



Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	4 November 2025
Report of:	Garry Taylor, Director of City Development
Portfolio of:	Councillor Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Briefing Report: North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - Publication Draft

Subject of Report

1. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a spatial strategy that seeks to map nature recovery actions and deliver the Governments England-wide nature targets. They are a statutory requirement as set out by the Environment Act 2021 as a new system of spatial strategies for nature throughout England.
2. The LNRS is designed as a mechanism to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to help restore, join and halt nature decline. 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
3. North Yorkshire Council (NYC) was appointed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as the 'Responsible Authority' for York and North Yorkshire, and City of York Council as a 'Supporting Authority'.
4. This report will provide an update on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and make recommendations regarding the endorsement of the Publication Draft version of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This will inform our response to

the statutory 28 day period within which we can inform the Responsible Authority as to whether we accept or object to the final LNRS.

Benefits and Challenges

5. The strategy enhances transparency and accountability in environmental decision-making as it will help to provide strategic understanding of our green infrastructure network and identify opportunities to support nature recovery. It provides a clear set of priorities and spatial data that can be used to monitor progress and inform future reviews of the Local Plan and Climate Change Strategy. Consequently, it will be a valuable evidence base against which further policy and actions can be identified.
6. The LNRS provides a shared spatial framework that enables cross-boundary collaboration between local authorities, statutory bodies, and landowners. This will help align nature recovery efforts across York and North Yorkshire, increasing ecological connectivity and resilience.
7. The strategy supports the delivery of multiple policy objectives, including climate adaptation, flood mitigation, and public health. By identifying multifunctional green infrastructure, it strengthens the case for nature-based solutions in urban and rural settings.
8. The LNRS has been grant funded by Defra for its production. NYC as the Responsible Authority have two designated officers leading on the production of LNRS with whom CYC officers are working.
9. Our role as a Supporting Authority limits our ability to shape the strategy. While we have provided feedback on pre-consultation draft, we cannot enforce changes; these are being balanced against other consultee comments received. Consequently, some comments previously made by CYC will not have been taken forward.
10. Effective implementation of LNRS priorities will require ongoing coordination across internal departments and external partners. Ensuring alignment between planning, conservation, and climate teams may require additional governance structures or working groups. There is a risk that without sufficient resourcing, the strategy may not be fully embedded into decision-making or

council-wide actions. While there is some initial funding provided for actioning Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), long-term delivery will depend on sustained capacity within planning and climate teams.

11. The success of the strategy depends on landowner engagement and voluntary uptake of nature recovery actions. Building trust and demonstrating benefits to landowners will be essential, and understanding the mechanisms government intends to use to support nature recovery with help achieve this. There is a real risk that interest may decline during the delivery phase if these mechanisms remain unclear. For example, government could integrate LNRs priorities into the assessment criteria for Environmental Land Management schemes. Demonstrating tangible benefits and securing central government support both financial and policy-based will be key to sustaining long-term engagement, particularly in areas where competing land uses exist.

Policy Basis for Decision

National Policy

12. The Environment Act 2021 is the statutory foundation for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRs) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Act establishes LNRs as a key mechanism for reversing biodiversity decline and integrating nature recovery into spatial planning.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to protect and enhance biodiversity, including through the identification of ecological networks. It is expected that a future update to the NPPF will include how LNRs should be given weight in the plan making process. The Government will also provide separate guidance on how local authorities will be expected to comply with their duty to have regard to LNRs through their planning functions.
14. Government guidance confirms that LNRs should be used to inform Local Plan preparation and spatial strategies. Government guidance is clear that LNRs should be used by Local Authorities preparing local plans to inform the way those plans address the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity.

