Bedfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Consultation Report

Consultation Response Document

Introduction

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are new plans that are a key part of the government's Environmental Improvement Plan. They aim to create a bigger, better, and connected network of wildlife habitats across England.

LNRS focus on the most important actions needed to protect nature in Bedfordshire and help meet national goals for nature recovery. The document explains what the natural environment of Bedfordshire is like, how it has been shaped by both people and wildlife over time, and the challenges it faces.

The strategy has two main parts**: a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities** and a **Local Habitat Map.** The Statement of Biodiversity Priorities explains what the strategy aims to achieve, based on input from local stakeholders and other plans. It also details how to make these goals happen with real actions on the ground. The Local Habitat Map shows where the actions can be delivered.

Purpose of consultation

This is the first LNRS for Bedfordshire. The strategy has been developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders. The purpose of the public consultation, led by Central Bedfordshire Council, was to give residents, land managers and organisations with an interest in nature in Bedfordshire the opportunity to feedback on the draft LNRS. This process ensures that the strategy best fits local opportunities, concerns and priorities whilst also helping to improve and refine the strategy before it is finalised. The consultation is also a requirement of the statutory duty for a Responsible Authority in its lead role in developing its Local Nature Recovery Strategy before publication.

Consultation process

How the consultation was run

The consultation ran from 1 July to the 7 September. The consultation survey was hosted on the Commonplace website https://bedslocalnaturerecoverystrategy.commonplace.is/. The survey contained questions on different aspects of the draft LNRS including the usability, Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, the Local Habitat map and any further information that respondents wanted to share on the strategy overall. All questions were optional allowing participants to skip to particular areas of interest if preferred.

How the consultation was promoted

The consultation was advertised using a variety of methods to promote responses through the survey. A summary of the promotion activities is below.

- Press release sent to local media
- Social media via Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough and Bedford Borough Councils
- Posters placed in nature reserves, libraries and leisure centres
- Direct email contact with conservation organisations and land managers

- eNews letters via Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough and Bedford Borough Councils
- 3 Webinars – 1 for communities and town and parish councils and 2 for farmers and landowners.
- Attendance at Town and Parish Council events
- Land manager presentation and site visit at the Southill Estate
- Advertising in Bedslife magazine

How the results were analysed

We designed the survey to test elements of the strategy using paired questions—one quantitative and one qualitative. The quantitative questions asked respondents to rate aspects of the strategy on a five-point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The accompanying qualitative questions invited respondents to explain their ratings or share any additional relevant feedback.

Quantitative responses provided a snapshot of overall sentiment, while qualitative comments offered deeper insights. These comments were reviewed and categorized as either positive or suggesting improvement. Suggestions for improvement were then grouped into common themes to identify recurring issues, which have informed our response below.

Feedback received via email or during in-person sessions was reviewed using the same approach. We have aimed to respond to the most frequently raised suggestions and concerns, and every piece of feedback submitted during the consultation has been considered.

Remit of the LNRS

The purpose of the LNRS is to identify actions and locations for creating or enhancing habitats to deliver the greatest benefits for nature and the wider environment. It is a strategic tool designed to guide and support efforts across public, private, and voluntary sectors, helping them focus their nature recovery activities for maximum collective impact. Importantly, there is no obligation to implement any specific measures proposed within the LNRS.

The strategy may suggest actions such as habitat creation or enhancement, or pollution reduction. However, it is not an action plan for any individual organisation, and proposals like land acquisition for a specific entity fall outside its scope. Changes to government policy, enforcement and conservation are also out of scope for the LNRS.

While the LNRS prioritises measures that directly support local nature recovery, it also considers wider co-benefits where they align with this goal—such as nature-based solutions. Measures that do not directly contribute to nature recovery, like cycling or walking infrastructure or renewable energy generation are not included. Similarly, some actions that are captured within other strategies may not be suitable for the LNRS.

The LNRS also sets out measures for threatened individual species. These measures focus on actions that can be delivered locally. Some migratory species for example need actions outside the UK. There may also be a lack of knowledge about the causes of some species' declines.

Therefore, the LNRS does not capture all important actions for nature recovery and wider environmental improvements but focusses on local habitat creation and improvement.

Summary of responses

Overall there were 409 responses to the online survey and 34 emails sent directly to the LNRS inbox. The LNRS website on Commonplace was visited 4376 times over the course of the consultation.

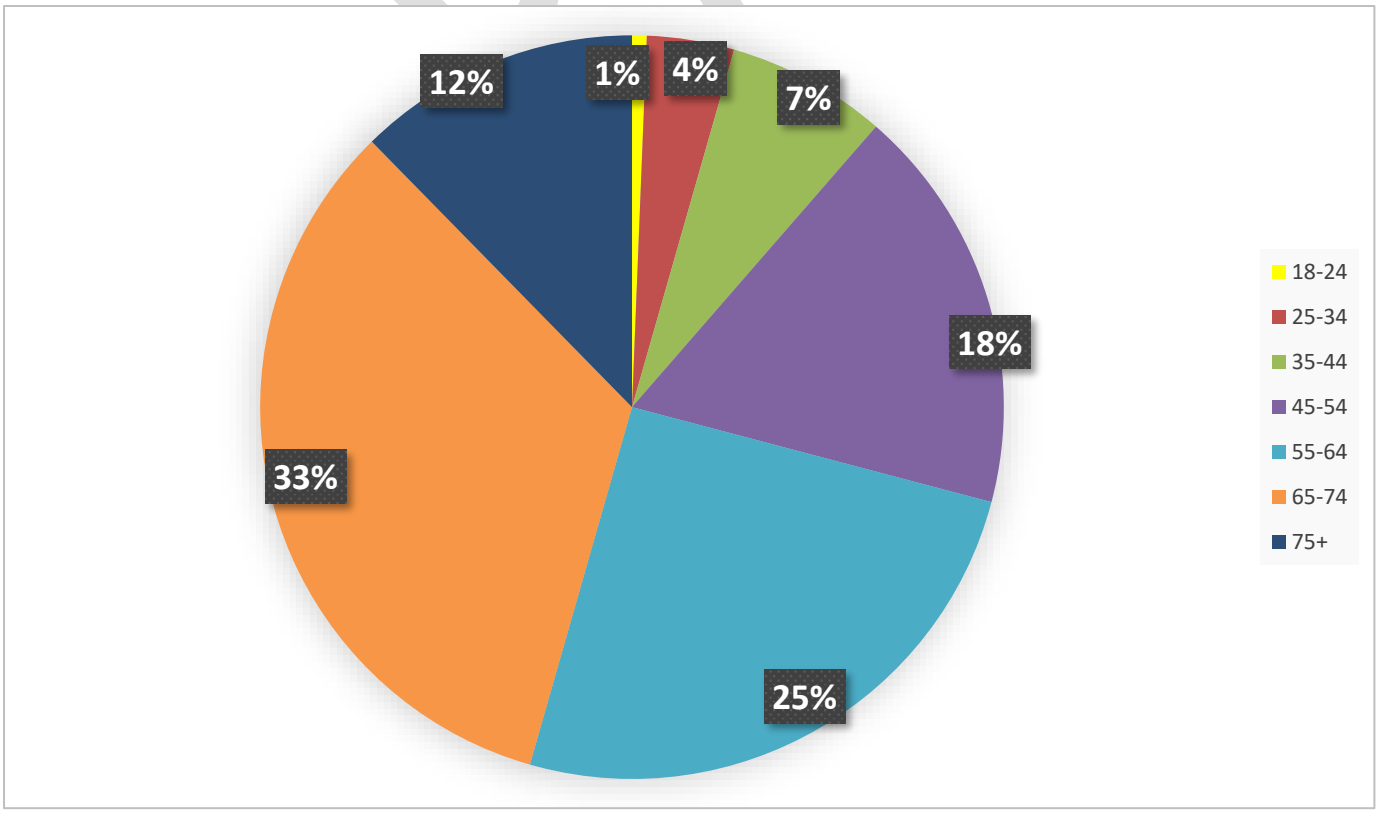
Respondent stakeholder group

The table below shows which group the respondents identified as. Some stakeholders entered multiple groups. Other respondents left this section blank.

