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**Sussex
Nature Recovery**
A collective blueprint for targeted action

How to have your say on your Sussex LNRS

A webinar for Town & Parish Councils

21st October 2025

SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk



Agenda

- About Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Key components of Sussex LNRS (getting you familiar)
- Navigating the Local Habitat Map
- What happens next
- Q&A (aiming for 20 mins)

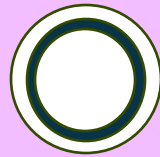


First, a bit of housekeeping



Chat

Technical problem?
Let us know if you can't see the slides or hear the presenters, by posting in the chat.



Record

This session is being recorded.
It will be uploaded to the Sussex Nature Recovery website in the next few days.



Questions

Please ask questions using the Q&A button. You can do this anonymously.

Upvote those questions you want to hear answered by our panel

About Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategies

Overview

- A new statutory process to help nature.
- 48 strategies being developed across England, led by county councils.
- They all follow a defined process but vary due to quantity/quality of local data and resources, and by their interpretation of the task.
- 2 strategies cover Sussex:
 - East Sussex and Brighton & Hove
 - West Sussex
- Shared stakeholders and a history of close collaboration led to developing aspects of the Sussex strategies together, under the banner of Sussex Nature Recovery.
- Over 2,000 Sussex residents and organisations involved in their development via workshops, surveys, webinars, mapping tools, task & finish groups, presentations and more.
- The two strategies set out the main principles, priorities and actions for nature recovery in Sussex.
- **We will be spending the next few years understanding how best to embed them into local decision making.**

Consultation
Six-week duration
Closes
26 November 2025

Publication
Spring 2026

Some of those involved (plus all District & Borough councils)



Impact and scope

- **Unlock funding:** direct Biodiversity Net Gain funding into areas that will deliver the greatest benefits to nature. Role in guiding agri-schemes to be defined.
- **Inform local planning:** role in planning process and informing public authorities' strengthened biodiversity duty
- **Support decision-making:** provide an evidence-base to give confidence to landowners, funders, investors.
- **Nature-based solutions:** support their delivery which will help direct funding from private sector.
- **Targeting:** ensure the right things are done in the most effective areas.

What they can't do

- *Can't dictate* how land will be used.
- Place *no obligations* on landowners or any other organisation to carry actions out.
- *Can't protect more spaces* for nature - Areas mapped for habitat creation/improvement do not prevent other legitimate land uses, do not place new restrictions on developing land, and do not identify areas to be given legal protection.
- While they highlight pressures such as pollution and housing development, they *can't tackle the sources* of these pressures if they are covered by other frameworks.



What they contain

Supporting information

- Ecological evidence and data
- Existing priorities from 150 published plans & strategies
- Views and concerns from local people
- Existing projects, initiatives and ambitions
- Local/national expertise and rigour



The 'Tool kit'

7 principles

24 habitat priorities

100+ measures
(practical, feasible actions)

Prioritised species list and specific
species measures

Local Habitat Map

The format: 4 written parts and an interactive map



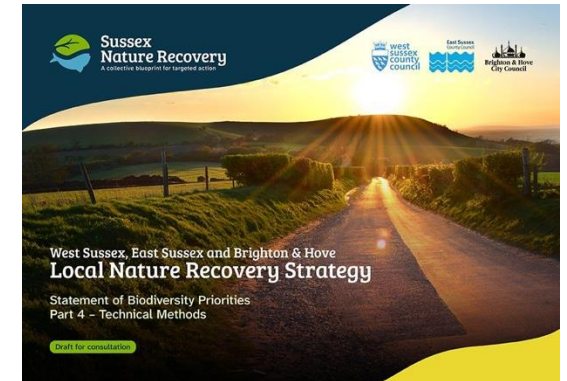
West Sussex
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities
Part 1 – Context & Description of
Strategy Area



West Sussex
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities
Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and
the Local Habitat Map



West Sussex
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities
Part 3 – Priority Species