15. The Government published further guidance in February 2025, which clarified that Local Planning Authorities must comply with their duty to have regard to LNRSs in exercising their planning functions, which includes expectations for integrating LNRS priorities into development plans, biodiversity net gain.
16. Under the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 the Responsible Authority must follow a defined process before publishing the final LNRS; within this process, a Supporting Authority has a role in reviewing and responding to the LNRS before final publication. These have informed the Options and Recommendations in this report. Regulations relevant to this process include:
 - Regulation 13: “Pre-publication approval”, in which supporting authorities must be provided with the final LNRS by the responsible authority once consultation has concluded and must also be informed of the intended publication date.
 - Regulation 14: “Provision of final draft to neighbouring responsible authorities”, wherein a Responsible Authority must also provide a copy of the final LNRS to neighbouring responsible authorities.
 - Regulation 15: “Publication advisory notice”, whereby supporting authorities may give notice to the responsible authority on the conditions that parts of the strategy are not justified by the consultation outcomes, or the strategy is materially deficient. The notice must be issued within 28 days of receiving the final strategy and must give a copy of the publication advisory notice to the Secretary of State. The responsible authority is required to investigate the matters raised in the notice and provide a response within 28 days of receiving the notice.

Local & Regional Strategy

17. The implementation of LNRS and BNG aligns directly with the sustainability priority of the Council’s 10-Year Strategy, which commits York to becoming carbon neutral and contributing to the regional ambition of being carbon negative. The strategy also supports the Council’s vision of protecting iconic green spaces and enhancing the natural environment for future generations.

18. The LNRS complements the York Climate Change Strategy (2022–2032), particularly its focus on nature-based solutions, climate resilience, and ecosystem services. It provides a spatial framework for delivering these outcomes in partnership with landowners, developers, and community groups.
19. The LNRS also supports the delivery of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority ambitions to support opportunities for the green economy across the region and vibrant and sustainable places, including increasing woodland coverage, the number of hedgerows and peatland restoration.
20. The strategy will also inform future updates to the adopted Local Plan, ensuring that nature recovery priorities are embedded in land use planning and development management policies.

Financial Strategy Implications

21. An allocation of £388,000 was issued to North Yorkshire Council as the Responsible Authority, by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA); to lead the preparation of the LNRS for York and North Yorkshire in line with statutory guidance.

Recommendation and Reasons

22. Executive is asked to:
 - i. Note the work that has been undertaken in relation to the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy at pre-publication stage, comprising:
 - The *Local Habitat Map*, which spatially identifies existing and potential areas for nature recovery.
 - The *Statement of Biodiversity Priorities*, which sets out agreed ecological priorities and measures for habitat enhancement and creation.

Reason: To ensure these outputs are compliant under the Environment Act 2021, and capable of being implemented effectively as a reference point for future planning and environmental decisions.

- ii. Delegate authority to the Directory of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency, to respond to North Yorkshire Council as the Responsible Authority within the statutory 28-day period following their issue of the Publication draft LNRS.

Reason: To allow a statutory response to be provided to the Regulation 15 stage consultation.

Background

23. North Yorkshire Council is the responsible authority for the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for North Yorkshire and York. Under the Environment Act 2021, every county in England must produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
24. The strategy is intended to drive nature recovery, along with associated environmental benefits. Its main purpose is to identify appropriate actions and suitable locations to enhance existing habitats or create new habitats, where this is most likely to provide the greatest benefits for nature and the wider environment. The strategy must:
 - agree priorities for nature's recovery
 - map the most valuable existing areas for nature
 - map specific proposals for enhancing or creating habitat for nature, along with wider environmental goals
25. The strategy does not force landowners or land managers to make any changes or undertake any actions on the land that they own or manage. It also does not grant any additional protections or change existing protections and restrictions.
26. Instead, the strategy seeks to drive collaborative, coordinated action for nature by setting out the most beneficial priorities and measures (actions) to enhance and create habitat, and identify where these could be carried out to have the greatest positive impact.
27. North Yorkshire Council, as the Responsible Authority, have advised that issue of the revised pre-publication LNRS will be early November 2025. Once the documents are issued, a statutory 28-day review period will begin in which Supporting Authorities can

view the LNRS outputs and respond to either support or object to the contents. In advance of this, we have attached at Annex A the LNRS Consultation summary from June 2025, which explains more about the detail of the LNRS, the identified priorities and habitats map.