Survey and email responses by stakeholder	
Residents of Beds	341
Voluntary	21
Landowner and farmer	32
Resident outside Beds	7
TPC	13
Other	13
Local Business	17

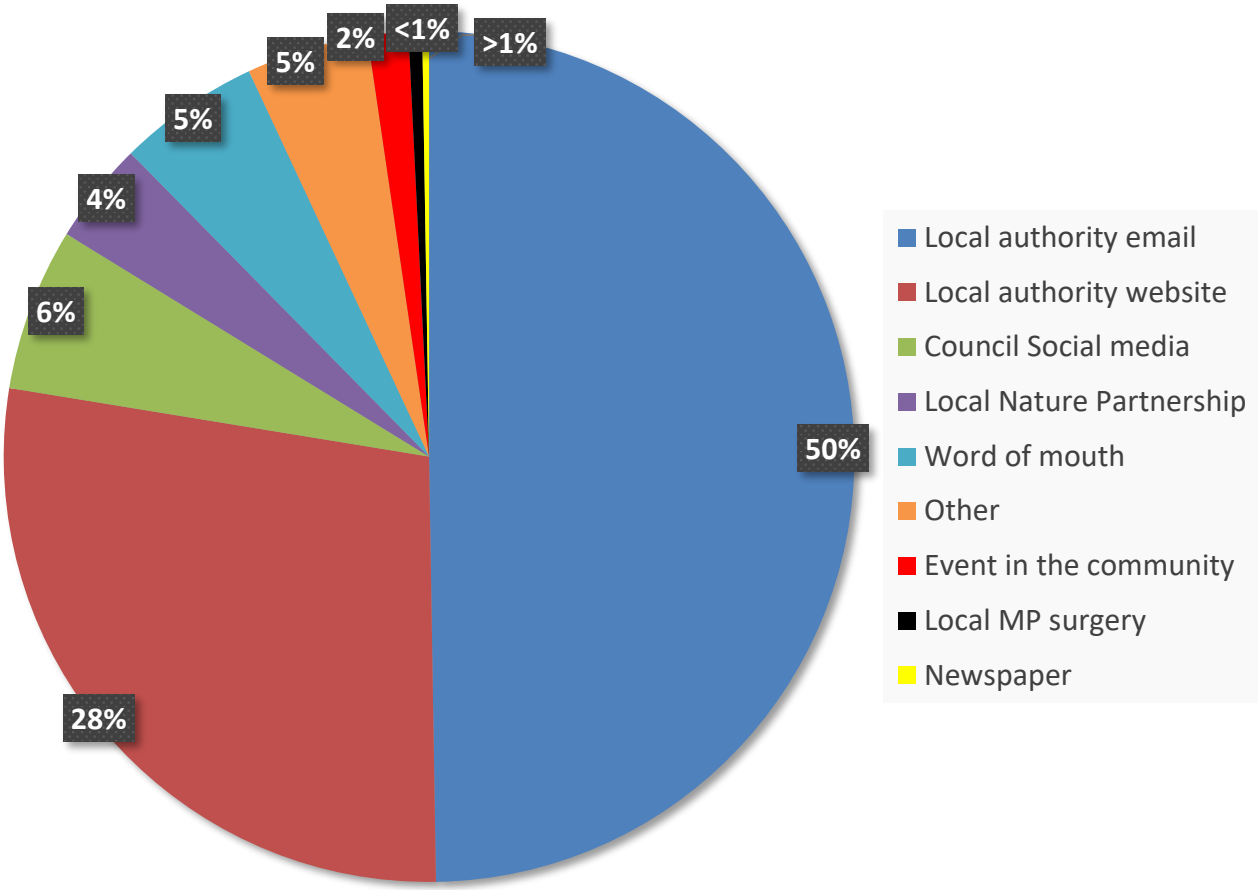
Respondent age group

Respondents were asked to select their age group. The results are shown in the chart below. Some respondents chose to leave this question blank or select 'prefer not to say'. The most commonly selected age group was 65-74.



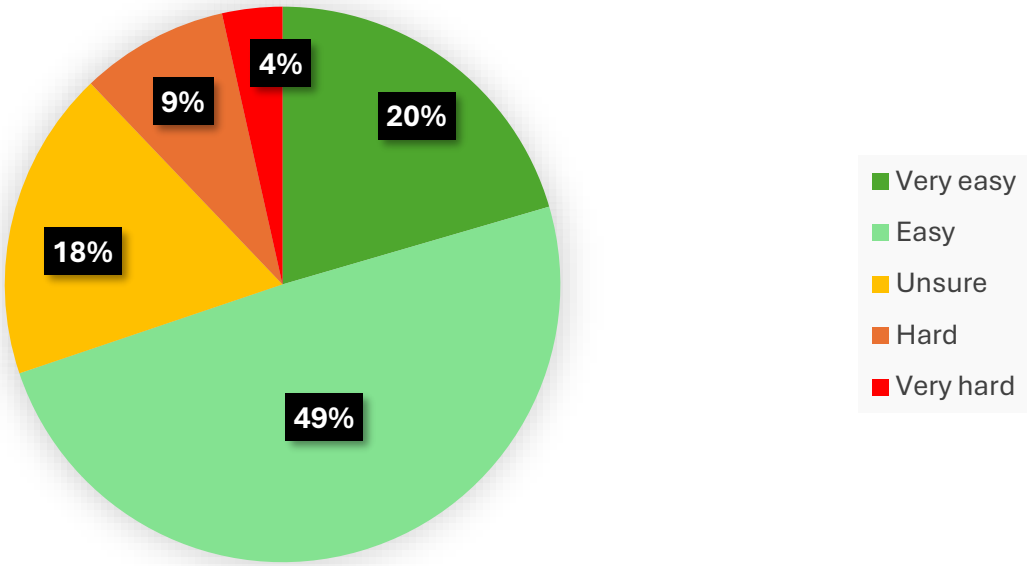
How respondents were made aware of the consultation

The chart below shows how each respondent became aware of the LNRS consultation. The consultation was promoted through a range of media and throughout Bedfordshire to engage with as many people as possible.



Overall

In the survey, respondents were initially asked '*Overall, how easy or hard was the strategy to understand?*'



Summary of comments

Respondents were generally positive about the ease in which they understood the strategy. With comments stating it was well written and in plain English. Comments included:

'Clear presentation with helpful map'

'It is written in plain English, a well organised document, and well illustrated with images, maps, charts, etc..'

'It was clearly written and well-organised.'