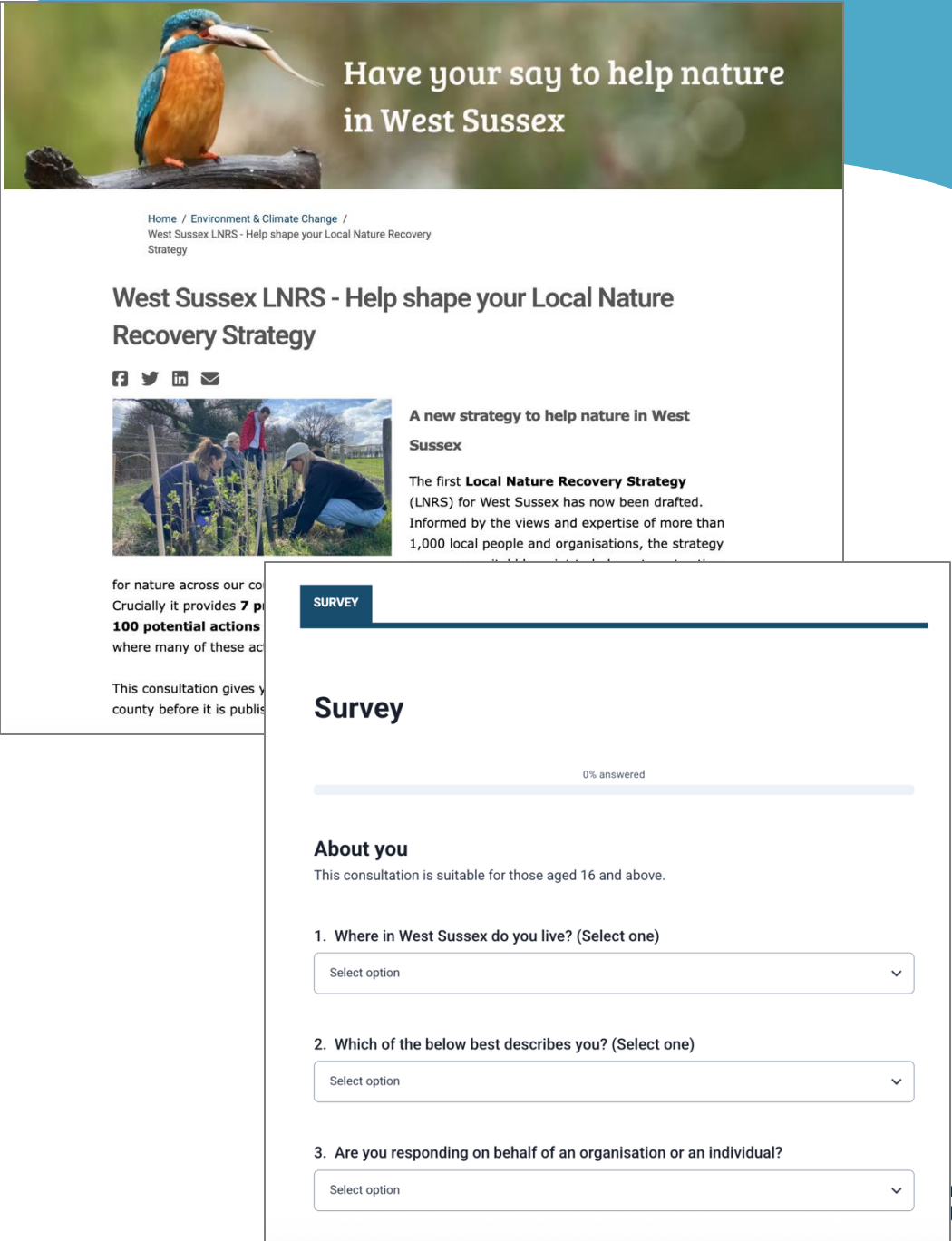
West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities
Part 4 – Technical Methods

Consultation

- Both strategies have their own consultation hub on West Sussex County Councils' YourVoice Platform.
- Hubs have links to documents and map plus user guides and FAQs.

3 ways to have your say

- **Take the consultation survey**
 - Scroll down the hub page to start the survey.
 - 36 questions. All are voluntary, many are multiple choice.
 - Survey canvasses your awareness of and involvement with the LNRS. Also asks your views on the key components of Parts 1-3 and the map.
 - Skip any questions that don't feel relevant.
- **Add a comment directly to the map**
 - If you have comment about a location and what is or isn't on the map, you can add a pin to the interactive map itself.
- **Email us if you have more detailed feedback**
 - EastSussexLNRS@eastsussex.gov.uk
 - WestSussexLNRS@westsussex.gov.uk



The image shows a screenshot of the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) consultation hub. The top section features a kingfisher on a branch with the text "Have your say to help nature in West Sussex". Below this is a breadcrumb trail: "Home / Environment & Climate Change / West Sussex LNRS - Help shape your Local Nature Recovery Strategy". The main heading is "West Sussex LNRS - Help shape your Local Nature Recovery Strategy". There are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email. A photo shows people planting trees in a field. Text next to the photo says: "A new strategy to help nature in West Sussex. The first Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for West Sussex has now been drafted. Informed by the views and expertise of more than 1,000 local people and organisations, the strategy..." Below the photo, it says: "for nature across our co... Crucially it provides 7 p... 100 potential actions... where many of these ac... This consultation gives y... county before it is publi...".

