

Individual Decision



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The attached report will be taken as
Individual Portfolio Member Decision on:

Thursday 7 August 2025

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Final Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) – Supporting Authority Consultation

Committee considering report:	Individual Executive Member Decisions
Date of Committee:	7 August 2025
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Report Author:	Elise Kinderman
Forward Plan Ref:	ID4636

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To outline the current consultation on the final version of the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (details included at Appendix A). The report sets out that the Council is supportive of the strategy and is content for the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be published.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Council responds to the Responsible Authority for the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) that it is content for the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be published.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The Government has provided funding to 48 'Responsible Authorities' for the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. The Responsible Authority for the Berkshire LNRS is the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) who are responsible for the preparation of the strategy. No additional need of funding for the preparation of the strategy has been identified.
Human Resource:	The LNRS is being prepared by RBWM. Existing WBC staff resource has been involved in the production of the LNRS with the Team Leader (Place) attending steering group meetings and facilitating consultation responses. Members of the

	Ecology and Environment Delivery teams have also had input throughout the development of the LNRS.			
Legal:	The LNRS is required to be produced under the Environment Act 2021. No legal issues have been identified.			
Risk Management:	<p>Possible risks include:</p> <p>Information on the LNRS not being disseminated effectively leading to non-engagement with stakeholders - RBWM is leading the preparation of the LNRS and WBC will communicate progress through relevant communication channels. Consultation periods can be included on the WBC consultation webpage.</p> <p>WBC interests not suitably included in the LNRS - WBC is fully engaged in the LNRS process through being included on the steering group, and through local authority networks, which should act to mitigate this risk.</p>			
Property:	No property implications identified.			
Policy:	<p>The Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies priority areas/actions for biodiversity efforts to be delivered, in relation to the duty to provide net gains for biodiversity identified in the NPPF, and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. Nutrient Neutrality will also be a consideration of the LNRS.</p> <p>The strategy specifically relates to the following policies in the West Berkshire Local Plan Review: SP10 - Green Infrastructure, SP11 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity, and will assist in progressing key parts of West Berkshire's Environment Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		No impact on equalities identified
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		No impact on equalities identified
Environmental Impact:	X			Identification of priority areas/actions for biodiversity efforts to be delivered will positively impact on the environment including supporting carbon sequestration.
Health Impact:	X			Improving the environment/biodiversity will have consequential positive benefits for health (e.g. air quality, mental health and wellbeing, physical activity).
ICT Impact:		X		No ICT implications identified.
Digital Services Impact:		X		No digital services implications identified.
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			Council Strategy 2023 – 2027 priority area – tackling the climate and ecological emergency. The LNRS will directly positively influence this priority.
Core Business:		X		No significant impacts on core business identified.
Data Impact:		X		No significant impacts on the rights of data subjects identified. RBWM will be undertaking the necessary public consultation.

<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>Introductory webinars to introduce the LNRS and outline the anticipated progress were held from 19th September – 5th October 2023.</p> <p>A survey on how participants wished to be involved in the production of the strategy was undertaken in Dec 23 – Jan 24.</p> <p>Stakeholder and landowner engagement workshops were run March/April 2024.</p> <p>Further survey on priorities for nature recovery undertaken March/April 2024.</p> <p>Consultation with Supporting Authorities on pre-consultation LNRS Oct/Nov 24.</p> <p>Public consultation on the draft LNRS – Feb/March 2025.</p> <p>Consultation with Supporting Authorities on final LNRS – July/August 2025.</p>
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the [Environment Act 2021](#).
- 4.2 The main purpose of the strategies is to identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.
- 4.3 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) is responsible for producing the Berkshire LNRS (termed 'Responsible Authority'). The Supporting Authorities (SAs) include Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, and Wokingham Borough Council. Natural England is also defined as a supporting authority under the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy Regulations](#).
- 4.4 The LNRS has now been finalised and RBWM are consulting Supporting Authorities before the LNRS is published in line with the LNRS Regulations (publication scheduled for October 2025). Details of the final Berkshire LNRS are included at Appendix A.
- 4.5 The current period of consultation for Supporting Authorities is on the final version of the LNRS, (pre-publication approval) and runs from 30th June 2025 - 8th August 2025. The Responsible Authority must provide its final LNRS to Supporting Authorities and indicate the intended publication date. The [Local Nature Recovery Strategy Regulations](#) specify a period of 28 days within which supporting authorities can raise any issues with the final version of the LNRS through a publication advisory note.
- 4.6 At this stage, if a Supporting Authority has concerns with the LNRS, they can (within 28 days) give a publication advisory note to the Responsible Authority, stating these concerns. A copy must also be given to the Secretary of State. A dispute resolution

process is then invoked, with the final go-ahead to publish the LNRS given by the Secretary of State, where the Supporting Authority who initially raised concerns has not subsequently informed the Responsible Authority that it is content for the publication to proceed.

