

Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Network Mapping Project

Responsible Authority Appointment

Formal appointment letters from Defra expected May 2023. Council has a call booked to discuss the agreement with Defra mid-May. The confirmation will require legal sign off within Herefordshire Council (HC) and a decision paper internally.

Sketching Out Processes and Timelines

Resources for each task will need to be identified and secured.

Task	Resource	Timescale
Webpage creation		May 2023.
Stakeholder contact list		Spreadsheet set up April 2023 and populated as we move forward.
LNRS generic email address		By 1 st June 2023.
Form steering group and evolving wider partnership		Plan first meeting mid-May 2023.
Early wide engagement questionnaire (if desired by steering group)		Launch June 2023 for 6 weeks.
A short 'what we learned' document setting out results of engagement.		September 2023.
Design work – logo etc.		June/July 2023.
Draft engagement plan		Draft July 2023. Consultation with stakeholders July/August 2023.
Visioning Work		Summer/Autumn 2023
Mapping Work - LNRN		Commissioning Summer 2023. Baseline Autumn 2023. Opportunities Spring 2024. Sharing and refining Summer 2024.
Web hosting for LNRN mapping		Summer 2024
Schematic of LNRN		Spring 2024.
Description of the LNRS Area and Statement of Biodiversity Priorities		Engagement Winter 2023. Outcomes Summer 2024.
Public Consultation on LNRS		September/ October 2024.

Webpage Creation

It would be useful to have a basic webpage on the HC website at this point – what is an LNRS, that the Council expect to be appointed as the RA, links to the Defra background information etc.

A landing page where partners can expect to find all the up to date information as we get started.

Early Stakeholder Engagement

Some early engagement has already occurred. Some RAs have chosen to do a broad early engagement questionnaire (scoping exercise) and that might be a useful way to bring partners into the process and begin to engage with landowners and other parties. It would focus on broad questions around top priorities, biggest opportunities, the role of habitats and species, biggest threats to biodiversity, identifying the most special biodiversity features of the county, beginning to explore approach.

Stakeholder Contact List

Creation of a stakeholder engagement contact list to allow us to curate an audience who wish to be updated on LNRS development so we can do targeted mail outs etc.

Generic Email Address

Creation of a generic email address to allow the ecology team to manage engagement effectively.

Formation of a LNRS Steering Group and Wider Partnership

Work with stakeholders to agree representation on the LNRS steering group and evolving wider partnership. Hold initial steering group meeting. Agree Terms of Reference (draft already underway).

Production of a Draft Engagement Plan

Production of a more complete draft Engagement Plan setting out how HC will engage with partners, stakeholders and the general public throughout the project. This will allow us to identify resource and skills needs for engagement activities.

Visioning Work

Visioning should be done by steering group and wider partnership following inception. Ideally this work should be professionally facilitated at a range of in person and virtual engagement sessions.

Description of the LNRS Area

It is assumed this can be a fairly broad description of the natural character areas and biodiversity features present, designated sites and the current state of biodiversity in the County.

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities – the ‘Strategy’

This is a more developed statement building on the vision and description. It should set out the priority habitats present, the most special areas and designated sites and try to set the baseline for those habitats/features at the current time. It should also build on the key themes, priorities, opportunities and threats work undertaken as part of the early stakeholder engagement. This document can draw together the description and visioning while also setting priorities and describing the measures which might be utilised in delivering the priorities.

Mapping & Schematic of LNRS Map

Mapping should use nationally available datasets as the starting point and should engage with neighbouring RAs on matching up at the borders. Local datasets should be used where they are reasonable accurate, at appropriate scale and where data ownership allows for their use.

The first iteration of the mapping exercise may identify evidence gaps which can be established, funded and filled by the time the first review is due to be carried out.

Mapping should be simple, clearly setting out the baseline and then mapping a range of broad 'opportunities' which deliver biodiversity gain, improvements in connectivity and improved buffering of designated sites. The mapping should aim to act as a priority setting exercise spatially but should be sufficiently flexible that landowners do not feel 'prescribed to' and instead feel engaged to take positive action for biodiversity on their land which meets some of the strategy's objectives.

Mapping should be digitally hosted in the long term and updated at each strategy review.

Fran Lancaster
Principal Natural Environment Officer
Herefordshire Council