SURVEY

Survey

0% answered

About you

This consultation is suitable for those aged 16 and above.

1. Where in West Sussex do you live? (Select one)

Select option

2. Which of the below best describes you? (Select one)

Select option

3. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or an individual?

Select option

Key components of Sussex LNRS

Description of Sussex nature

Part 1, Section 4

What is it?

- A summary of our priority habitats: what they are, where they are found, their condition and the pressures they're under.

How does this help us to help nature?

- No single 'State of Nature' report for Sussex. Patchy habitat data locally and nationally.
- Multiple sources reviewed and data drawn together to create this Description.
- Peer reviewed by a panel Sussex's leading nature experts.
- Provides the first ever comprehensive summary of the condition of Sussex nature.
- A benchmark from which to assess progress and future trends.

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Part 1

Nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove - description

4.6 Protected Sites

Designations

The value of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove for wildlife and beauty is recognised by the areas designated for their nature conservation interest. Some are protected under international agreements or national legislation and some under local policies. The following table shows the extent of these **protected sites** in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

SSSIs support habitats and/or species of national importance, and represent our best sites for wildlife and geology. Within these nationally important areas, some are additionally designated as **NNRs** - these recognise some of our most important habitats, species and geology and are considered to be the 'jewel in the crown' of our SSSIs. **SACs** are internationally important sites for habitats and species, **SPAs** are internationally important sites for birds, and **Ramsar sites** are internationally important wetlands. All of these sites are protected by law.

Designation	No. of Sites	Extent (ha)	% of LNRS Area
Ramsar wetlands	2	6,442	3.7
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)*	6	7,624	4.2
Special Protection Areas (SPA)*	2	5,546	3.2
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*	65	15,519	8.5
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	4	342	0.2
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	28	2,029	1.1
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)*	368	10,498	5.7
Total extent of national & international designations*		15,547	8.6
Total extent of all designations*		26,004	14.4

*NB designations can overlap so total extents are not a direct sum.



Pevensey Levels © Kai Hilton/Sussex Wildlife Trust
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West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Part 1

Nature in West Sussex - description

Species-rich Grassland

Our species-rich grasslands include **lowland calcareous grassland** (chalk grassland), **species-rich meadows** (including lowland meadows) and pastures, **waxcap grasslands**, and **neutral grasslands**. We also have acid grassland but as that is most commonly found in association with heathland habitats, it is covered in that section of the description. Similarly, wet grassland and grazing marsh are covered in the wetland section. Map 3 (Appendix 1A) shows the distribution of chalk grassland and lowland meadows in West Sussex.

These grasslands are rich in wildlife and provide important ecosystem services but they depend on continuity of appropriate and sympathetic management to maintain their ecological value. Ongoing agricultural "improvement" of semi-natural grassland (through re-seeding, use of fertiliser and herbicides to increase productivity), neglect, land use change and urban development are key threats that continue to reduce and fragment the remaining areas of ecologically important grassland both across the UK and in West Sussex.

Unimproved chalk grassland occurs along the length of the South Downs, and unimproved hay meadows and pastures are concentrated on more traditionally managed farms in the High and Low Weald. Waxcap grasslands can be found in cemeteries and churchyards in towns and villages across the county as well as within unimproved grassland on undisturbed soils with a range of pH values. Diverse, semi-natural grassland is usually associated with the farmed landscapes and nature reserves but also occurs in mosaics with other habitats, such as scrub (in transitional vegetation), on woodland rides, in wetlands, on road verges and sometimes in urban greenspaces. The extent of the different species-rich grasslands found in our LNRS area is shown below.

Grassland Type	Extent (ha)	% LNRS area
Lowland calcareous grassland	2736	1.4
Lowland meadows	226	0.1
Waxcap grasslands	1451	0.7
Unimproved neutral grassland	389	0.2
TOTAL	4793	2.4