Consultation Analysis

28. A formal governance structure and LNRS programme board were established as part of the production of the LNRS, convened by North Yorkshire Council as the Responsible Authority. As part of this, there have also been Officer led task groups that have led on technical input into the evidence base, content and format of the LNRS.
29. An online survey was initially undertaken as part of the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for North Yorkshire and York hosted on the North Yorkshire Council website. This was held for 12 weeks, from 16 November 2023 to 12 February 2024. The objective of the survey was to raise awareness about nature recovery, understand the views of individuals throughout North Yorkshire and York regarding nature and its enhancement, and signpost respondents towards local volunteering opportunities in nature. The online survey was publicised through a range of media channels and paper copies of the survey were completed by members of York Youth Council and Skipton Youth Council. This survey received:
 - 532 total responses
 - 110 responses from City of York residents (21% of total responses).
30. Prior to public consultation on a pre-public consultation version of LNRS, a statutory 28 days was provided to Supporting Authorities (including CYC) and other advisory groups/bodies for detailed comments. Officers provided detailed comments and issued a formal Council representation to NYC in June 2025¹ supporting the consultation on the pre-publication draft LNRS. These comments were considered by NYC prior to moving forward to the next statutory consultation stage. In coming to a view on

¹ 13/06/2025 [To provide written consent to public consultation on the draft North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)ref: 7447](#)

comments, NYC balanced all comments made by supporting authorities in revising relevant parts of the LNRS. Consequently, not all of CYC Officer comments were implemented.

31. NYC held a statutory six week public consultation on the pre-publication draft LNRS between 30 June to 12 August 2025. As the Supporting Authority, CYC provided support to the consultation by distributing documents throughout the city in line with our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and signposting online to North Yorkshire Council's consultation portal². The consultation was open for comments for all York residents, community groups and any other interested parties. In total the consultation received 91 responses (427 logged comments). These included responses from North Yorkshire residents (54%); City of York residents (13%); Environment professional (10%); community organisations (10%); landowners (10%).

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

32. The following options have been considered:

Option (i) (recommended) - Agree to delegate authority to the Director of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency, to provide a written response to the final publication draft of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy within the statutory 28-day period of consultation (Regulation 15 stage).

Option (ii) - Do nothing during the statutory 28-day period of consultation on the Publication draft LNRS (Regulation 15 stage).

Rationale

33. CYC has been actively engaged in the development of the LNRS since its inception. In its role as a Supporting Authority, officers have participated alongside North Yorkshire Council, Natural England and National Park Authorities in steering groups and contributed to the identification of nature recovery priorities within York's boundaries. The LNRS will directly support planning

² <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-council/consultations-and-engagement/north-yorkshire-and-york-local-nature-recovery-strategy-consultation>

functions, Biodiversity Net Gain implementation and future funding streams for nature recovery. The strategy aligns with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Council Plan commitments to enhance local green infrastructure and biodiversity.

34. Under Regulation 15 of the LNRS Regulations 2023, as set out at Paragraph 16, a supporting authority may issue a Publication Advisory Notice explaining in writing if it believes:
 - Part of the final LNRS cannot be justified based on the consultation results (Regulation 15(2)), or
 - The final LNRS is materially deficient (Regulation 15(3)).
35. If the Publication Advisory Notice is issued, the supporting authority must send a copy of the notice to the Secretary of State. The responsible authority must subsequently:
 - Investigate the concerns raised.
 - Reply in writing within 28 days, detailing the results of the investigation and any actions taken or planned in response.
 - Send a copy of the reply to the Secretary of State.
36. The Secretary of State will then determine whether the strategy may be published or published with conditions. Once the Secretary of State makes a decision, they must inform all supporting authorities. If permission is granted (with or without conditions), the responsible authority may proceed to publish the LNRS.
37. Delegating authority to the Director of City Development to provide a written response (Option (i)) supports efficient decision making and ensures timely compliance with the statutory 28-day consultation window. This response will reflect consideration of the publication draft LNRS issued to CYC and whether or not we can support the publication or will need to issue a Publication Advisory Notice.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- **Financial** - An allocation of £388,000 was issued to North Yorkshire Council as the Responsible Authority, by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA); to lead the preparation of the LNRS for York and North Yorkshire in line with statutory guidance.

- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications.
- **Legal** - The procedure for the consultation and publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is set out in the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 (the Regulations).

The Consultation of the LNRS has taken place in accordance with regulation 12.