There were also several comments on the difficulties in understanding the strategy. Several stakeholders felt the strategy was too long and complicated and that it lacks clarity. Comments included:

'There is a lot to digest and I had trouble understanding the map

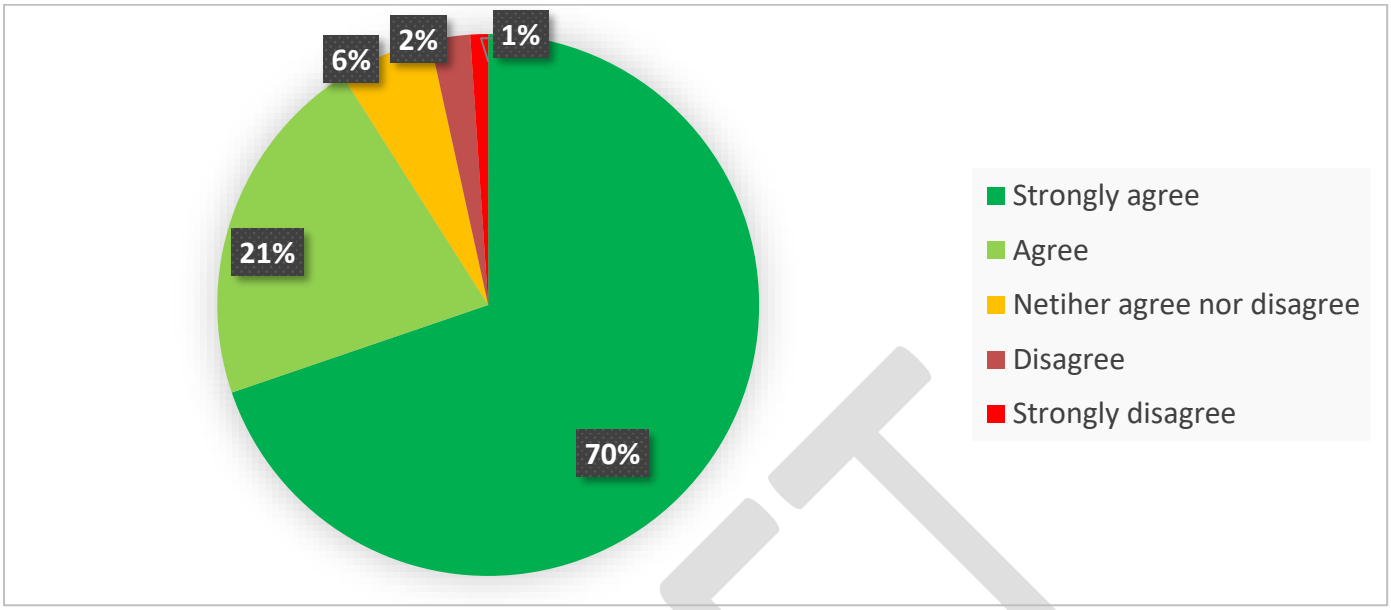
'The strategy is too big to truly get good feedback on, and in places too specific (target numbers may be viewed as too high or too low, but the survey does not allow those opinions to be clearly represented).'

'The document is so long that getting to the end needs a great deal of commitment. An easy to read version for the lay person and professionals who need an overview would be a useful addition.'

Vision

Question: '*How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed vision... "A county where nature is thriving, connected and resilient - benefiting people, and our economy. We want nature recovery to be at the heart of how we plan, build, farm and live".'*

As shown in the chart below, the majority of people (91%) agreed with the vision.



Summary of comments

The most common theme was around biodiversity and wildlife, indicating strong public interest in protecting species and habitats.

- Planning & Development also featured heavily, often in the context of concerns about housing and land use.
- A notable number of comments addressed the implementation of the strategy, suggesting a desire for clearer action plans and accountability.
- Water quality, public engagement, and climate resilience were mentioned less frequently but still present.

Description of strategy area

The Description of the Strategy area within the written document, helps inform priorities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity and environmental improvement within Bedfordshire. It includes habitats and species found in the county along with the general landscape and future pressures on nature.

Summary of comments

There were several suggestions to change the way Bedfordshire is described by separating the county into different sub areas. Some comments felt the description of the areas could be revised to make it more recognisable to stakeholders.

Some responses suggested that further information was needed on what it means for areas that aren't mapped within the Local Habitat Map. It was felt more explanation was needed on what the mapped areas meant but that nature recovery is still important outside of these areas.

The description of nature-based solutions in the draft provided a general explanation of what they are. Some respondents felt specific examples of what is being delivered in Bedfordshire would help to show how this could be implemented.

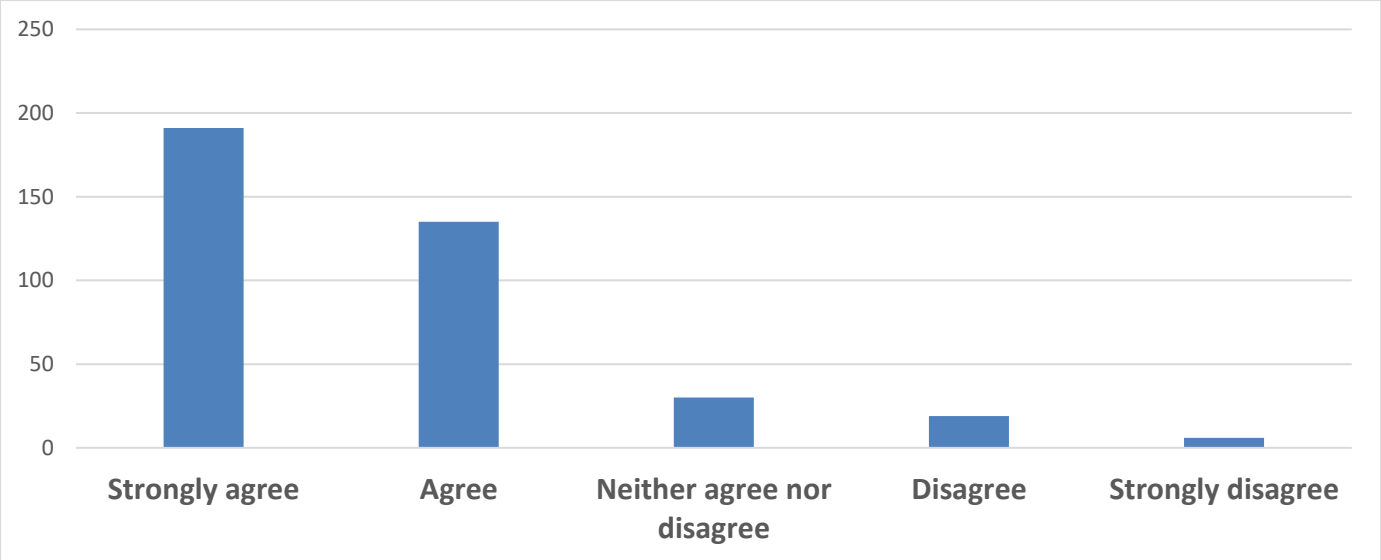
Summary of revisions

- The character areas within the description of the strategy area have been changed to include Forest of Marston Vale as a separate area to the Great Ouse Valley. The Forest of Marston Vale is a significant part of Bedfordshire's landscape rather than a single site. In addition, the area to the south of the Greensand Ridge and north of the South Bedfordshire Chalk has been renamed Clay Hills, Valleys and Vales and reworded to reflect these Landscape Character Areas. In addition, individual maps removed with one overall map at the start of the section.
- Key locations within the South Bedfordshire Chalk area have been separated out to match the structure of the other character areas within the strategy.
- The ResilienTogether project was used as an example of nature-based solutions to flood risk. This project has installed monitors on the River Pix to see how different intervention such as leaky dams and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) can reduce flood risk and improve water quality also reflecting the *R2c NFM* measure.
- Wording was improved to highlight that nature recovery can be delivered anywhere, and that while the mapped areas are the best places to deliver many of the measures, some can be delivered elsewhere.

