

North Yorkshire Council

Richmond (Yorks) Area Committee

17 March 2025

Update on the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members with progress on the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), since spring 2024 and in advance of the six-week statutory public consultation scheduled to start from late May 2025.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are the England-wide system of spatial strategies established by clauses 104 to 108 of the Environment Act 2021.
- 2.2 They are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to help nature. 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.
- 2.3 North Yorkshire Council was appointed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as responsible authority in August 2023 and commenced work on the LNRS in September of the same year. NYC has followed DEFRA's statutory guidance and advice and undertaken extensive technical studies and stakeholder engagement from September 2023 through to March 2025. NYC has compiled all the documentation required by the statutory guidance, with supporting appendices.

3.0 UPDATE ON THE NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK LNRS

- 3.1 Since spring 2024, the project team has continued to follow the requirements of the LNRS statutory guidance in addition to the monthly online advice sessions from DEFRA.
- 3.2 This involved a series of in-person workshops to elicit our priorities for nature recovery covering different habitats across our geography including:
- woodland
 - wetland
 - upland
 - grassland and farmland
 - in-river habitat
 - urban

- 3.3 We had over 120 attendees from a range of organisations including: Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, City of York Council, protected landscapes, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and White Rose Forest. Alongside each priority is a series of associated measures (actions).
- 3.4 At the same time, we co-created our vision strapline - 'To work together to enhance, expand, restore and connect our region's habitats for thriving nature across North Yorkshire and York'. The vision is underpinned by 10 principles, including: restoring natural processes, producing food, fuel and timber in nature friendly way, connecting people to nature and managing our water sustainably.
- 3.5 Over the summer period we worked closely with our advisory group (steering group) to devise the approach to our nature recovery map and this also involved several calls with DEFRA and Natural England's LNRS central team to agree a way forward.
- 3.6 During the early winter months, we facilitated nine in-person workshops for landowners, land managers and farmers to update them on our work, present the proposed mapping method and brief them on the forthcoming statutory public consultation in late spring 2025. At the same time, we have been progressing our work on wildlife species devising a method for selecting a long list of priority species and a short list of focus species (approximately 80 no.). The focus species will benefit from our proposed measures (actions).
- 3.7 We have been considering how the LNRS will be delivered, and this has involved a workshop with DEFRA, followed by the submission of an 'ask' in respect of the funding and staffing needed to deliver the LNRS. We are expecting an announcement from DEFRA for the funding of FY '25-'25 soon. We convened a delivery workshop for our own local stakeholders in early December 2024 to begin early thinking around what LNRS delivery could look like in our area.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 4.1 To date, across our geography; we have engaged with over 1,500 stakeholders, including our online survey which took place between November 2023 and February 2024. Engagement events have included one to one interviews, in-person workshops with species and habitat specialists, member briefings, in-person workshops with youth councils, webinars, in-person workshops with landowners, land managers and farmers, online calls with NYC officers from related disciplines and presentations at local nature conferences. We also have a mailing list of 400 individuals who have requested to be kept up to date on progress with the LNRS.
- 4.2 Comments from stakeholders have been logged and where feasible actioned to inform the emerging LNRS.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 We are finalising our LNRS documentation and the building of our online nature recovery map and expect this all to be ready by the end of March at which point we are required to submit this 'pre-consultation' draft to our four supporting authorities for their consideration and sign off. (The LNRS regulations state they have 28 days to consider the pre-consultation draft and raise any objections (if any) during that time frame). Our four supporting authorities are: Natural England, City of York Council, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and North York Moors National Park Authority.

- 5.2 Subject to the sign off by the supporting authorities and by our own Executive Member, we intend to publish the draft LNRS documentation for a six-week statutory public consultation period from the end of May 2025.
- 5.3 The LNRS regulations requires responsible authorities to publish all responses to the consultation within a reasonable time of the consultation concluding. The purpose of this is for consultees to understand how their comments have informed changes to the LNRS in the form of the 'pre-publication' draft.
- 5.4 The LNRS regulations requires that the 'pre-publication' draft is submitted to our four supporting authorities for their consideration and sign off. We expect to submit the draft to them during August 2025 (The LNRS regulations state they have 28 days to consider the pre-consultation draft and raise any objections (if any) during that time frame).
- 5.5 Once sign off is received from our supporting authorities, the LNRS will be submitted to the NYC Executive for consideration and sign off as the published version. We expect to submit to the October 2025 NYC Executive.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 The LNRS will contribute to the vision of the Council Plan (2024-2028) particularly in respect of building on our natural capital and supporting a good quality of life for all. The vision is underpinned by five ambitions and the LNRS will support place and environment by contributing to a clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit and by encouraging communities to work together to improve their local area. It will support economy by helping to reverse the decline in nature and in so doing contribute to sustainable tourism. It will contribute to health and wellbeing by supporting people to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 We have been required to follow the LNRS regulations and statutory guidance set out by DEFRA and so no alternative options have been considered.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising specifically from this report as it is for information only. The LNRS project is fully grant funded and the total grant available is £341k. Costs incurred for the remaining work on the LNRS are covered by this grant.
- 8.2 Along with other responsible authorities, North Yorkshire Council have contributed to the design of the delivery phase with DEFRA and await the forthcoming announcement on the funding for delivery for financial year 25/26. Funding for the subsequent three years will be announced at a later date.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As the appointed responsible authority, North Yorkshire Council is legally required to prepare the LNRS.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Supporting nature is one of the three pillars of the NYC Climate Change Strategy 2023-2030 and within that theme there are seven priorities. The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy seeks to support those priorities and therefore is expected to have a positive outcome for Climate Change and Nature.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 To note progress and outlined next steps in relation to the North Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS – LNRS webpage

[Local Nature Recovery Strategy | North Yorkshire Council](#)

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