

**Defra Consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategies:  
how to prepare and what to include**

Please note: This consultation took the form of an online multiple-choice questionnaire.

A joint response was submitted by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.

**Question 5:** Which of the groups listed below do you consider essential for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Local authority(s) other than the “responsible authority”, where the Strategy covers more than one Local Authority area**
- **Local authorities adjacent to the Strategy areas**
- **Local Nature Partnership(s), where active and geographically aligned**
- **Natural England**
- **Environment Agency**
- **Forestry Commission**
- **Other public bodies (e.g. Highways England)**
- **Environmental non-governmental organisations active in the Strategy area**
- **National Park Authority(s), where present in the Strategy area and if not the “responsible authority”**
- **Area of Outstanding National Beauty organisation(s), where present in the Strategy area**
- **Local Records Centre(s), where separate from any of the other groups listed**
- **Local farming, forestry and landowning groups**
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships**
- **Utilities providers, such as water companies**
- **Other local business representative bodies**
- **Individual landowners and land managers (including farmers, both landowners and tenants)**
- **Individual businesses**
- **Members of the public**
- **Don't know**

**Question 6:** Are there any organisations not listed above whose involvement you consider essential?

**No**

**Question 7:** Do you think that additional support should be provided to farmers, landowners and managers and the land management sector to facilitate their involvement with the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

**Yes**

**Question 8:** If information on other types of local wildlife sites within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy area is not held by the responsible authority, do you think that if another Local Authority owns the information they should be obliged to provide it to them?

**Yes**

**Question 9:** Are you aware of specific locally-held information that would make an important contribution to the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies that you do not believe would be made available without a requirement to do so?

**No**

**Question 10:** How do you think neighbouring Local Nature Recovery Strategy responsible authorities should be required to work together?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- Required to inform neighbouring responsible authorities of their progress in preparing their Strategy
- Required to give information to neighbouring responsible authorities that would help them prepare their Strategy
- **Required to collaborate when setting objectives for areas close to boundaries**
- Left to local discretion
- Other [if other, please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 11:** Should draft Local Nature Recovery Strategies be subject to a local public consultation prior to publication?

**Yes**

**Question 12:** Should individual landowners or managers be able to decide that land they own or manage should not be identified by a Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area that could become of particular importance for biodiversity?

**No**

**Question 13:** Should anyone interested in the Strategy be able to propose additional areas that could become of particular importance if these can be shown to be making a sufficient contribution to the overall objective of the Strategy?

**Yes**

**Question 14:** How prescriptive do you think regulations made under clause 101 should be in setting out how the responsible authority should work with local partners?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- Setting broad principles only
- **Setting broad principles and specific requirements on who to engage or how**

- A standardised process of who to engage and how
- Don't know

**Question 15:** Do you think that regulations made under clause 101 should establish a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

**Yes**

**Question 16:** If you believe that regulations made under clause 101 should establish a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which of the following bodies do you think should be able to raise a dispute (including on behalf of others)?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- Local Authorities within the Strategy area who are not the responsible authority
- **Natural England**
- Responsible authorities for neighbouring Strategy areas
- Other [Please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 17:** Which of the following do you think might be reasonable grounds for raising a dispute about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy preparation process?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- Not adequately involving relevant specific groups
- Slow / no progress
- Lack of transparency
- **Legal requirements not being followed**
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 18:** At which points in the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy do you think it should be possible to escalate procedural disputes for external consideration?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- Before finalisation of the Strategy priorities
- **Before a potential public consultation on the draft Strategy**
- **If the responsible authority does not respond within a reasonable timeframe to being informed of concerns**
- At any time
- There should not be a process for external consideration
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 19:** Do you think that Local Nature Recovery Strategies should also be “signed off” by a body other than the responsible authority before they can be published?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- No
- Yes – instead of a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation process
- **Yes – as well as a mechanism for resolving disputes in the preparation process**
- Don't know

**Question 20:** If so, which bodies should be given sign-off responsibility?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Other Local Authorities in the Strategy area**
- **Natural England**
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 21:** On what grounds could a body refuse to sign-off a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Disagreement about overall priorities**
- Disagreement about specific priorities
- Disagreement about potential measures
- Disagreement about the inclusion or exclusion of specific “areas of potential importance”
- On any reasonable grounds
- Only the “responsible authority” should be required to sign-off the Strategy
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 22:** Should the Defra Secretary of State be able to appoint a separate body to consider disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and if so, which body or bodies?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- It should not be possible for a separate body to be appointed
- **Natural England**
- Planning inspectorate
- Whichever body the Secretary of State considers appropriate
- The responsible authority for a different Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 23:** In resolving disputes in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies should the Secretary of State be able to: ...

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Require the responsible authority to repeat particular parts of the preparation process**
- **Require the responsible authority to make specific changes to their Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
- **Approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy with or without changes**
- Something else [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 24:** Do you think that each local habitat map should adopt the same data standards and be published in the same format to facilitate national collation?