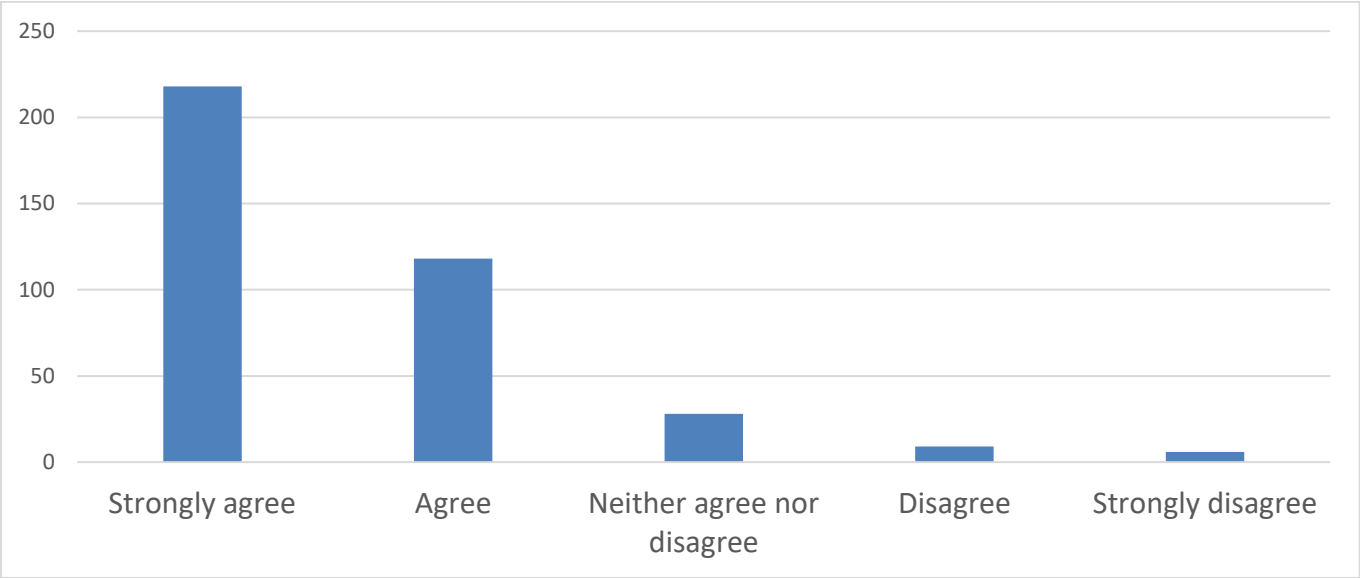
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

Local Wildlife Sites

For Local Wildlife Sites, respondents were asked *'How far do you agree or disagree with the priority outcome for Local Wildlife Sites…'* and were given a choice from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The outcomes are what the strategy is seeking to achieve. The chart below shows the number of responses to this question in each category.



Respondents were then asked, *'How far do you agree or disagree that the measure will contribute to the outcome?'* The chart below shows the number of responses to this question in each category.



Summary of comments

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, respondents could also provide further information in a free text box. These responses were grouped into themes to identify the key aspects of the consultation for consideration. The themes for Local Wildlife Sites are summarized below.

Feedback on the Local Wildlife Site management strategy highlighted widespread concern that the proposed 60% management target is too low, with many suggesting it be raised to 80%, 90%, or even 100%. Respondents emphasised the critical role of Local Wildlife Sites in supporting biodiversity, community wellbeing, and education, citing specific local sites needing attention. There were repeated calls for stronger landowner engagement, including financial incentives and clear enforcement mechanisms. Development pressures, especially from housing and infrastructure, were seen as a major threat, with calls to prioritise brownfield over greenfield sites and align planning decisions with conservation goals. Finally, concerns were raised about funding, implementation, and the need for SMART objectives and measurable actions to ensure the strategy's success.

Comments included
'If wildlife sites can be protected against development, that would be great but this government see building as more important than protecting our wildlife and future.'

'B1 states 60% will be positively managed. Why are 40% still left to be negatively managed or unmanaged?'

'As 54% of LWS are currently in positive management, a priority outcome of 60% for the LNRS is lacking in ambition that would help restore nature. This target should be at least 70% to enable a notable improvement in the best places for nature.'

Summary of revisions

Many of the comments reflected that outcome B1 was not ambitious enough – setting a target of 60% of Local Wildlife Sites in positive management. It was therefore agreed that the target should be for all LWS to be in positive management**.**

Updated Outcome

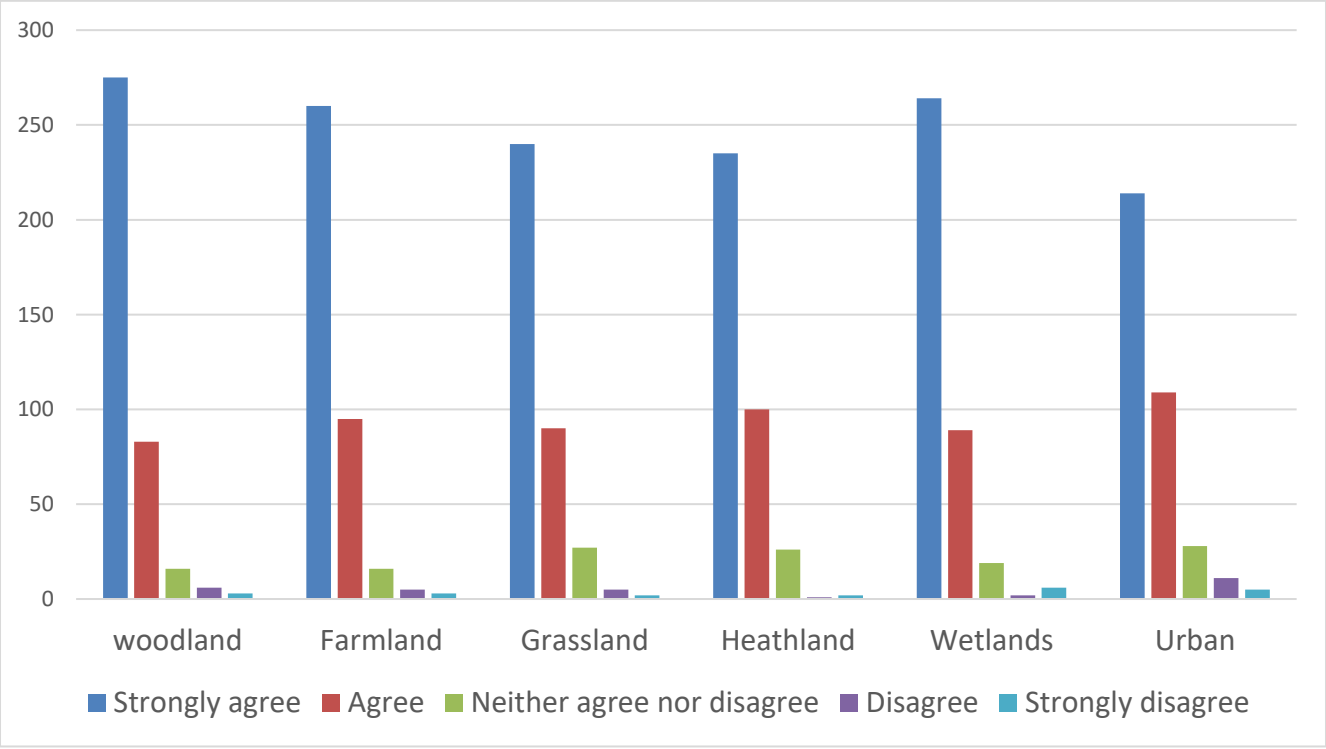
B1 Identify, conserve and bring into positive management all Local Wildlife Sites in Bedfordshire