Grassland meadow © iStock.com/Chris Page

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What's currently happening

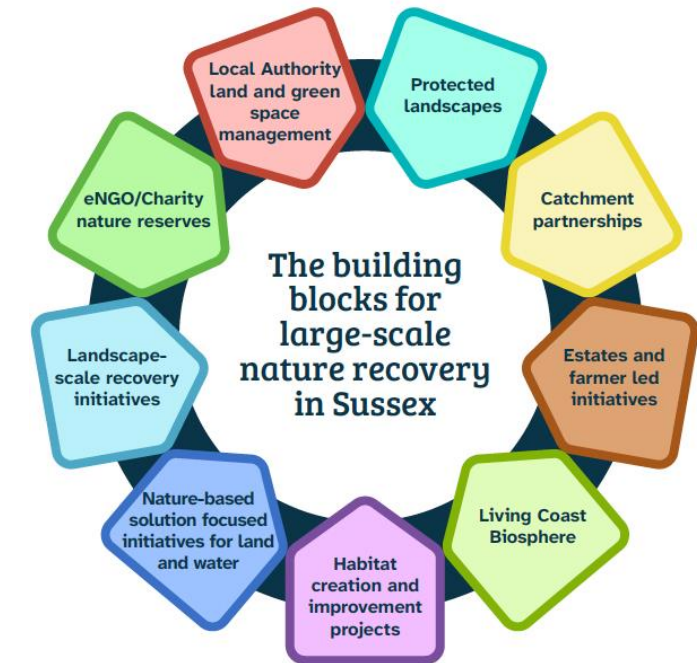
Part 1, Section 5

What is it?

- A summary of existing landscape-scale recovery and initiatives and drivers. Includes Protected Landscapes, new movements such as Weald to Waves and Sussex Bay, plus farmer clusters and charity and local authority managed land.
- Examples of local action from grassroots groups and projects (provided from our surveys).

How does this help us to help nature?

- Demonstrates that the LNRS is a container for all layers of action across the area.
- Identifies landscape-scale initiatives as our building blocks for nature recovery in Sussex (they already have the ambition, mechanisms, land, etc).
- Acknowledges the contribution played by the vast network of hardworking community groups and local councils.
- Reminder that we are not starting from a blank canvas – huge amount of energy and commitment in Sussex.



West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Part 1

What is happening already?

5.4 Local achievements

A few of the fantastic local nature projects delivered by community groups and councils across West Sussex. Read about many more in our [community group survey results](#).

Eastbrook Community Gardeners – plant trees and flowers in Fishergate and Southwick. Have supplied and laid over £1,250 of wildflower turf in St Aubyn's Crescent.

Steyning Downland Scheme – in partnership with South Downs National Park Authority and Kew Wakehurst, this community group supported the reintroduction of the Duke of Burgundy by creating new habitat, planting and growing food plants and monitoring this butterfly species.

Wild About Warnham – manage 20 acres of former farmland since 2008 to provide optimum habitat for butterflies and other wildlife. 33 butterfly species have now been recorded. Birds and other taxa have colonised the site which is also a valuable educational resource.

Burgess Hill Swift Supporters – have installed nesting boxes and organise swift walks to monitor and educate others about this species.

Friends of Heene Cemetery – undertook ecological surveys of the cemetery and its unimproved meadowland, identifying 723 species and establishing the rich biodiversity of this site in central Worthing. The group have also installed educational posters.

The Woodland, Flora & Fauna Group – erected scores of Barn owl boxes in locations around southern Mid Sussex to provide roosting and breeding opportunities around areas of suitable hunting terrain.

The Welldeerness CIC – planted 1500 native trees to increase biodiversity on Wild Heart Hill in Findon. Won the Queens Tree award.

Curtis Avenue Wildlife Garden – cleared a fly-tipped playing field 15 years ago with assistance from local environmental groups. Now a series of habitats for wildlife – woodland, orchard, hedgerows, wildflowers, grassland and ponds – providing a haven for butterflies, bees, insects and birds.

Cuckfield Parish Council – planted two orchards and an 'edible' hedge on a parish council site with an interpretation board to educate visitors. Their Biodiversity Action Plan includes swift nest boxes, a camera trapping project to estimate the local hedgehog population and pilot studies on managing verges for wildflowers.

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group – delivering multiple projects for nature across the Manhood Peninsula including fixing and linking its wetlands through their FLOW project, working to safeguard the local water vole population and devising pollinator highways.