**Yes**

**Question 25:** If yes, how should this level of consistency be established?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Advice from Natural England**
- **Creation of standard templates**
- Specified in regulations made under clause 101
- By consensus amongst responsible authorities
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 26:** Do you think that each statement of biodiversity priorities should also be published in a similar format?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- The format should be the same
- **There should be some specific requirements but the responsible authority should keep some discretion over presentation**
- The responsible authority should be able to decide how they present their Strategy so long as it meets legal requirements
- Don't know

**Question 27:** Do you think that all Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be published together on a single national website as well as being published locally by the responsible authority?

**Yes**

**Question 28:** Do you think that a published Local Nature Recovery Strategy should:

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- Only be changed once the Secretary of State has been notified
- **Only be changed with the Secretary of State's permission**
- Not be changed unless it's part of a scheduled review process
- Don't know

**Question 29.** Do you think that all Local Nature Recovery Strategies across England should be reviewed and republished at similar times or should there be local discretion to decide when is the best time?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- Set nationally
- **Decided locally**
- Don't know

**Question 30:** If you do think all Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be reviewed and republished at the same time, do you think that this should happen to a fixed cycle?

**N/A as answer to Question 29 was local discretion.**

**Question 31:** Do you think that all responsible authorities should take a consistent approach to describing the biodiversity in their Strategy area?

**No**

**Question 32:** If yes, do you have a preference as to how sub-areas based on similarities in biodiversity should be identified?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- No preference
- Responsible authorities should be able to decide
- National Character Areas
- River catchments
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 33:** To ensure that the statement of biodiversity priorities provides an accurate and useful description of the Strategy area that can inform the setting of realistic and appropriate priorities, what else should the description consider in addition to describing existing biodiversity?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Climate change scenarios**
- **How land use / habitat distribution has changed over time**

- **Anticipated future pressures on land use (e.g. broad indications of housing and infrastructure need)**
- **Environmental issues in the Strategy area that might be addressed through nature-based solutions**
- **Existing significant nature or environmental projects (e.g. landscape scale work)**
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 34:** How should the statement of biodiversity priorities describe opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity without mapping them?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- Identifying particular rarer habitats / species that the strategy area is suitable for supporting
- Assess the potential to contribute to national priorities for nature recovery
- Describe the relative opportunity for creating more areas of key habitats as well as making them bigger, better and joined up
- Indicate broad areas where creating improving habitat may be more achievable
- Assess the potential for use of nature-based solutions
- **However, the responsible authority finds more useful**
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 35:** Do you think that all Local Nature Recovery Strategies should follow the same priority setting process or that each responsible authority should decide for themselves how priorities should be set?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- All Strategies should follow the same priority setting process
- **Strategies should follow the same high-level principles but with local discretion**
- Strategies should decide for themselves how to prioritise
- Don't know

**Question 36:** How should national environmental priorities be reflected when setting Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- National priorities should be advisory
- **Responsible authorities should show how they have considered national priorities**
- Local priorities should follow a consistent nationally-set structure
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know

**Question 37:** Should Local Nature Recovery Strategies identify only those outcomes for nature recovery and environmental improvement that are of a priority or also include those that are positive but of lower priority?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- List only priorities
- List priorities and other relevant lower priority outcomes
- **Let the Responsible Authority decide**
- Don't know

**Question 38:** How should priorities identified in other environmental spatial plans in the Strategy area be incorporated into the Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- **Considered and prioritised alongside other outcomes**
- Incorporated directly
- Don't know

**Question 39:** Do you think that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy should include potential measures for conserving and enhancing biodiversity and making wider environmental improvements that cannot be mapped as well as those that can?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- **Yes both**
- No, only those that can be mapped
- Don't know

**Question 40:** Should there be a standard list of potential measures for responsible authorities to choose from?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- No – responsible authorities should have free choice
- **There should be a list of suggestions**
- There should be a core list which the responsible authority can add to
- Responsible authorities should only be able to choose measures included on a national list
- Don't know

**Question 41:** What sort of areas, outside of national conservation and local wildlife sites, might a responsible authority reasonably consider to be of particular importance for biodiversity?

[Select all that apply - answers selected by the councils are in **BOLD**.]

- **Ancient woodlands**
- **Flower-rich meadows**
- **Priority habitats in good condition**



- Areas used for feeding or resting by animals or birds from a nearby national conservation site
- Any areas the responsible authority chooses
- None
- **Other [please specify]: The above list is incomplete as there are other locally identified habitats of importance which are not listed. This list should be specific to areas which have been identified through an agreed set of local criteria as being important for biodiversity.**
- Don't know

**Question 42:** Should all responsible authorities follow a standardised process for mapping potential measures to identify areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity or other environmental benefits?

**No**

**Question 43:** Do you think that all responsible authorities should seek to identify a similar proportion of their Strategy area as areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity or wider environmental outcomes?

[Select one answer – the answer selected by the councils is in **BOLD**.]

- Yes, there should be a set percentage each responsible authority should identify
- **No, this should not be set and decided locally**
- Don't know

**Question 44:** Do you think that when Strategies are reviewed and republished, they should map where appropriate action has been taken to make areas of increasing importance for biodiversity?

**Yes**