- 4.7 West Berkshire Council is supportive of the LNRS. Officers have reviewed the document and can see no reason why any concerns regarding its publication should be raised.
- 4.8 The information linked to in Appendix A (Final Berkshire LNRS) is to be treated **confidentially** as it contains the final version of the LNRS that has not yet been approved to be published. The RBWM approval process will take place in September 2025, with publication due in October 2025.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.2 [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the [Environment Act 2021](#). Each Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) must:
- agree priorities for nature's recovery and propose actions where they would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities;
 - map the most valuable existing areas for nature; and
 - map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.
- 5.1 The Berkshire LNRS has been in production since April 2023. West Berkshire Council officers have attended the steering group, which has met every two months to progress the production of the LNRS.
- 5.2 A series of workshops and public consultation events were undertaken in Spring 2024, and have been used to inform the production of the priorities for nature recovery in the Berkshire LNRS.
- 5.3 Supporting Authorities were then consulted on the consultation draft version of the LNRS in October/November 2024 and public consultation proceeded in February/March 2025.
- 5.4 Supporting Authorities are now being consulted on the final version of the LNRS, with this being the last opportunity to raise any issues before it is published.

Background

- 5.5 The following schedule for the final stages of LNRS preparation has been prepared by RBWM to inform the process going forward through to publication.

Berkshire LNRS Sign off - for SAs		
Process	Start date	End date
Public consultation	17.02.2025	24.03.2025
RA review public consultation and changes	24.03.2025	13.06.2025
TVERC create final layers + graphic design	16.06.2025	29.06.2025
Final SA consultation on LNRS	30.6.2025	08.08.2025
Pre-publication panel (Natural England + RA)	w/c 7 th July	
RBWM cabinet	30.09.2025	
Publication of LNRS	October 2025	

- 5.6 The [Local Nature Recovery Strategy Regulations](#) specify two periods of formal consultation for supporting authorities in the production of an LNRS. The first is when the Responsible Authority must present a consultation draft and invite comments from all Supporting Authorities. The second is when the Responsible Authority must provide a final copy of the LNRS to all supporting authorities.
- 5.7 The current period of consultation on the final LNRS relates to the second of these two formal stages (consultation on the draft LNRS was undertaken in November 2024). At this stage, a Supporting Authority may, if it has concerns with the LNRS (within 28 days), issue a publication advisory notice outlining those concerns to the Responsible Authority. A copy must also be issued to the Secretary of State.
- 5.8 The Responsible Authority must then investigate those concerns and respond within 28 days to the Supporting Authority with the outcome and any further steps to be taken (also supplying a copy to the Secretary of State).
- 5.9 Where a Supporting Authority, has not subsequently informed the Responsible Authority that it is content for the publication to proceed, the Responsible Authority may request permission from the Secretary of State to publish the final LNRS.
- 5.10 The current period of consultation on the final LNRS is being undertaken from 30th June – 8th August 2025. Possible responses include providing confirmation that the

Supporting Authority is content for the LNRS to be published, or to issue a publication advisory note outlining concerns with the LNRS.

6 Proposals

- 6.1 West Berkshire Council officers have reviewed the final LNRS and are content with it proceeding to publication. The LNRS will provide a framework for directing and delivering benefits for nature and biodiversity, facilitating a more co-ordinated and joined up approach, in line with the Lawton principles¹.
- 6.2 It is therefore recommended that the Council responds to the Responsible Authority for the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) that it is content for the final Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be published.

7 Options for consideration

- 7.1 The Council could do nothing, which would also be deemed to indicate it being content with proceeding to publish the LNRS. However, a formal response would indicate the Council's engagement with the process and demonstrate its commitment to progressing the strategy in line with government aspirations.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Officers are supportive of the final Berkshire LNRS and it is recommended that the Council responds to the Responsible Authority for the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) that it is content for the final Berkshire LNRS to be published.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – CONFIDENTIAL Final Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval ☐

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council ☐

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position ☒

¹ Lawton, J.H. et. al., (2010). *Making Space for Nature: A Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network*. [online] Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402170324/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf> (Accessed 02/06/25).

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wards affected: All

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Appendix A – Final Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The documents that make up the final Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy are:

Description of Area and its Opportunities

List of Priorities and Measures

Species Priorities List

Local Habitat Map

They are all available to view [here](#) for the pre-publication consultation stage of the process with Supporting Authorities. It is suggested that the [Description of Area and its Opportunities](#) is the best place to get an overview of the LNRS with the other documents providing information at a more detailed level.

We can confirm that Natural England, as one of the Supporting Authorities during this pre-publication period, have approved the Berkshire LNRS to go to publication (at their panel session in July). This is, of course, conditional with approval from all other Supporting Authorities.

If you would like to be inspired by Berkshire's nature, a short video is available on this webpage: [Berkshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy | RBWM Together](#)

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