

Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Summary Report

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Contents

What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?	3
Our vision for nature in Cumbria.....	3
Why do we need a LNRS?	3
What do we mean by nature recovery?	4
How can the LNRS be used?	4
Cumbria's priorities for nature recovery	5
Overarching.....	5
Woodland, tree and scrub	6
Moorland, heathland and montane.....	6
Grassland and limestone pavement	7
Wetland and freshwater.....	7
Coastal and estuarine.....	7
Built environment.....	8
Species recovery	8
Principles for nature recovery	9
Local Habitat Map.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	11

What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are required across England by the Environment Act (2021). The LNRS sets out priorities for nature recovery and the potential measures (or actions) that can help to deliver those priorities.

There are two elements to the LNRS that should be used together:

- a written document outlining the priorities and potential measures (the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities)
- an interactive map that shows where delivering the potential measures could have the most positive impact (the Local Habitat Map)

The LNRS is a strategy for local nature recovery, not a binding delivery plan. Local nature recovery strategies do not mandate protection or any change in management. Any action needs to be considered against existing legislation and statutory guidance to ensure that any nature recovery efforts are effective and compliant.

Our vision for nature in Cumbria

“Cumbria’s natural environment is in landscape scale recovery, with a mosaic of wildlife-rich habitats that are managed sustainably to create a network that is resilient to climate change, helps plants and animals thrive, and provides valuable services to local communities and the economy.”

Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Why do we need a LNRS?

England is widely considered to be one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Urgent action is not just needed for nature. It matters to people too.

From the peatlands in the Cumbrian uplands that are helping to fight climate change by ‘locking away’ carbon, to the wetlands that store and slow the flow of water in flood events, nature helps to protect communities. The quality of drinking and bathing waters, levels of pollution in the air, food and water security, and even the temperature on the streets is affected by the condition of the environment.

To get the most benefits from nature, we need a mosaic of different habitats across the landscape that are bigger, better and more connected and that are healthy and functioning in a natural way.

What do we mean by nature recovery?

In general, nature recovery means to halt or reverse the decline in the number and range of habitats and species.

How can the LNRS be used?

The LNRS is to be used by everyone, from individuals and community groups to landowners, developers, local authorities, government organisations, businesses, and conservation charities. It aims to drive collaborative action for nature and the investment for this to take place. It is also a tool for monitoring change as the LNRS will be updated and republished every few years.

Cumbria's priorities for nature recovery

Overarching

Priority 1: Habitat mosaics

More of our environment managed at a landscape scale, providing space for the full range of naturally occurring habitats and species to flourish as part of connected, structurally diverse and dynamic mosaics.

Priority 2: Invasive non-native species

Halt the spread and reduce the extent of invasive non-native species (INNS) in Cumbria, prevent the arrival of new INNS, and where possible eradicate specific INNS from target catchments/areas.

Priority 3: Data and mapping

Improve Cumbria's data for habitats and species including habitat type, extent, and condition, to monitor and support the delivery of the LNRS and other associated nature recovery projects.

Priority 4: Safeguarding our habitats and species

Safeguard existing 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity', 'Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance', and LNRS priority species through a range of approaches such as appropriate local planning processes, guidance, and land management incentives.

Priority 5: Skills, delivery, and funding

Increase investment in funding and resource to enable the long-term delivery of nature recovery, including skills and education, and long-term management and monitoring.

Priority 6: People taking action for nature

More people from all sectors of society taking positive action for wildlife, and engaging with nature through responsible recreation, volunteering, and learning.

Priority 7: Farming and nature

More farmland managed to regenerate soils, incorporate thriving wildlife-rich habitats, and improve water quality, contributing to High Nature Value farming systems that produce food and fibre and sustain rural culture and communities.

Woodland, tree and scrub

Priority 8: Sustainable forest management

70% (50,000 ha) of existing woodland to be under sustainable management practices which maintain and enhance biodiversity by 2035.

Priority 9: Create and connect woodland

Increase woodland and non-woodland tree cover in Cumbria by 10,000 ha by 2035, targeting the expansion of and improvement of connectivity between the existing woodland network.

Priority 10: Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees

75% (12,250 ha) of ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees are under sustainable management, and are in or are moving towards good ecological condition by 2035.

Priority 11: Hedgerows and scrub

Restore or create 1,250 km of species-rich native hedgerows and 5,000 ha of high nature conservation value scrub by 2035 and increase the amount of the existing resource that is under favourable management.

Priority 12: Forestry and nature

More productive forest and woodland is created and managed sustainably to support wildlife-rich habitats, contribute to nature recovery networks, and deliver wider benefits while providing timber for a range of goods.

