so A/M1 is the first woodland Potential Measure
4. For the species priorities, the code SP/P1 and SP/M1 is used (SP = species)

Link to NEO's:

The link to the National Environmental Objectives is identified in this column, with those NEO's directly benefit from a priority being emboldened.

Co-benefits:

The LNRS should aim to enhance biodiversity whilst also providing a range of co-benefits. These are identified against each priority, where relevant (and where there is a clear and direct link), based on the following themes:

- 1. Cleaner Water:** Improved water quality for drinking and bathing through the creation of wetlands and better land management practices
- 2. Cleaner Air:** Enhanced air quality by reducing pollutants and by planting trees and hedgerows, which help to filter pollutants
- 3. Healthier Soils:** Improved soil health for growing food and other products, such as timber and biofuels
- 4. Climate Regulation:** Increased carbon sequestration through the restoration of peatlands and the creation of new habitats, as well as shading from trees
- 5. Flood Mitigation:** Reduced flood risks by restoring natural floodplains and creating wetlands
- 6. Recreational Opportunities:** More green spaces for recreation and well-being, benefiting local communities
- 7. Economic Benefits:** Boosted local economies through eco-tourism, delivery of land management practices and products e.g. from woodland
- 8. Educational Opportunities:** Increased opportunities for environmental education and community engagement

Appendix 3: LNRS Priorities and Potential Measures

Nature-based solution:

Nature-based solutions are interventions that use nature and the natural functions of healthy ecosystems to tackle societal challenges (social, economic and environmental). These are identified against each potential measure, where relevant, based on the following themes:

- 1. Wetland Creation:** Establishing new wetlands to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and provide flood protection
- 2. Peatland Restoration:** Restoring degraded peatlands to sequester carbon, improve water quality, and support unique wildlife
- 3. Tree and Hedgerow Planting:** Increasing tree cover and hedgerows to enhance habitat connectivity, sequester carbon, and improve air quality
- 4. Sustainable Woodland Management:** Managing existing woodlands sustainably to enhance biodiversity, provide timber, and support recreation
- 5. Grassland Restoration:** Restoring and managing grasslands to support pollinators, improve soil health, and increase biodiversity

6. River Restoration: Re-naturalizing rivers to improve water quality, reduce flood risk, and enhance habitats for aquatic species

7. Urban Greening: Creating green roofs, walls, and urban parks to improve air quality, reduce urban heat islands, and provide recreational spaces

8. Agroforestry: Integrating trees and shrubs into agricultural landscapes to enhance biodiversity, improve soil health, and increase farm productivity

9. Pollinator Habitats: Creating and maintaining habitats specifically for pollinators to support agriculture and biodiversity

10. Keystone species and ecosystem engineers: The use of species, including reintroduced species, to manage habitats and ecosystems

Supporting actions:

In some cases, 'supporting actions' have been identified which are considered to be out of scope for the LNRS, but are nevertheless important for driving nature recovery in Nottinghamshire.

Spreadsheet:

Please see separate spreadsheet which provides a detailed matrix to show links between Priorities and Measures within the same habitat, and between different habitat groups. This matrix also identifies links to the National Environmental Objectives, and shows where Priorities and Potential Measures have other benefits or provide nature-based solutions.