

**CABINET**

**COUNCILLOR KEITH DIBBLE  
HOUSING & PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**14 OCTOBER 2025**

**KEY DECISION? YES**

**REPORT NO. PG2532**

## **HAMPSHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY**

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) were introduced by the Environment Act 2021 and are a new system of plans for nature recovery covering the whole of England. Hampshire County Council is the responsible body preparing the LNRS for Hampshire and has formally provided the Council with the final LNRS under the Regulations, triggering a 28-day period for the Council to either confirm that it is content for the final LNRS to be published or to issue a publication advisory notice.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Cabinet confirms that it is content for the final Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to be published.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the background to the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and to enable the Cabinet to discharge the Council's requirement (as a supporting body) under the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 ("the LNRS Regulations") to respond to Hampshire County Council (as the responsible body) within 28 days of it providing the final LNRS to the Council.
- 1.2. This is a key decision because the Hampshire LNRS will cover the whole of Rushmoor and the Council will be required to "take account" of the LNRS when preparing the new local plan.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) were introduced by the Environment Act 2021 and are a new system of plans for nature recovery covering the whole of England. They are a key mechanism for planning and delivering the National Nature Recovery Network. Rushmoor will be required to "take account" of the LNRS when preparing the new local plan. Hampshire County Council (HCC) is the responsible body for preparing the LNRS for Hampshire and Rushmoor is designated as a supporting body. Officers have been attending a LNRS working group which meets regularly.

2.2. There are several key stages of LNRS preparation where the LNRS Regulations require Rushmoor (as a supporting body) to formally respond to HCC (as the responsible body):

- **Regulation 6:** To confirm relevant sites
- **Regulations 7, 9 & 11:** To confirm that we are content for the draft LNRS to be consulted on or raise objections within 28 days of receipt
- **Regulations 13, 15 & 18:** To confirm that we are content for the final LNRS to be published or issue a publication advisory notice within 28 days of receipt

2.3. A formal request under Regulation 6 was received by Rushmoor and responded to in January 2024. A draft of the LNRS was provided to Rushmoor under Regulation 7 in October 2024. Following this, officers raised a significant matter of concern with HCC relating to the lack of reference to the Thames Basin Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) which covers approximately 220 ha in Rushmoor. Reassurance was received from HCC that these concerns would be addressed prior to consultation, and on that basis, Rushmoor provided a formal response to HCC under Regulation 9 in November 2024 setting out that it was content to approve the draft for consultation.

2.4. HCC published the draft LNRS for a 6-week consultation in May 2025. Rushmoor provided a formal response to the consultation in June 2025 raising the following concerns:

- The length, focus and usability of the LNRS and the risk that this will impact on levels of public engagement with the LNRS
- How Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) have been addressed in the LNRS. Urban SINCs have been excluded and whilst we agree that it is acceptable to exclude some SINCs where it is unlikely that changes to site management are feasible or desirable, we are concerned about the exclusion of the following SINCs within Rushmoor which would benefit from more appropriate management as may be secured through an LNRS:
  - Claycart Hill Open Space
  - Claycart Hill Flash
  - Chalk Farm Lake
  - Ramilies Park / North Camp Lakes
  - Brickfields Park
  - Rushmoor Arena

2.5. On 1 October 2025 HCC formally provided Rushmoor with the final LNRS under Regulation 13. This triggered the 28 days for Rushmoor to either confirm that it is content for the final LNRS to be published or to issue a publication advisory notice. A publication advisory notice should be issued where the supporting authority considers that parts of the final LNRS cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation undertaken by the responsible authority, and/or the supporting authority considers that the final LNRS is materially deficient.

### **3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**

#### **General**

3.1. The Hampshire LNRS is set out in four parts:

- Part 1: Introduction and Description of Strategy Area
- Part 2: Priorities and Measures
- Part 3: Species Recovery
- Technical Appendices

3.2. The LNRS sets out 52 priority outcomes, along with 69 potential measures to help deliver those priority outcomes for nature recovery in Hampshire. These priority outcomes and measures are grouped as follows:

- Chalk streams, other watercourses, headwaters and groundwater source protection zones
- Wetlands, ponds and ditches
- Species-rich grasslands
- Heathland and acid grassland mosaics
- Woodlands
- Wood pasture, wooded commons and historic parkland
- Coastal
- Farming and nature
- Hedgerows
- Greenspace, access and transport related
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
- Improving knowledge of priority species and priority habitats

3.3. The LNRS species priorities list contains the individual species and groups of species (assemblages) that the LNRS will focus on supporting. Species assemblages which share habitat requirements are likely to benefit from the same recovery measures. They can therefore be addressed collectively in the LNRS rather than individually. 419 species are included in the priority list, of which 69 are priority species that do not fit into assemblages and will require more targeted and bespoke action, and 350 species are grouped into 37 assemblages.