Moorland, heathland and montane

Priority 13: Restore upland bog habitats

Restore 10,000 ha of blanket bog and valley mire and maintain under restorative and sensitive management (resulting in good hydrological and biological condition) as part of a dynamic mosaic of upland habitats by 2035.

Priority 14: Enhance and restore heathland habitats

Re-create 10,000 ha of heathland and have 90% of the existing resource under appropriate management as part of a dynamic mosaic of upland habitats by 2035.

Priority 15: Montane habitats

Restore, enhance and create 500 ha of montane habitats as part of a dynamic mosaic of upland habitats that are under appropriate management by 2035.

Grassland and limestone pavement

Priority 16: Conserve and enhance existing wildlife-rich grasslands

Maintain and enhance the existing extent of wildlife-rich grassland, with 75% (8,500 ha) under appropriate management and in good condition by 2035.

Priority 17: Create and connect wildlife-rich grassland

Create or restore 2,850 ha of grassland to be wildlife-rich by 2035, creating an appropriately managed and connected network that increases the biodiversity of grasslands and soils.

Priority 18: Limestone pavement

Maintain the extent of the existing pavement resource, including open, wooded, and fragmented pavement, enhance the condition of 450 ha, and maintain the condition of the rest of the resource.

Wetland and freshwater

Priority 19: Restore natural function/processes

Restore natural processes and hydrology to our wetland and freshwater habitats, with 200 km of rivers restored, connected to their floodplains, and 500 ha of good quality riparian, lake shore, and wetland habitat created by 2035.

Priority 20: Enhance and restore wetland habitats

Maintain, restore or enhance 3,250 ha of lowland raised bog, and 2,000 ha of lagg and wetland habitat to be in good condition and under appropriate management by 2035.

Priority 21: Water quality

Improve water quality in wetland, freshwater, coastal, and estuarine habitats, and reduce diffuse and point source water pollution, with 99% of water bodies and coastal waters with good ecological status and 25% with good chemical status by 2035.

Coastal and estuarine

Priority 21: Water quality

See [Wetland and freshwater](#).

Priority 22: Restore and enhance coastal habitats

Restore 750 ha of coastal habitats by 2035, and maintain or enhance 75% (7,000 ha) to be in good condition and under appropriate management.

Priority 23: Create space for coastal dynamism

Expand the space available to coastal transitional habitats and restore coastal processes, enabling them to be dynamic and move inland in response to natural processes and climate change.

Priority 24: Marine nature recovery

Increase our understanding of the threats and pressures on the marine environment, and the potential actions that may be needed to address these.

Built environment

Priority 25: Manage and enhance our built environment

Enhance the ecological value of our built environment, to maintain existing habitat, minimise fragmentation, and maximise further opportunities for biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and nature recovery, while meeting community needs.

Priority 26: Create more wildlife-rich habitat within our built environment

Create new wildlife-rich habitats in building developments in our built-up areas, creating a mosaic of interconnected habitats designed and managed for wildlife.

Species recovery

Priority 27: Species recovery

Maintain, and where possible increase, the population size, extent, and diversity of Cumbria's key native species recovery.

Principles for nature recovery

There are several common principles that should be followed if the LNRS is to be successful in delivering nature recovery at scale. These principles apply to all priorities and potential measures, across all habitat types.

1. Follow policy, guidance, and good practice
2. A strategy to guide delivery practice
3. Right habitat, right place
4. Know your site
5. Think long-term
6. Be ambitious
7. Build resilience
8. Maximise multiple benefits
9. Collaborate with communities
10. Consider access
11. Monitor success
12. Support landowners and managers
13. Share knowledge

Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map shows the potential measures that relate directly to habitat enhancement, restoration, or creation. It has a nature recovery network for each habitat theme. Within these networks, opportunities for nature recovery are particularly strategic and deliver maximum benefit for biodiversity and the wider environment. However, areas outside of mapped locations may still be suitable for delivering these measures.

The Local Habitat Map does not operate at a field scale resolution, but it can show how nature recovery on your land fits into the wider landscape. The Local Habitat Map is available at cumbrialnrs.org.uk.

Where an area of land is suitable for more than one potential measure, the Local Habitat Map will show multiple overlapping potential measures. Prioritising which measure should take place should be decided on a site by-site basis, after considering wider benefits, funding, site surveys, viability, and specialist advice.

Many of the potential measures in the LNRS are not mapped. This is because they don't directly relate to habitat enhancement, restoration, or creation. Instead, they are equally beneficial anywhere across the county, or there is insufficient data to know where they should be mapped. Even if a potential measure is not mapped, it is still an equally important action to support nature recovery.

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