Habitat - Overview of quantitative responses

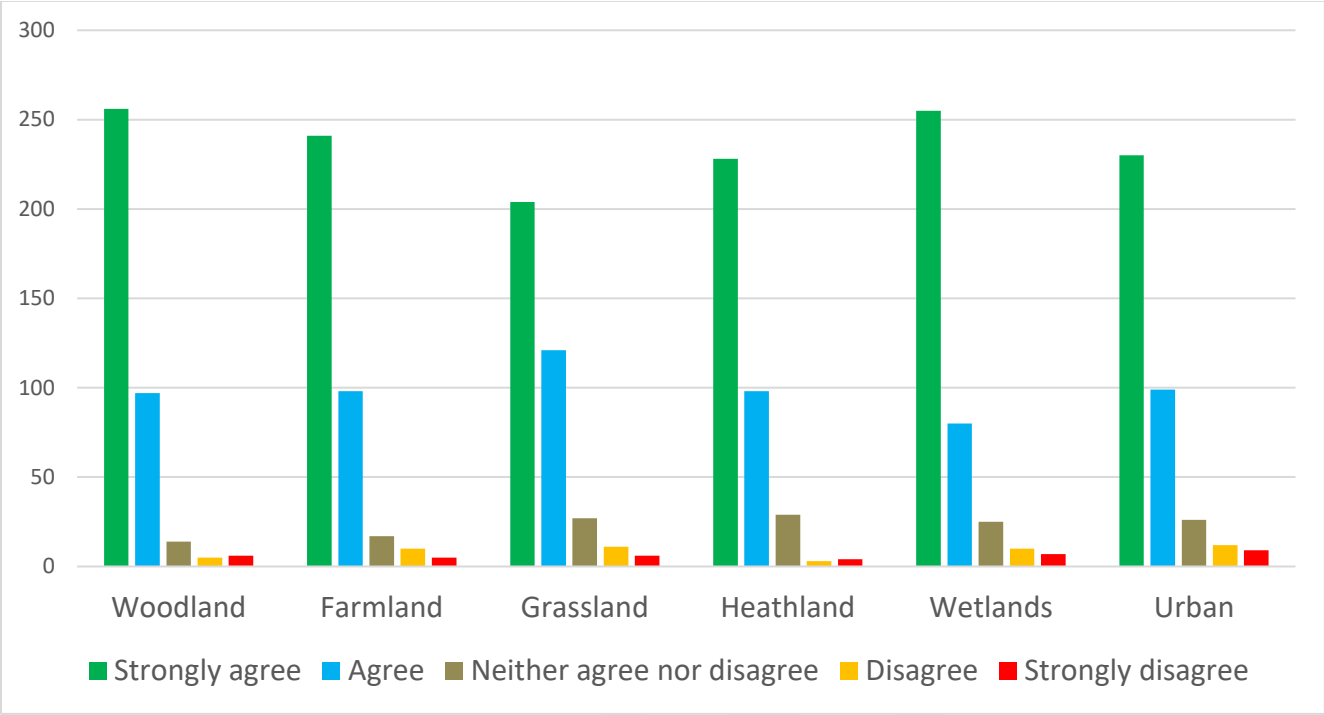
The LNRS consultation survey was separated out into broad habitat groups, matching those in the LNRS itself. These are:

- Woodland and Trees
- Farmland and Hedgerows
- Calcareous and neutral grassland
- Heathland and acid grassland
- River, wetlands and ponds
- Urban and developed land

For each of these habitat groups, respondents were asked *'How far do you agree or disagree with the priority outcomes for…'* and were given a choice from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The outcomes are what the strategy is seeking to achieve. The chart below shows the responses to this question for each habitat.



Respondents where then asked, '*How far do you agree or disagree that the measures will contribute to the outcomes?'.* The measures are the practical actions that can be taken to deliver achieve the outcomes. The chart below shows the number of responses to this question for each habitat.



Overall, the majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the outcomes and measures for the different habitats.

Habitats - Overview of qualitative responses and revisions

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, respondents could also provide further information in a free text box. These responses were grouped into themes to identify the key aspects of the consultation for consideration. Some themes were found across several habitat types. These are summarised below along with the main themes for each habitat.

Summary of general comments

Consultation responses revealed concerns that ongoing and future development may hinder effective action on wildlife site protection. There were doubts about whether the proposed outcomes would be meaningfully adopted and delivered, with many highlighting the need for significantly more funding and resources to support implementation. Respondents also stressed the importance of robust monitoring and the publication of clear, measurable targets to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the process.

Comments included:

'With all the new developments it is important that local wildlife sites are built in to the planned sites in order to ensure wildlife is not totally pushed out to other areas - which are rapidly disappearing.'

'This all relies on funding and people to implement - can't just rely on volunteers.'

'The theory is fine. Implementation will be tricky'

'I agree but how is this going to be funded. Currently paths are overgrown, woodlands are neglected - is this costed and realistic?'

Woodland and Trees

Summary of comments

Consultation feedback on woodland and tree management raised several important themes. Respondents stressed the need to ensure that trees and woodlands are properly maintained after planting, with some advocating for a greater focus on natural regeneration rather than artificial planting. There was strong support for promoting scrub as a valuable habitat, alongside calls for increased urban tree planting to enhance green infrastructure. Views on deer and squirrel control were mixed—some requested more detail on the necessity and methods, while others expressed clear disagreement with such measures. Funding was a recurring concern, with many highlighting the need for more resources to support woodland protection. Additionally, there were calls to reduce recreational pressure to safeguard sensitive habitats, while maintaining public access where appropriate. Some respondents also felt that other habitats should be prioritised over woodland in certain areas, reflecting a broader desire for balanced and site-specific conservation strategies.

Comments included:

'New woodland is necessary and very important but the conservation and management of existing woodland, particularly species-rich ancient woodland is paramount.'

'These woodlands need linking to each other via hedgerows, There is a finite distance that prey creatures will travel over open country'

'Make sure that trees that are planted are in the right place and the right habitat. There has been a mad panic for tree planting as if that were to solve the environmental crisis. No planting on acid heathland etc - just as there should be no tree planting on northern moorlands except to help drainage and aid against flooding'

Summary of revisions

- The Woodland outcome *W1* has been updated to be consistent with the other outcomes.
- The measures within the draft strategy included managing existing woodland including deer and squirrel management and further guidance has been provided in the strategy already so further were not felt necessary.

- Wording has been updated to measures *W1a* to include scrub and open spaces as part of the woodland creation as this is important for biodiversity. Measure *W3a* has also been updated to reflect species that would benefit.

Updated measures

W1 - There is an increase in the overall tree canopy cover across Bedfordshire by expanding and connecting existing sites and creating new woodland.

W1a - Expand and connect core woodland sites through natural regeneration or by planting new mixed species woodlands. Include areas of dense scrub and open spaces. Use a diversity of genetic types to help increase resilience to diseases and impacts from a changing climate. Protect new trees from livestock and wild animals such as deer.

W3a - Maintain traditional orchards by planting and protecting new trees from grazing animals. Maintain existing trees by pruning where required. Managing surrounding grassland by grazing or hay cutting. Keep standing deadwood and some deadwood on living trees to provide habitat and feeding opportunities for invertebrates and birds. Avoid using pesticides as this can impact invertebrates including some of the rare dead wood beetles. This includes noble chafers which are associated with old decaying orchard trees with heartwood decay therefore reliant on continuity of traditional orchards and new generation of trees.

Farmland and Hedgerows

Summary of comments

Consultation responses regarding farmland and nature recovery revealed a range of concerns and suggestions. Many participants expressed unease about the potential loss of productive farmland to nature-focused initiatives, emphasising the need to balance conservation with food production. There were strong calls for increased support and funding for farmers, alongside concerns about how farmland management would be monitored and enforced. Soil health was highlighted as a key priority, with respondents urging that outcomes be measurable to ensure accountability. Additionally, there was support for improving public access to farmland where appropriate, and for reducing pesticide use to enhance environmental sustainability.

Comments included:

'Soil management is key, as not only helps good farming but also reducing flood risk and pollution.'

'Where possible I think the aim should be to improve not merely maintain hedgerows - these small margins have such an outsize impact on wildlife, especially birds.'

'Soil health (F4A) – could be expanded to cover the benefits of increasing soil organic matter which, along with reducing compaction, can increase water retention (and aquifer recharge within the Chilterns), reduce run off, flooding, erosion and pollution.'

Summary of revisions

- The remit of the LNRS is focused on nature recovery and identifying opportunities for land managers to deliver for wildlife. They are designed to integrate into sustainable farming practices

which potentially attract funding and provide other environmental benefits. Suggestions to change legislation or regulation are not part of the LNRS remit.