3.4. The LNRS will be used to:

- channel investment into local priorities for protection and enhancement, such as the Environment Land Management scheme;
- map areas of opportunity for the use of “nature-based solutions” to wider environmental problems like flooding, climate change mitigation and adaptation or poor water quality;
- guide mandatory biodiversity net gain investments; and
- provide a source of evidence to help local authorities understand locations important for conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

### **Recommended response**

- 3.5. Officers have worked closely with HCC throughout the preparation of the LNRS, who have been responsive to addressing the issues and concerns that have been raised. With regards to the length, focus and usability of the LNRS, HCC have now set out the LNRS in four parts to make it more accessible to users. Additionally, the six SINC's which we flagged concerns about being excluded have now been included.
- 3.6. Rushmoor must respond to HCC by either:
- Confirming that it is content for the final LNRS to be published, or
  - Issuing a publication advisory notice where it considers that the following apply:
    - parts of the final LNRS cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation undertaken by the responsible authority, and/or
    - the final LNRS is materially deficient.
- 3.7. On the basis that the previous concerns and issues raised by officers have been addressed in the final LNRS alongside those raised by other stakeholders as part of the wider consultation and it is considered that the LNRS is not materially deficient in any way, it is recommended that the response to HCC is to confirm that Rushmoor is content for the final LNRS to be published.

### **Alternative Options**

- 3.8. The following alternative options have been identified:
- Issue a publication advisory notice
  - Not respond to HCC
- 3.9. These alternative options have been dismissed because it is not considered that the criteria for issuing a publication advisory notice have been met and Rushmoor is required under the LNRS Regulations to respond to HCC.

### **Consultation**

- 3.10. The LNRS has been prepared by HCC who have undertaken consultation in line with the requirements of the LNRS Regulations, which includes a 6-week consultation held in May/June 2025.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)**

### **Risks**

- 4.1. The Council is required under the LNRS Regulations as a supporting body to respond to HCC's provision of the final LNRS under Regulation 13 and is credited in the document as a partner who has worked with HCC to shape the

LNRS. Failure to respond appropriately to HCC on the publication of the LNRS would therefore have a reputational risk.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4.2. The legal implications are set out in the body of the report. There are no further specific legal implications arising.

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.3. There are no direct financial implications.  
Rosie Plaistowe-Melham, Financial Services Manager & Deputy S151

### **Resource Implications**

- 4.4. There are no resource implications of this decision.

### **Equalities Impact Implications**

- 4.5. HCC has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment for the LNRS, which has scored neutral for protected characteristics and positive for rurality.

### **Other**

- 4.6. There are no other implications of this decision.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the background to the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and to enable the Cabinet to discharge the Council's requirement (as a supporting body) under the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 ("the LNRS Regulations") to respond to Hampshire County Council (as the responsible body) within 28 days of it providing the final LNRS to the Council.
- 5.2. It is recommended that the Cabinet confirms that it is content for the final Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to be published.

### **LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:**

Appendix 1 – Pre-Publication Consultation Letter from Hampshire County Council

Appendix 2 – [Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

None

### **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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### By Email Only

<i>Enquiries to</i>	Laura McCulloch	<i>My reference</i>	LNRS SA Pre-Cons
<i>Direct Line</i>	0370 779 2427	<i>Your reference</i>	
<i>Date</i>	1 October 2025	<i>E-mail</i>	<a href="mailto:laura.mcculloch@hants.gov.uk">laura.mcculloch@hants.gov.uk</a>

Dear Tim,

### **Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire – Pre-Publication Consultation with Supporting Authorities (Environment (Local Nature Recovery) (Procedure) Regulations 2023)**

I am writing to you as we have now reached the publication stage for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help and support in shaping the Strategy; it is much improved as a result of your guidance and input.

This pre-publication consultation is asking for your approval to publish the Strategy.

A copy of the Strategy is enclosed, including a link to the updated Local Habitat Map. Please note that the updated versions of the Strategy and Local Habitat Map will not replace the drafts that are on our website until such time as we have approval to publish.

As per Defra guidance, this version of the Strategy will be in place until such time as the Secretary of State instructs responsible authorities to prepare an update. The Local Habitat Map will therefore be static rather than live. It's anticipated that the Strategy will be updated every 3 to ten years.

The regulations provide you with 28 days from the date of receipt of the Strategy to respond, and expects you to provide written confirmation that you are happy for the Strategy to be published. You can provide your written approval by completing this form by **Wednesday 29 October 2025:** [REDACTED]

Regulation 15 of the Environment (Local Nature Recovery) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 states that a supporting authority may give a publication advisory notice if it considers that

*Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Hampshire 2050*  
**Gary Westbrook**

- a) part of the final local nature recovery strategy cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation undertaken by the responsible authority; or
- b) the supporting authority considers that the final local nature recovery strategy is materially deficient.

If you consider this to be the case, before the expiry of the 28-day consultation period you must give notice in writing explaining either

- a) why you consider that parts of the final local nature recovery strategy cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation undertaken, or
- b) why you consider that the final local nature recovery strategy is materially deficient.

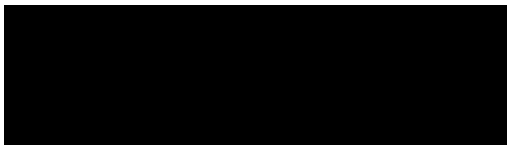
The publication advisory notice must be provided to the Secretary of State within a reasonable time of it being given to the responsible authority.

Subject to the outcome of the Natural England panel on 21 October 2025, and provided that no publication advisory notices are received during the 28-day consultation period, a report will be presented to the County Council's Cabinet on 11 November 2025 to seek approval to publish the Strategy.

Should approval be granted, the County Council will notify the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of its intention to publish the Strategy in December, and thereafter publish the Strategy on the County Council's website.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,



Laura McCulloch  
Head of Spatial Planning  
Hampshire 2050

**Copy to: Alice Barella; Heather Lewis**