➤ The Woodland Flora and Fauna Group undertake breeding surveys and identify a young barn owl. © Michael Setford



➤ Steyning Downland Conservation Volunteers putting in a new water trough. © Wyles Field

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Opportunities

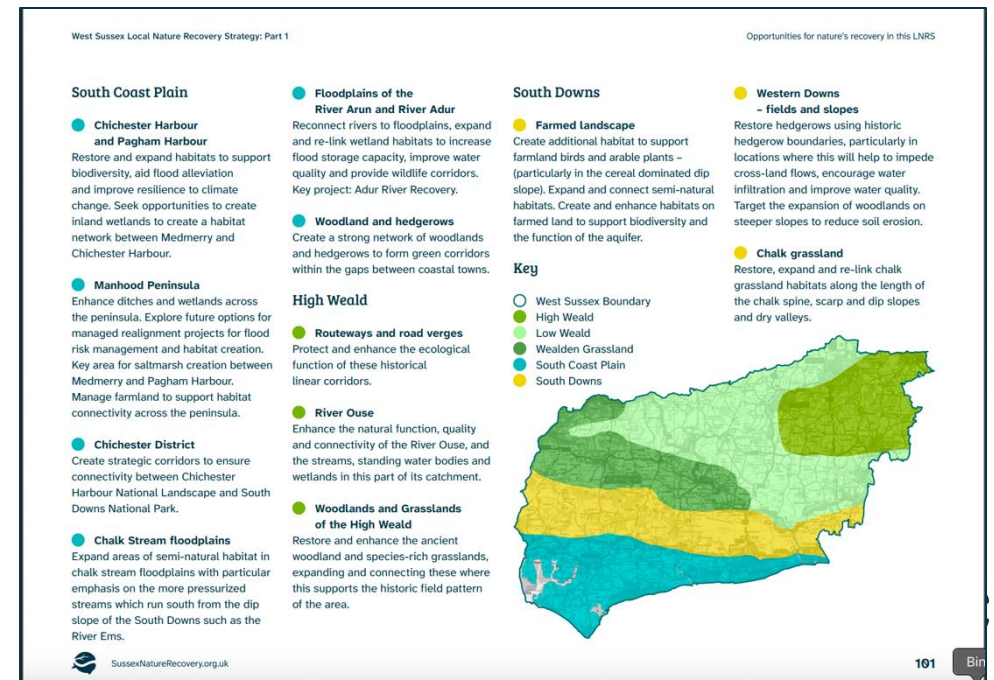
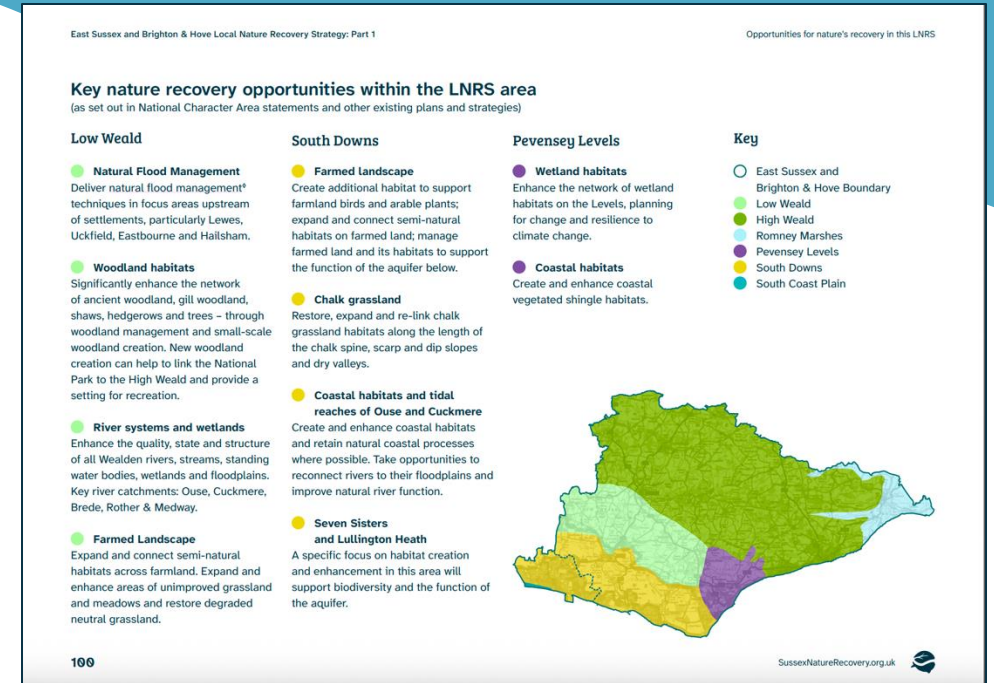
Part 1, Section 6

What are they?

- A summary of the key nature recovery opportunities from various sources:
 - National Character Areas
 - Protected Landscape Management Plans
 - BOAs (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas)
 - Local Plans
- 22 identified for West Sussex, 23 for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

How does this help us to help nature?

- Reflects a consensus on the high-level spatial priorities for nature's recovery for our LNRS areas.
- Important foundation for mapping measures.