- Changes made to *F1a* to provide more information on what the measure could include. Further changes were made to *F4a* to reflect soil health as well as reducing erosion.

Updated measures

F1a - Implement nature-friendly land management techniques to benefit farmland wildlife such as farmland birds, invertebrates and arable plants. Retain overwinter stubble, cover crops, fallow plots and beetle banks to provide food and shelter. Implement integrated pest management

F4a - Implement sustainable farming practices to improve soil heath and reduce erosion along susceptible areas. Create vegetated areas on steeper slopes to improve soil health and reduce the impact of erosion on nearby watercourses. Consider directly drilling and minimum tillage to reduce the amount of carbon released in peat rich soils in the Flit Valley. Reduce compaction from heavy machinery by adopting Controlled Traffic Farming practices in the Chilterns in particular, to allow water to infiltrate the aquifers. Keep soil covered using catch and cover crops to improve soil structure and fix nutrients for following crops.

Calcareous and neutral grassland

Summary of comments

Consultation responses regarding grassland and verge management raised a variety of concerns and suggestions. Road safety was a key issue, with some respondents worried that leaving grass long could obscure visibility and pose risks. Others expressed frustration that verge management is not being consistently carried out. There was a view among some that woodland should be prioritised over grassland in conservation efforts. To address public resistance to reduced grass cutting, respondents recommended more public engagement to shift perceptions. Concerns were also raised about recreational pressure, particularly the impact of bikes on sensitive habitats. Additionally, there was support for including areas of scrub to create habitat mosaics that benefit biodiversity.

Comments include:

'There should be more focus on woodland and less on grassland.'

'Lets put wild flowers on the verges as well'

'Love the idea of grazing rather than cutting - just be aware of traffic needing to be able to see past the grasslands for safety'

Summary of revisions

- Grassland opportunities are more limited than woodland creation and therefore took priority in locations where both could be delivered. Grass verges are captured within the measures so no changes were made to this aspect. The key change has been on how scrub management is worded.

- Areas of scrub can be beneficial so wording has reflected this rather than simply suggesting scrub control. Outcome *G1* was also updated to ensure consistency in wording across all outcomes.

Updated outcomes and measures

G1 - New wildlife rich calcareous and neutral grassland has been created to connect existing sites

G1a - Create new areas of calcareous grassland including along roadside verges by introducing suitable grazing or cutting to manage sward diversity. Where there is little chance of success through natural regeneration, plant suitable calcareous grassland species. Provide scrubby areas and hedgerow boundaries for diversity. Create new areas of bare 'sterile' chalk substrate as found in chalk pits, along the edges of old hollow-ways associated with steep earthworks. Create new features of this type so that this microhabitat is available more widely through the chalk downland landscape. This may require machinery to scrape out old features to reveal underlying subsoil or bedrock.

G2a - Maintain appropriate calcareous grassland grazing or cutting regimes that creates swards with varied height and structure. If grazing is not possible, cut in late summer removing the cutting to reduce nutrient input. Further prevent nutrient levels from building by restricting the application of fertiliser or manure. Limit herbicides to targeted usage. Maintain and enhance scrub patches and hedges around fields to provide connectivity between habitats. Manage roadside verges to promote diverse grassland habitats and create connectivity by appropriate management.

Heathland and Acid Grassland

Summary of comments

Consultation responses on heathland and acid grassland management highlighted several key themes. Many participants recommended splitting heathland and acid grassland into separate measures to better reflect their distinct ecological needs. There were calls to refine the wording of heathland-related actions for clarity and precision. Concerns were raised about the availability of resources for effective management and monitoring, alongside specific worries about risks posed by adders and potential public disturbance. Some respondents suggested augmenting heathland areas with hedgerows and scrub to enhance habitat diversity, while others emphasised the need to reduce the risk of wildfires through appropriate management strategies.

Comments included

'All for heathland but what about the potential effects of heatwaves - can these be factored in somehow?'

'This is very important for our snakes and reptiles that depend on this type of habitat. It will also mean humans will need to be restricted especially if they have dogs as they disturb ground nesting birds and will come into contact with adders.'

'Corridors of linked habitats are crucial - for plants/insects/birds. Things do not survive in isolation'

Summary of revisions

- Changes were made to include integration of firebreaks and ponds into the heathland and acid grassland measures to reduce risk of wildfire.
- Further refinements were made to heathland measures to reflect beneficial scrub management rather than simply control.
- An additional mention of acid grassland as a key element of heathland mosaics has been incorporated into the measures.

Updated measures

H1a - Create new areas of heathland and acid grassland mosaics to link existing habitat areas. Prioritise recently lost areas of heathland. Encourage colonisation by using heather seed (directly or in brush or capsules) or cuttings, preferably from a donor site nearby, where there is little chance of success through natural regeneration through the seed bank. Graze or cut the colonising heathland vegetation at set times to maintain diverse maturity of plants. Provide areas of bare ground for invertebrates. Species that may benefit include nightjar and small heath butterflies.

H2a - Manage existing heathland and acid grassland mosaics through appropriate hydrological management to ensure wet heath/acidic mire areas are maintained. Maintain a diverse vegetation structure including patches of scrub and gorse to provide a range of habitat niches including lichen and moss dominated area. Create areas of bare ground for invertebrates such as solitary wasps and bees and feeding sites for birds. Integrate firebreaks and ponds to improve climate resilience and mitigate pressures from wildfire.

Rivers, Wetlands and Ponds

Summary of comments

Consultation responses on water-related habitats and features highlighted several key concerns and priorities. The importance of chalk streams was strongly emphasised, with calls for greater recognition of their ecological value. Respondents also felt that the Grand Union Canal deserved more attention within the strategy. Development within floodplains raised concerns, particularly regarding its impact on water quality and habitat integrity. There were widespread concerns about pollution, especially linked to water companies, and the broader issue of water resource management. Littering was noted as a persistent problem, and many called for improved public engagement to raise awareness and encourage responsible behaviour. The removal of invasive species like Himalayan Balsam was seen as a priority. However, some respondents expressed doubts about the achievability and delivery of the proposed measures, highlighting the need for realistic planning and adequate resourcing.

Comments included:

‘Control strongly the dumping of sewage and soil into the rivers & streams’

‘I think all this is going to require a lot of money and effort and a lot of volunteers’

‘Reintroduce rivers that have been taken underground’

'This is absolutely critical. It should be THE strategy. The linkage to all rivers via corridors is fundamentally right.'

Summary of revisions

- Many of the comments focused on reducing pollution and measures are included to reduce this through land management. Other measures such as improving sewage systems best sit within other strategies which are focused on infrastructure. Therefore not included in the LNRS.
- Litter was also frequently mentioned and while important to address, sits outside the LNRS remit of land management.
- Greater emphasis and understanding of chalk streams has been included with a new measure R3b to understand where waterbodies may meet chalk stream classification.
- A new peatland buffer measure has been created by separating out R6a into R6a – managing existing peatland and R6b protecting areas around it.
- Measures relating to ponds have been refined to reflect potential funding opportunities by setting a suggested minimum size.

Updated outcomes and measures

R4 - Existing areas of floodplain grazing marsh, fens and reedbeds are maintained and enhanced and new areas are created to improve wetland connectivity

R1a - Target treatment works improvements where they are currently having the greatest impact. This includes improvements to processes and the creation of treatment wetlands. This should include the targeting of improvements at smaller works (including Descriptive Treatment Works serving less than 250 people) at locations where the receiving waterbody is most likely to be significantly impacted by nutrient inputs from treated effluent (due to low volume receiving flows), and also those locations where storm overflows have the greatest impact on water quality.

