

Committee: Open Spaces

Date: 5 October 2021

Title: DEFRA Local Nature Recovery Strategies - Consultation

Purpose of Report

To advise members on how to respond to the NALC consultation on Local Nature Recovery strategies

Recommendation:

Members to recommend to Full Council that officers should respond as proposed in the report provided.

Background:

1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a flagship measure in the Environment Bill. They are a new system of spatial strategies for nature which will plan, map, and help drive more coordinated, practical, focused action and investment in nature's recovery to build the national Nature Recovery Network
2. Defra are currently holding a consultation to gather views on key questions that will help Government produce both the regulations and the guidance swiftly after the Environment Bill becomes law
3. The consultation includes an overview of what Local Nature Recovery Strategies are and how Government intends for them to be used. The questions themselves focus first on the process (regulations) and then the content (guidance) of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
4. National Association of Local Councils (NALC) will be responding to seven main questions and seeks the views of county associations and member councils in response to these questions to help inform its own submission.

Report:

5. **What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?**
 - 5.1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial strategies for nature, which will cover the whole of England. They are established by clauses 100 to 104 of the Environment Bill and are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to help nature.
 - 5.2. 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.

6. How will these Strategies be used?

- 6.1. After the 2019 consultation of biodiversity net gain there was strong support for maps to be used as a guide the provision of compensatory habitat in relation to developments
- 6.2. The Environment bill will require developer to ensure there is a biodiversity net gain on all new developments and where this cannot be achieved on site, they will be encouraged to do this elsewhere. Places identified within the LNRS will have a 15% metric uplift thus encouraging a more targeted approach to habitat creation and restoration
- 6.3. LNRS will also play a key role in future agri-environmental schemes and likely see landowners compensated for managing land in areas identified by the LNRS
- 6.4. LNRS are also intended to support the delivery of wider environmental objectives. “Nature based solutions” refers to the use of nature and natural processes to address wider environmental or societal problems. Examples include restoring peatlands to slow the flow of water into river systems to reduce the risk of flooding or planting trees near rivers to limit soil erosion that impacts on water quality

7. Ilminster Town Councils Response to the NALC Consultation

In the table below the questions that NALC are interested in hearing from members about are highlighted along with a proposed response and the reasoning behind this response.

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No.	Question	Suggested Response	Explanation
5	<p>Which of the groups listed below do you consider essential for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities adjacent to the Strategy areas. • Local Nature Partnership(s), where active and geographically aligned • Natural England • The Environment Agency • The Forestry Commission • Other public bodies e.g. Highways England • Environmental non-governmental organizations active in the Strategy area • National Park Authority(s), where present in the Strategy area and if not the “responsible authority” • Area of Outstanding National Beauty organization(s), where present in the Strategy area • Local Records Centre(s), where separate from any of the other groups listed • Local farming, forestry, and landowning groups • Local Enterprise Partnerships • Utilities providers, such as water companies • Other local business representative bodies • Individual landowners and land managers (including farmers, both landowners and tenants) • Individual businesses • Members of the public 	It would be appropriate that all be contacted in the initial stages.	<p>LNRs’s need transparency for collaboration, and consensus in decision making. They need broad and diverse stakeholder participation from the earliest stages in our LNRs.</p> <p>Transparency in the production of LNRs will be important to encourage participation, help resolve difficult or competing issues, and to obtain consensus among participants.</p> <p>LNRs are expected to include the wider environmental benefits of nature recovery, including nature-based solutions that counter the effects of climate change, such as natural flood management</p>
6	<p>Are there any organizations not listed above whose involvement you consider essential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't Know 	No	Through public consultation all interested parties will have an opportunity to shape these strategies, (see explanation 11)

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9	<p>Are you aware of specific locally held information that would make an important contribution to the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies that you do not believe would be made available without a requirement to do so?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't Know 	No	<p>Some wildlife groups and organizations use the data they collect commercially to help fund further research. As a council we do not hold such data in this and would happily share what data we have collected to help prepare local strategies</p>
10	<p>How do you think neighboring Local Nature Recovery Strategy responsible authorities should be required to work together?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to inform neighboring responsible authorities of their progress in preparing their Strategy • Required to give information to neighboring responsible authorities that would help them prepare their Strategy • Required to collaborate when setting objectives for areas close to boundaries • Left to local discretion • Other [please specify] • Don't Know 	Required to collaborate when setting objectives for areas close to boundaries	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies is intended to cover an area large enough to allow landscape-scale spatial planning for nature, the Nature Recovery Network is a national network, and this strongly implies the need for cross-boundary collaboration between neighboring Strategies which will help connect key habitats that cross boundaries.</p>
11	<p>Should draft Local Nature Recovery Strategies be subject to a local public consultation prior to publication?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't Know 	Yes	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies are designed to work collaboratively with organizations and individuals contributing positively towards a shared goal rather seeking to limit what might be required of them. Due to the broad range of potential partners, it would be excessively burdensome for responsible authorities to engage directly with every potential</p>

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			landowner or interested party there a public consultation would allow all interested parties to have their say on the strategies
12	<p>Should individual landowners or managers be able to decide that land they own or manage should not be identified by a Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area that could become of particular importance for biodiversity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't Know 	No	Mapping areas is of high importance for biodiversity and future planning policies and is intended to support landowners and their cases for additional funding and support rather than cornering them into a change of land use and will likely play an integral role in future agri-environmental schemes and the additional biodiversity net gain units for developers.
14	<p>How prescriptive do you think regulations made under clause 101 should be in setting out how the responsible authority should work with local partners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting broad principles only • Setting broad principles and specific requirements on who to engage or how • A standardized process of who to engage and how • Don't Know 	Setting broad principles and specific requirements on who to engage or how	<p>Minimum requirements and principles should be outlined how the responsible authority must work with local partners this will ensure consistent standards and simplify alignment with other decision-making processes and LNRs.</p> <p>But leaves the flexibility to adapt to area specific needs and requirements as a one size fits all approach is not appropriate</p>

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