Principles

Part 2, Section 3

What are they?

- Seven strategic principles to guide the application of our priorities and measures.
- Describes the key issues related to nature in Sussex and how the strategy helps to address these.

How does this help us to help nature?

- Sets the scene to describe why we need to act and what we need to do. (e.g. coastal habitats at *extreme* risk of climate change).
- Highlights changes needed to current approaches (e.g. designations are *not enough* to keep core areas in good condition).
- Underscores the breadth of action needed – not just habitat creation and enhancement but improving access to nature in urban areas and supporting and championing farmers/regenerative farming practices.

1. In our core areas for nature, hold on to what we have and make it better.
2. Create a network of ‘bigger, better, more and joined-up’ wildlife-rich spaces across our rural and urban landscapes.
3. Think big: work at scale to support ecosystems and natural processes.
4. Showcase and support action for nature across our farmed landscapes.
5. Support species special to the LNRS area.
6. Invest in and use nature to deliver wider benefits where we need them.
7. Bring nature into everyday life, providing places for people to benefit from and engage with nature.

Priorities

Part 2, Section 4

What are they?

- 24 priorities related to habitats (woodland, coastal, river systems, grassland etc).
- Each comes with a set of outcome statements that describes what 'success' in 10 years looks like to guide our understanding of their potential short-mid term impact.

How does this help us to help nature?

- Sets out what we need to do.
- Includes priorities for 'nature networks' (to cover habitat mosaics and nature corridors), and 'Nature, health & wellbeing' (to acknowledge the important link between access to nature and health).

RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

Priority: R1 (Rivers and river systems)

Support the recovery of our rivers and river systems*, their health, biodiversity and natural functions

- The natural functions of our rivers and streams are being enhanced and restored. The connection between our rivers and their floodplains has been increased where this is suitable. Mosaics of dynamic floodplain habitats are delivering benefits for nature and are supporting the natural function of river systems in times of flood and drought. In some places, watercourses are also being 're-naturalised' to improve their habitat and flow paths, undoing 'straightening' and removing/adapting man-made barriers to flow and species movement. This is giving rivers and streams room to flow more naturally over a greater length.



Measures Part 2, Section 4

What are they?

- 100+ practical and achievable actions that can be implemented to deliver the priorities.
- Each has additional information about how and where they can be carried out, their wider environmental benefits, links to best practice and case studies, and some examples of alignment with agri-environment schemes.
- ‘Core’ measures supported by ‘Enabling’ measures – a set of additional actions needed that are *beyond the scope* of the LNRS e.g. ‘Work collaboratively to design a data and monitoring system... on the health of rivers and streams in Sussex’.

How does this help us to help nature?

- Takes the strategy from high level steps to on-the-ground actions, ranging from those related to specific sites and expertise to everyday measures we can all take forward.

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R1.6	Create and manage permanent vegetation buffer strips alongside rivers and streams to support biodiversity and intercept and reduce levels of pollutants (such as nutrients, chemical pollutants, veterinary chemicals, excessive sediment) reaching watercourses. Mapped 	Creation of permanent vegetation buffers (grassland, wetland, hedgerows, trees, others). For farmland, buffer size to be suitable for site, field size and landscape scale. For grassland buffers, there is a recommended width under ELMS schemes >6m (SFI) and 12-24m (arable land at high risk of erosion).	This is good practice along all watercourses but is particularly important in the following cases: • watercourses in an agricultural setting (arable and pasture); • priority watercourses e.g. chalk streams, wood gills; • those located in source protection zones and nitrate vulnerable zones; • those in upper catchments.	Defra Blog: Water body buffering standard of the Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: BFS1 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land



Priority species and measures

Part 3

What is it?

- A shortlist of our most at risk/iconic Sussex species and the specific interventions needed to recover them (over and above those that will improve habitats).
 - East: 160 priority species (additional 326 species supported by habitat measures).
 - West: 163 priority species (additional 338 species supported by habitat measures).

How does this help us to help nature?

- The most up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of priority species compiled for Sussex.
- Rigorously reviewed by panel of leading species experts.
- Highlights which species need additional actions.
- A benchmark from which to assess progress and future trends.