The Council as a Supporting Authority has 28 days from the date of receipt of the final local nature recovery strategy to issue a Publication Advisory Notice on the basis that it considers that part of a final LNRS cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation or that the final LNRS is materially deficient. Regulations 15 and 16 as set out in the body of the report require North Yorkshire Council to investigate the matters raised in the Publication Advisory Notice and provide a response prior to seeking permission from the Secretary of State to publish its final LNRS. The Secretary of State has the power to permit North Yorkshire Council to publish the final LNRS with or without conditions.

Where a Publication Advisory Notice is not received North Yorkshire Council can publish the final LNRS upon the expiry of 28 days from the date of providing the final LNRS to the supporting authorities or when all supporting authorities have provided consent to its publication.

There are no further rights of appeal. Any decision made by the Council, North Yorkshire Council or the Secretary of State may be challenged by way of judicial review

- **Procurement** - Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to report itself, should any priorities require procurement, all works and/or services must be procured via a compliant, open, transparent, and fair process in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Procurement Act 2023. Further advice regarding the procurement process and development of procurement strategies must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – No implications.

- **Environment and Climate action** - The LNRS demonstrates alignment with objectives of the York Climate Change Strategy, particular the focus on nature-based solutions, climate resilience, and ecosystem services. It provides a spatial framework for delivering these outcomes in partnership with landowners, developers, and community groups.
- **Affordability** – No implications.
- **Equalities and Human Rights** – The implementation of specific BNG site developments and interventions will need to consider Equalities and Human Rights on a site-specific basis the noting of proposed statutory regime in this report has no impacts. North Yorkshire Council will have to consider Equalities and Human Rights in the development of LNRS strategy.
- **Data Protection and Privacy** - The completion of data protection impact assessment (DPIA) screening questions evidenced there would be no processing of personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data processed, so there is no requirement to complete a DPIA.
- **Communications** - Communications support will be required during LNRS publication.
- **Economy** - LNRS will impact the economy at a high level by its association with land use and practices. The economic affects are unquantifiable for the purposes of this report, but are intended to be beneficial in the long term, as part of an overall sustainable economy.

Risks and Mitigations

38. Risk: Insufficient Resources for Implementation - Delivery of LNRS priorities may be constrained by limited staff capacity, particularly in ecology, design, and conservation teams.

Mitigation:

- Utilise existing grant funding to support additional capacity, particularly for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) implementation.

- Explore further funding opportunities through Defra, LEP, and private sector partnerships.
- Prioritise actions based on available resources and strategic impact.

39. Risk: Low Stakeholder Engagement and Uptake - The success of the LNRS depends on voluntary participation from landowners, developers, and community groups. Low engagement could limit delivery of nature recovery actions.

Mitigation:

- Continue proactive engagement with stakeholders through workshops, advisory groups, and communications.
- Highlight the benefits of nature recovery, including funding opportunities, climate resilience, and community wellbeing.
- Work with NYC and regional partners to coordinate messaging and support.

40. Risk: Data Gaps or Mapping Limitations - The Local Habitat Map and biodiversity priorities may be limited by data availability or technical constraints, affecting accuracy and usability.

Mitigation:

- Continue collaboration with NYC and Natural England to refine mapping and data layers.
- Encourage local ecological surveys and citizen science contributions.
- Update the strategy periodically to reflect new evidence and monitoring outcomes.

Wards Impacted

41. All wards will be impacted as the LNRS covers the entire local authority.

Contact details

42. For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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Background papers:

13/06/2025 [To provide written consent to public consultation on the draft North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)ref: 7447](#)

20/05/2025 [North Yorkshire & York, Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) consultation draftref: 7425](#)

12/10/2023 [Biodiversity Net Gain \(including information on Local Nature Recovery Strategy\)ref: 6954](#)

NYC consultation Documents issued in June 2025 via: [North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation | North Yorkshire Council](#):

- [Document 1: Thriving Nature in North Yorkshire and York - Short Summary \(pdf / 4 MB\)](#)
- [Document 2: Thriving Nature in North Yorkshire and York - Our Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(pdf / 8 MB\)](#)

- [Document 3: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities part 1 - Description of Our Strategy Area \(pdf / 2 MB\)](#)
- [Document 4: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities part 2 - Priorities and Measures \(pdf / 1 MB\)](#)

Annexes:

- Annex A - Pre-Publication Local Nature Recovery Strategy Short Summary (consultation version, June 2025)