

Report to Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee

10 September 2026



Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Lead Member:

Cllr Ben Simpson Portfolio Holder – Waste Recycling & Green Spaces

Lead Officer:

Andrew Bird – To Service Director Sustainable Environment

Key Decision: No

Ward(s): All

Appendices: None

Report Assurance:

	Name	Date
Lead Officer	Andrew Bird	01/09/2026
Monitoring Officer		
Section 151		
Chief Executive		
Cabinet Member		

Report Summary

To provide members of the Health wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee with an update on the statutory requirement for provision of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

Notes the report and the update on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent

1. Background

- 1.1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies were introduced through the Environment Act 2021 as a new way to enhance local wildlife and ecosystems. The Staffordshire and Stoke-On-Trent the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a legal framework for enhancing and restoring the natural environment in our area. This local nature recovery strategy is one of 48 strategies covering all of England.
- 1.2. The strategy includes a statement of priorities (set out below) and an online map which identifies both existing priority areas for nature and those areas that could become priority areas in the future. The map identifies opportunities where enhancement could make a significant difference – importantly it does not dictate land use.
- 1.3. Whilst focused in particular on nature recovery, the strategy also considers how wider environmental benefits can be delivered, including flood risk management, air quality and climate impacts.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. Nature in England is in steep decline. This decline is apparent in Staffordshire. [The State of Nature Report 2023](#) Identified that Great Britain is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. Nature recovery doesn't just help nature but also helps local communities through flood resilience, food system resilience, positive health and wellbeing impacts, cleaner water and air, and much more.
- 2.2. There are 3 measures of biodiversity change:
 - Abundance (the number of individuals which comprise a species).
 - Distribution (the proportion of sites or locations in which species are present).
 - Extinction risk.
- 2.3 The Purpose of the LNRS
 - Made mandatory by the Environment Act 2021, the main purposes of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) are to:
 - Bring together information about the areas which are most important for biodiversity and make this accessible on a map base, known as the 'Local Habitat Map'.
 - Identify locations where effort can best be focused to improve or create habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.

- Help reverse the ongoing decline of nature in England by establishing priorities for nature recovery.
- Provide a strategy around which partners can come together to deliver shared aims and objectives, including around improving public access to nature, natural flood risk management, and resilience to the changing climate.
- Assist government agencies to target biodiversity-related funding.
- Assist land managers, developers, planners, environmental organisations, communities, residents and businesses to pursue opportunities to target actions and thereby help nature recover.
- Inform the delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and guide local planning policy for nature recovery.

3. Strategic Approach

3.1. It is expected that the Strategy will be used to:

- Guide funding and investment into local priorities for nature protection and enhancement, and thereby help realise opportunities for nature recovery.
- Help shape future farming and land management programs, such as Environment Land Management (ELM) and Countryside Stewardship schemes.
- Map areas of opportunity for the use of 'nature-based solutions' to wider environmental problems like flooding or poor water quality, climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Guide mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) investments.
- Provide a source of evidence for local planning authorities, helping to understand locations important for conserving and restoring biodiversity.

3.2. The LNRS will set out priority outcomes and actions, as well as short term targets to support nature recovery in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent

3.3. Where possible, the strategy will seek to support delivery of national targets identified by Government, including halt in the decline in species abundance by 2030, and protect 30% of UK land for biodiversity by 2030.

3.4. NuLBC – LNRS Responsibility

3.5. Adoption – When the LNRS was first announced, Full Council on the 17th of November 2021 proposed a motion to support the LNRS. Since then, the Council has supported the LNRS through development of the draft strategy and subsequent consultation.

3.6. Consultation – Consultation was led by Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust from the 1st of June till the 27th of July 2026 with landowners, farmers, supporting authorities, regulatory bodies, neighboring regional authorities, communities, businesses and environmental bodies. The Council supported the consultation through social media, in person engagements and attendance to one of the in-person consultation sessions. This phase is now completed. A Supporting Authorities consultation will be undertaken in Autumn of 2026 with supporting authorities, which includes the Borough Council. Officers involved from various teams across the Council will be able to respond to the draft presented.

- 3.7. Delivery - The LNRS for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is planned to be fully adopted and published by Autumn/Winter of 2026/2027. The Council had the LNRS embedded into the main Sustainable Environment Strategy and is still a working member of the partnership with supporting authorities, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The Delivery of the LNRS will mostly sit with the County, however NuLBC will be expected to support with the delivery of certain projects especially if they are on NuLBC owned land. The Council may also get involved through the LNRS in facilitating local partners like farmers and landowners to contribute land for the projects, the procurement of grant funding for project delivery and the engagement of the Borough with the LNRS.

4. Finance & Resources

- 4.1. There are no financial and resource implications arising from this report. Support for the LNRS will be undertaken within existing resources and budgets.

5. Legal & Governance

- 5.1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies were introduced through the Environment Act 2021 as a new way to enhance local wildlife and ecosystems.

6. Supporting Information

- 6.1. There is more information available on the LNRS Website - [LNRS Website](#)