R3a - Restore rivers to a more natural state to improve resilience to changes in flow and help with over-heating of water (e.g. by providing a balance of light and shade). Use restoration techniques such as re-meandering and reducing channel width where over-widened, to create more sinuous watercourses with natural diverse flows Manage invasive species such as floating pennywort and Himalayan Balsam where possible throughout the catchment.

Remove redundant weirs and other obstacles to restore more natural flow and facilitate movement of fish and invertebrates. Where this is not possible, bypass these structures, and if this is not possible install fish ladders and other modifications to aid passage. Introduce gravels to river channels to provide suitable spawning sites.

Prioritise habitat creation that benefits infiltration rates into aquifers where these are under greatest pressure from abstraction

R5a - Restore and manage existing ponds by managing vegetation and creating buffer zones to benefit aquatic wildlife and retain water. Control scrub and invasive non-native plants to maintain open water

while retaining small areas of overhanging trees, bushes and deadwood for dragonflies and other invertebrates.

When creating ponds in intensively managed landscapes, such as arable or urban areas, prioritise creation/restoration on 'Zombie ponds' (those that exist in a sub-optimal state) and 'Ghost ponds' (locations where ponds no longer exist but field signs indicate they have done in the past) and where the ponds can be well buffered by rough grassland or low scrub. Ponds should be a minimum of 25m2.

New Measures

R3b - New Chalk Stream measure: Identify potential chalk streams arising from the Chilterns escarpment by assessing characteristics. And formally recognise those as chalk streams with Natural England

R6b - Review the hydrology of land surrounding the site to identify off-site drainage impacts, and also consider pressures such as abstraction, pollution and nutrient enrichment. Take action to reduce adverse impacts, for example through the creation of wetland to buffer the core area, or by diverting drains.

Built up and developed land

Summary of comments

Consultation responses on urban green space and verge management raised a range of practical and community-focused issues. Road safety was a recurring issue, particularly in relation to long grass obscuring visibility and affecting dog walkers. Litter and pollution were also highlighted, alongside frustration over the lack of maintenance and regulation. Respondents noted that the impact of urban diffuse pollution had not been adequately addressed and called for stronger enforcement and oversight. There was a clear desire for more community engagement to build public understanding and support for green space initiatives. Some felt that councils should be doing more to deliver and maintain green spaces, with suggestions including better use of initiatives like Green Wheels. Concerns over pesticide use also featured prominently, reflecting broader environmental and health considerations.

Comments included:

'The use of herbicides has to be drastically reduced and wildflowers left to thrive.'

'We believe that Green Wheels can play a significant role in enhancing nature recovery in an around built-up areas. While Green Wheels provide an amenity - and therefore a health and wellbeing - function; they also promote the creation and care of green spaces, habitats and landscape features. In addition to the outer rims and spokes of the Green Wheels, providing 'green'/ sustainable access routes (as an alternative to motorised transport); they provide excellent opportunities for people to engage with and care for nature on their doorstep, through, for example 'Friends of Green Wheel' groups. It would be good for the role of Green Wheels - and the promotion of the creation of new Green Wheels - to be included in the LNRS'.

'Good to see the River Lea Linear Park plans included specifically. I think this is an area in which community engagement will be particularly important but the aims are positive.'

Summary of revisions

- Changes were made to include information on Green Wheels within measure U2a to provide a way of ensuring accessibility to public green space.
- Changes were also made to measure U3b to highlight species that could potentially benefit from quarry restoration.

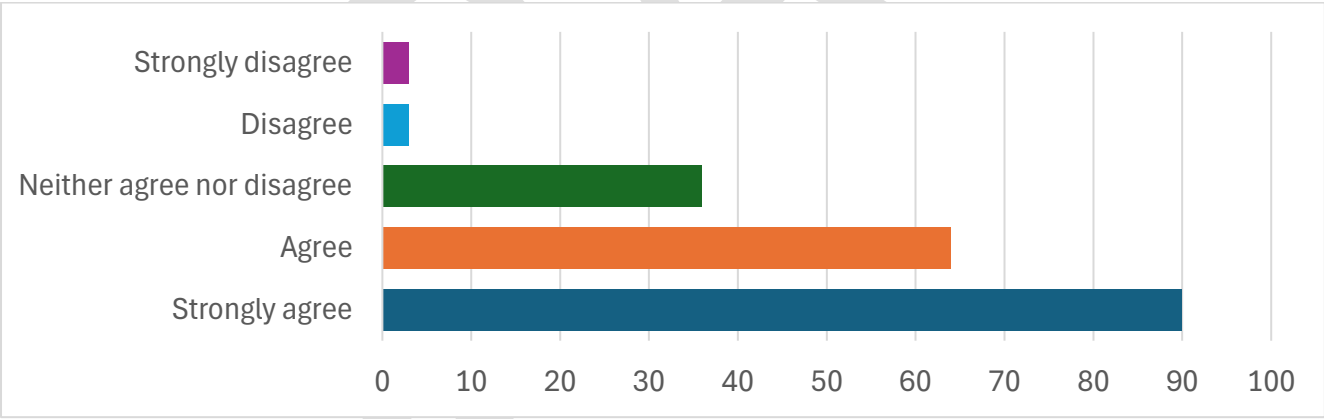
Updated measures

U2a - Create nature friendly areas within built-up and previously developed land to provide access to nature for people. Allow areas of grass to grow through the spring and early summer to promote plant and invertebrate diversity. If necessary, seed with suitable native plants. Plant hedgerows around borders to support species such as house sparrows and log piles and compost for species such as slowworms. Use 'Green Wheels' approach to improve accessibility to green spaces via sustainable transport. Enhance habitat long connecting routes.

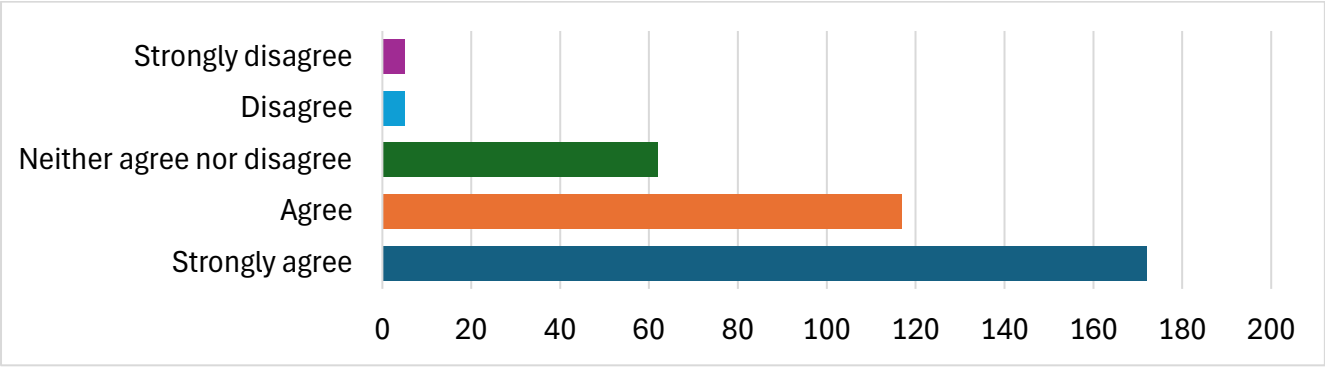
U3b - Restore mineral extraction sites to benefit biodiversity by implementing suitable management techniques to connect important local habitat such as grassland, heathland or wetlands. Species that may benefit include bitterns and sand martins.

Species - Overview of quantitative responses

How far do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right priority species assemblages?



How far do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right individual species for additional or bespoke support?



Species - Overview of qualitative responses and revisions

Summary of comments

Many respondents expressed strong support for the conservation and restoration of the listed species. There was widespread agreement that the strategy is a step in the right direction. A recurring theme was the suggestion to include additional species such as bees and other pollinators, skylarks, brown hares, house martins, and farmland birds like yellowhammers and corn buntings. These were seen as vital to ecosystem health and representative of Bedfordshire's natural heritage.