West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Part 3

Priority Species Measures

Species	Information	Measures
Mouse-eared Bat <i>Myotis myotis</i>	Legal protection, CR. Rarest bat in Britain, but not resident with no maternity sites found for many years. Only two individuals of this species in the UK, both in West Sussex. Thought to be crossing the Channel to hibernate. Possible that there are undiscovered summer roosts in southern England. Key species: Hibernation roost protection key. Habitats: tunnels (hibernation roost); woodland edge, pasture/grassland, agricultural land (foraging).	1. Protect hibernation roost e.g. through raising awareness with landowners. 2. Create, enhance and manage supporting foraging habitat for the species including woodland edges, pasture/grassland and agricultural land, especially in proximity to known hibernation roost and historic maternity roost site.
Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>	S41, BoCC Red. Very common winter visitor and passage migrant. Chichester Harbour holds about 80% of birds wintering in Sussex. Stronghold for the species and considered iconic.	1. Work with farmers to provide suitable crop or set aside pasture in winter months for geese to feed on. 2. Create and manage diverse coastal grasslands and marshes with ditches and scrapes of lagoons. 3. Ideally leave grasslands ungrazed over winter. 4. Reduce recreational disturbance through education.
Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Legal protection, BoCC Amber. Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; very scarce breeder since 2004. Marshes and reedbeds.	1. Maintain/enhance water quality in wetland and rivers around known sites e.g. by providing appropriate buffers, reducing the use of chemicals etc. 2. Manage reedbeds by e.g. grazing, cutting, scrub control etc.
White-tailed Eagle <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	Legal protection, BoCC Amber. Rare vagrant. Reintroduction project on the Isle of Wight. Considered iconic. Coastal & wetland.	Survey/monitoring to assess success of reintroduction programme and to inform future management.

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West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Part 3

Priority Species Measures

Wetlands (Rivers, Streams & Aquifers + Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies)

Amphibian Ponds Assemblage

Measures:

- Restore ponds: de-silt, deepen, maintain water levels and improve water quality.
- Establish network of new ponds, with range of sizes and depths.
- Maintain/extend undisturbed semi-natural habitat surrounding pond.
- Avoid stocking with fish.
- Establish toad crossing signposts/patrols where roads cross migration routes.
- Note: Great crested newt conservation strategy in place through District Licensing.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
Common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	Legal protection, S41. Widespread in the UK but have declined by over 68% in last 30 years. Requires targeted habitat management.
Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Legal protection, S41. Widespread but patchy distribution in the UK. Sussex is a stronghold for the species. Newt Conservation Partnership



Great crested newt © iStock.com/MikeLane45

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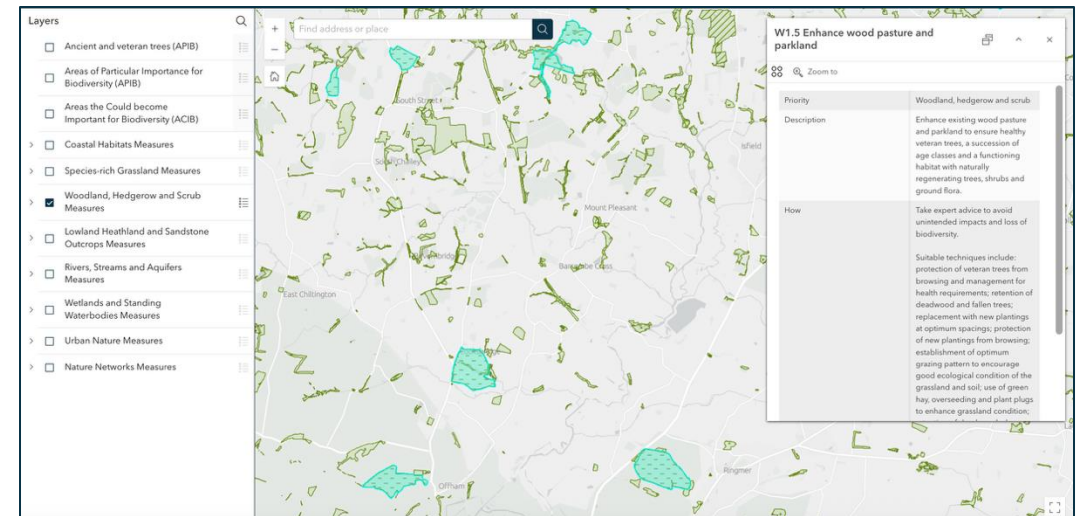
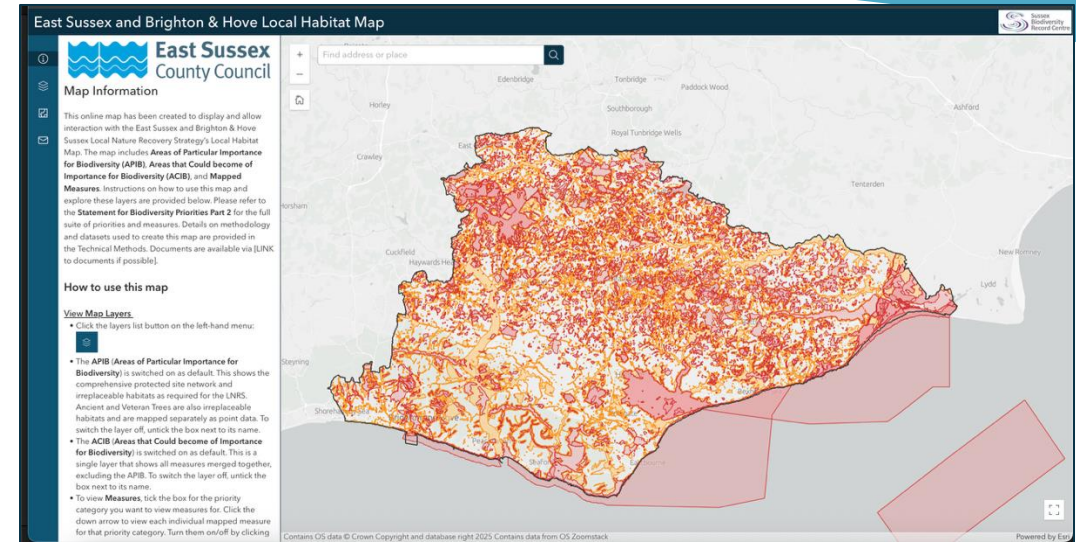
Local Habitat Map

