# Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy

## 1 Summary

**1.1.** As a supporting authority, this report seeks agreement on the content and the commencement of a six-week consultation of the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy, that will be conducted by the responsible authority, Westmorland and Furness Council.

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| ***Recommendation that you:*** | ***a*** | ***agree the contents of the draft Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Annex 1) for public consultation by Westmorland and Furness Council.*** |
| | ***b*** | ***Provide comments on the draft Strategy to incorporate into an officer led response to the consultation.*** |
| | ***c*** | ***delegate authority to the Director of Sustainable Development to prepare and submit a consultation response.*** |

## 2. Background

2.1. Cumbria is one of 48 strategy areas in England that are required by the Environment Act (2021) to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their area, in line with The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statutory Guidance. Westmorland and Furness Council were appointed the Responsible Authority for Cumbria's Local Nature Recovery Strategy by Defra and have led the work on developing the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). They are supported by the LDNPA as a Supporting Authority, together with Cumberland Council, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Natural England.

2.2. Under the statutory guidance, each strategy must agree priorities for nature recovery, map the most valuable existing areas for nature, and map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. By law, each local nature recovery strategy must include a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and a Local Habitat Map. The strategy has been prepared so that the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and the Local Habitat Map work closely together to inform on-the-ground nature recovery initiatives.

2.3. The first draft of the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and local habitat map has been produced, and Member approval is now being sought, as a Supporting Authority, to commence the consultation period for the strategy. It is presented in Annex 1. Following a six-week consultation period, the Strategy will be updated and presented again to supporting authorities for adoption, in readiness for publication in June 2025.

## 3. Policy Context

3.1. Established by the Environment Act 2021, each local nature recovery strategy will underpin an England Nature Recovery Network, a commitment set out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The LNRS will:

- 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

3.2. Once published, the Cumbria LNRS will have many uses for a whole range of stakeholders interested in nature recovery such as landowners, local planning authorities, developers, organisations, investors and the public. It will be delivered through a variety of mechanisms:

- A new Biodiversity Duty (set out in the Environment Act 2021) on all public authorities to have regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies.
- Integration of local nature recovery strategies into the planning system, so that areas of greatest potential for nature recovery can be better reflected in planning decisions.
- An incentive in how biodiversity net gain is calculated to encourage taking action where the local nature recovery strategy identifies it as being most beneficial.
- Funding for specific activities that local nature recovery strategies are expected to propose locations for that will assist with delivery of the actions in the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan.

3.3 Supporting the production of the Cumbria LNRS is a Business Plan priority #5 'Contribute to finalising the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy'.

## 4. Options

4.1. a) Members agree the contents of the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy for consultation by Westmorland and Furness Council, provide comments on the draft to officers and delegate authority to the Director of Sustainable Development to prepare and submit a response.

b) Members propose an alternative approach.

## 5. Proposals

5.1. Option a) is recommended to ensure compliance with the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statutory Guidance, for a six-week consultation period that allows the process to conclude in time for the Cumbria LNRS publication deadline.

5.2. Furthermore, the recommendation enables the views of Members to be captured into an Officer led response which will be submitted during the public consultation period.

## 6. Stakeholder Consultation

6.1. To ensure that the Cumbria LNRS is locally-led and evidence based, it has been comprehensively developed with a wide range of organisations and over 700 stakeholders to collect their respective interests, current work, future opportunities and concerns; so that anyone with any level of understanding in nature recovery could get involved and have their say, from statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations, to landowners, community groups and individuals. This process has included a range of engagement activities throughout the development process such as workshops, webinars, website updates, newsletters, surveys and online drop-in sessions that contributed across all its thematic, data and evidence and spatial mapping themes.

## 7. Demonstrating Best Value

a) Challenged – ensure compliance with the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statutory Guidance
b) Compared – this approach is consistent with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statutory Guidance that all Responsible Authorities are asking Supporting Authorities to undertake
c) Consulted – comprehensive consultation has been undertaken
d) Compete – not relevant

## 8. Finance Considerations

8.1. There are no significant financial issues arising from this report.

## 9. Risk

| Risk | Consequence | Controls Required |
|---|---|---|
| Members do not approve the draft Cumbria LNRS for consultation | An alternative approach will need to be agreed with Westmorland Furness Council and delay of the start of the consultation period | Preparation of realistic and achievable Cumbria LNRS that can be approved for consultation |
| Members wish to provide feedback on the current draft Cumbria LNRS before agreeing the document for consultation | An alternative approach will need to be agreed with Westmorland Furness Council and delay of the start of the consultation period | Members will have an opportunity to give feedback in the six-week consultation period in time for the summer publication deadline |

## 10. Legal Considerations

10.1. The preparation of the draft Cumbria LNRS complies with the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statutory Guidance. As such, there are no further legal considerations of relevance to this report and consultation document.

## 11. Human Resources

11.1. The Cumbria LNRS will provide the strategy for nature recovery, of which planned staff resources are aligned to. The recommendation will not have a significant impact on staff resources.

## 12. Diversity Implications

12.1. There are no diversity implications arising from this report.

## 13. Sustainability

13.1. In itself, there are no significant environmental, economic and social effect arising from agreeing this consultation document. The Cumbria LNRS is designed 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 in the natural environment to provide services to society and underpin

a thriving economy.

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| Background Papers | Annex 1: Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy |
| Author/Post | Tim Duckmanton, Team Leader Strategy and Environment |
| Responsible Director | Steve Ratcliffe, Director of Sustainable Development |
| Date Written | 16 January 2025 |

**Annex 1: Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

(attached PDF)

For ease of reference, here is the link the draft Local Habitat Map (see Appendix D, in the annex, for guidance)