Education and community involvement were seen as essential. Suggestions included engaging schools, supporting citizen science, and encouraging local stewardship of wildlife. Some respondents emphasized the importance of public awareness campaigns and volunteer support to sustain conservation efforts. Others stressed the need for collaboration between councils, landowners, and conservation organizations to ensure long-term success.

Species-specific feedback was detailed. Swifts received particular attention, with calls for better protection of nesting sites and integration of swift bricks into planning policy. Hedgehogs were also a priority, with recommendations for safe crossings and garden-friendly practices. Adders sparked mixed reactions, with some supporting their inclusion and others concerned about interactions the public and dogs. The inclusion of butterflies such as the small blue and Duke of Burgundy were praised, with support for habitat mosaics and targeted conservation. While some comments stated that the species were not all well-known respondents may lack the knowledge on what is best for them.

Comments included:

'Don't forget our ground nesting birds.'

'Maybe Skylarks could be added to the identified species'

'We should add waders such as Lapwing to this list and look to control predators'

'We need Swift bricks in new houses and developments. Essential.'

'Well selected! Perhaps Brown Hare could be included?'

Summary of revisions

Edits to existing individual priority species

- The measures of several species have been revised to better reflect their requirements and aid targeting action. Species with updated measures include
- Brown Trout – additions to the measures for brown trout include provision of riparian trees to improve shading. It also promotes preferred actions which include considering removing barriers first, then bypass channels if removal is not possible, then finally barrier modification such as fish passes/ladders

  Eel – Additional information on the priority locations for eel conservation. This includes eastern parts of the Great Ouse catchment.
- Dormouse – More dormouse specific measures have been incorporated. Previously the measures were felt too generic.

Additional assemblages

Some addition species have been included based on consultation responses and sharing information with neighbouring county LNRS. This helps to ensure we are joined up where possible across administrative boundaries.

Wader assemblage (Lapwing, Redshank, Curlew, Snipe)
Bedfordshire has the potential to help these species recover. They have been included as an assemblage as they need similar measures and would benefit from water retention measures/wetland creation along with bespoke measures.

Farmland bird assemblage (Corn bunting, Yellowhammer, Linnet, Tree sparrow, Yellow wagtail, Skylark, Grey Partridge)
Bedfordshire is covered by 65% farmland and therefore good potential to help these species which have a close relationship with the farmed environment.

New individual species

Black poplar
Due to requirement for male and female black poplars to be close together, black poplar was deemed a worthy inclusion as a priority individual species. Measure includes need for male of female trees to be together. Use diverse cuttings to promote genetic diversity not just local ones.

Great pignut
Bedfordshire is a stronghold for great pignut in the UK and therefore felt it should be included.

Field cow-wheat
Field cow-wheat is only found in 4 locations in England. 1 of these in Bedfordshire. Therefore has been included.

Crested cow-wheat
This species is similar to field cow-wheat. It is a priority in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire so it has been included to link across borders.

White spotted pinion
This species has been affected by the loss of elm to Dutch elm disease. Bedfordshire is traditionally a stronghold and therefore should be a location for its recover.

Additional comments

Many respondents expressed strong support for the LNRS, praising its ambition and the effort behind it. They appreciated the focus on biodiversity, habitat restoration, and the potential for long-term environmental benefits. Several welcomed initiatives like Tiny Forests and the inclusion of community engagement.

Respondents emphasized the need for clear targets, timelines, and accountability. Many questioned how success would be measured and who would be responsible for delivery. Concerns about insufficient funding were widespread, with fears that the strategy could become a "tick-box exercise" without real-world impact. Suggestions included: Developing a natural capital investment plan, establishing independent oversight, involving local nature partnerships and community groups in delivery.

Several respondents noted that the LNRS needs to have clear links to national strategies, local plans and the Planning & Infrastructure Bill.

While many supported the focus on priority species and habitats, others warned against over-prioritization that might neglect less "charismatic" or non-priority areas. There were suggestions to recognize the value of scrub, hedgerows, and urban green spaces.

There was strong support for public education, especially in schools, and for engaging local communities in nature recovery.

Additional revisions

Wording within *the Delivering and monitoring the strategy's outcomes* has been updated to reflect more recent regulations within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Numerous minor edits were also made to improve the accessibility, readability and accuracy without changing the overall context of the content in the document

Local Habitat Map

Summary of comments

Usability
Feedback on the interactive map was mixed. While some found it helpful, many described it as difficult to use, especially on mobile devices. Common issues included: Overlapping layers and unclear colour schemes, lack of site names or labels, inability to zoom or toggle layers easily, missing or outdated data (e.g., hedgerows, orchards, local wildlife sites) and calls for ground-truthing and better alignment with national datasets like MAGIC and DEFRA.

Missing or incorrect information

Numerous additions and edits to the areas mapped for the measures were suggested. Many of these were minor changes. Changes were made using the methodology used to create the mapped measures. This ensured that any changes would still be relevant for nature recovery.

Revisions

Usability

- The colouring and patterns of the layers within the map have been changed. They are all now solid colour rather than patterns which appeared confusing.
- Only the Bedfordshire Boundary, Council Boundaries and APIB layers will appear when the map opens.
- Additional external layers have been added

Missing or incorrect information

Changes were made to the following layers with other minor refinement made to some very small areas.

Layer	Change	Description	Justification
APIB - LWS	Addition	Strawberry Hill, Dove House Close Meadow and Clifton All Saints Churchyard CWS included within the APIB layer	These 3 sites have all been designated as LWS and therefore added to this layer.
G1a; G2a	Edit	Land designated as existing G2a moved to G1a	Site currently in CBC Local Plan (HAS29). Recent survey by developers suggests site is currently scrub. So not existing but could become CG. Moved to G1a
G1b	Addition	Grassland between railway line and Victoria Grove Flitwick	Map as neutral grassland opportunity. Within 200m of existing neutral grassland and NG opportunity
G1b	Addition	Area also added around Fancott Woods and Meadows SSSI as this is a neutral grassland site	Isolated area of neutral grassland which could be expanded
G2a	Addition	Additional neutral grassland S Kensworth Quarry	Update to habitat potential based on more recent survey by Environment Bank
H1a	Edit	Heathland opportunity edited around	Refined layer based on up-to-date information from Potton Town Council
H1a	Edit	Expand opportunity around Heath and Reach	Based on map provided by GST
N/A	Edit	Only APIB and boundary layers to be on when map is loaded up	Map is messy and confusing when all layers are turned on.
R6a	Edit	Separation of Peatland layer R6a - Peatland	Updated based on information from Adler and Allan - ACKNOWLEDGE IN DOC
R6b	Addition	R6b - Peatland buffer	Add new layer to map to represent peatland buffers

W1a	Delete	Small area removed at request of landowner - E Brook Lane Harrold	
W1a	Addition	Areas of woodland added around strawberry hill	Work by Bedfordia to benefit turtle doves and nightingales
W1c; R4a	Addition	New wet woodland W1c and wetland R4a in Aspen Gardens, Stotfold	Information provided by Town Council on proposed habitat creation
W2a	Addition	The Meg woodland added as unmanaged woodland	This as requested by NE as the plantation will be managed
W4a	Addition	Additional Orchard opportunity south of Campton	Orchard creation is being proposed by the Campton and Chicksands Parish Council. Current orchards are isolated and this is an opportunity in an area with small existing orchards within a mile
W4a	Addition	Additional Orchard S Kensworth Quarry	Proposed measure in an area currently unmapped
External Layers	Addition	North Chilterns Partnership, River Management Catchments, Parish Councils, Chiltern National Landscape	These were added to aid the use of the LNRS Local Habitat Map when focussing on other strategy or administrative areas.

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