What is it?

- Identifies locations where measures can feasibly be implemented that will have the greatest impact for nature/wider environmental benefits.
- Layers include:
 - Our existing designated sites for nature (called *Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity – APIB*).
 - Where a combined view of measures can be applied outside of the APIB (called *Areas that Could become of Importance to Biodiversity – ACIB*).
- NB - 60% of measures are not mappable. This is due to: a lack of data to target effectively, a stipulation in the regulations, or there are no 'best' locations as they could be implemented in too many places (e.g. nesting and roosting boxes, buffer strips etc).

How does this help us to help nature?

- Guides where we should be focusing efforts, and which actions and habitats are best suited to the area.



Navigating the Local Habitat Map

What happens next?

How the LNRS helps us to help nature

- It shows **where we should be strategic** in focusing our effort and why.
- **Gives confidence** to funders, investors, landowners about actions and locations due to being statutory and its collaborative, participative approach
- Serves as a **benchmark ‘state of nature’** for future trends and recovery efforts.
- **Is a new source of evidence for local planning** and local government decision-making processes.
- **Acts as a ‘container’ for existing recovery initiatives** – provides a wider context and mechanism to coordinate and direct action at all scales.
- Provides **a single set of priorities and actions** for all interested parties to rally behind, seek funding for and work together to deliver on the ground.
- Helps all those interested to see **how their actions could make a contribution to the broader county-wide ambition** for nature.

Moving towards delivery

Supporting information

- Ecological evidence and data
- Existing priorities from 150 published plans & strategies
- Views and concerns from local people
- Existing projects, initiatives and ambitions
- Local/national expertise and rigour

The 'Tool kit'

7 principles

24 habitat priorities

100+ measures
(practical, feasible actions)

Prioritised species list and specific
species measures

Local Habitat Map

Putting it into action

- Respond to consultation and publish (Spring 2026)
- Responsible Authorities given statutory role in supporting and enabling delivery.
- Rally authorities, partners, stakeholders and the public around the LNRS.
- Embed LNRS in local planning.
- Identify, develop, publicise and track high-impact projects that advance priorities and showcase best practice.



What's in it for Town & Parish Councils?

- Neighbourhood Plans were reviewed to inform LNRS priorities.
- While our mapping approach wasn't able to include spaces designated in Neighbourhood Plans, if you added specific projects to our interactive mapping tool, we have tried to accommodate these.
- Many measures are relevant. e.g. those covering active travel, community level green spaces/corridors.
- Lots of things should resonate in the written list (which might not be mappable) e.g. community orchards, wildflower strips etc.
- Tool kit gives reason and means to talk to and coalesce local groups about nature's recovery.



@Diana Alcroft

Adding your voice to your LNRS

- Go to your LNRS hub and respond to the consultation before 26th November 2025
- [Download our Comms Tool Kit](#) to help you promote the LNRS through your channels.
- Note - There is support for those without digital access in Sussex libraries.

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/lhrs-east>

West Sussex LNRS

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/lhrs-west>



Q&A