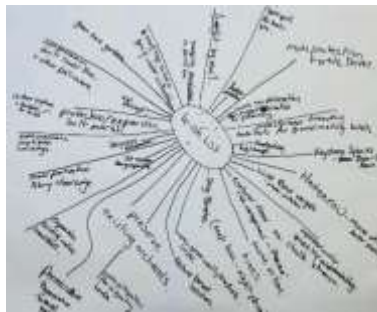




Pressures and priorities workshops report – part 3 30th January – 20th February 2024

Pressures out of LNRS scope to address or influence



Introduction to Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Making Space for Nature will work with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent & Medway (LNRS). These strategies have been created as a result of the 2021 Environment Act, with 48 to be created across England with no gaps or overlaps. Developed at a landscape scale by a Responsible Authority (Kent County Council), the LNRS will agree the local priorities and associated actions for nature recovery and wider environmental benefits. Collectively, the 48 LNRSs will deliver a nature recovery network for England, ending the decline of nature and supporting its recovery. Making Space for Nature will develop:

- Spatially framed strategy for nature – focussing action to where its most needed and/or where it will deliver the greatest benefits.
- Framework for joined-up action, developed with those that will be instrumental in its delivery.
- Set of agreed priorities for nature recovery, with measures to deliver.
- Shared vision for nature recovery and the use of nature-based solutions in Kent and Medway.
- Ambitious but realistic and deliverable plan, linked to supporting mechanisms and finance.

More detail on the project can be found at www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk

The MS4N Pressures and Priorities Workshops

Between 30th January and 20th February 2024, a series of workshops were held to identify the pressures and priorities for nature in Kent and Medway.

The purpose of the first session was to determine the "why" - identifying the key issues the LNRS needs to consider when setting its priorities of nature. Stakeholders were asked to identify the current, and future, pressures, threats and challenges. The outcomes of this can be found in part 1 of the *Pressures and priorities workshops report*.

Pressures will be used to inform the context setting for priorities and refinement of the long list. The workshop outputs will also be used to inform the pressures section of the "Strategy Area Description", as required by the LNRS regulations.

The second session aimed to start the identification of the "what" - the priorities the LNRS might include. Stakeholders were asked to identify the outcomes they would like to see for nature - where they wanted to get to in terms of the county's habitats and species. From this, a "priorities longlist" would be formed. The outcomes of this can be found in part 2 of the *Pressures and priorities workshops report*. This longlist will go through a refinement process, using a [criteria-based shortlisting approach](#), to create a proposed list of priorities for nature recovery in Kent and Medway.

Five full-day workshops were held at five different locations (Chilham, Ashford, Rainham, Gravesend and East Malling). In total, 200 people attended, representing 137 different organisations, bodies, affiliations etc. For more details see the [attendance and feedback report](#).

This report outlines what stakeholders told us they considered were the key pressures, threats and challenges for the county's natural environment but, on review, were considered to sit outside of the LNRS's scope to address or influence. The out of scope pressures have been ordered under the following themes:

- [1. Climate change](#)
- [2. Pollution](#)
- [3. Water use and management](#)
- [4. Human intrusions](#)
- [5. The built environment and associated infrastructure](#)
- [6. Land use for food production](#)
- [7. Extraction of resources](#)
- [8. Alien and problematic species](#)
- [9. Planning](#)
- [10. Policy, law and environmental priorities](#)
- [11. Funding, finance and employment](#)
- [12. Other pressures](#)

Although these pressures sit outside of the LNRS's scope, attention should still be paid to these by the relevant authorities.

The report also details which pressures, and other dependencies, the stakeholders considered needed to be tackled nationally if local ambitions were to be achieved.

[13. Pressures and dependencies needing national attention](#)

This report is a reflection of stakeholders' views and opinions. Views and opinions do not indicate fact. No inference should be taken from the manner or order in which they are presented.

The MS4N project team would like to thank all those that attended the workshops and so enthusiastically took part in the discussions.

1. Climate change

Influence	Pressures
Awareness/understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate deniers. - Change mindset, be real about climate change.
Pests and invasives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pests around for longer due to temps not going low enough to kill them or put into hibernation – effects on crops and native species due to competition.
Politics and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ambition of local plan policies on climate change checked by less ambitious national targets. - Policies undermine climate change action, we know what we need to do but are not doing it - we need long term big system thinking. - Spatial management for biodiversity offshore. - Race to net zero not joined up with nature recovery - e.g. wind farm cabling coming ashore.
Renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kent has more sun, more reason for solar.
Severe weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase of flooding risks in urban areas due to increase of urbanisation and increased rainfall. - Increased storminess, leads to increased surface water and flooding risk to homes. - Transport disruption. - Impact on farmland economy. - Fluvial flooding. - Increase in repair and rebuild costs - diverts funding away from biodiversity improvements – e.g. earth embankments on railway. - Low rainfall and higher temperatures than other parts of the country.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in water use due to hotter weather – e.g. filling swimming and paddling pools, watering gardens in summer. - Less rain leads to problems with less water available – there is a need for reservoirs and desalination plants.

2. Pollution

Influence	Pressures
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brexit - resulting in motorways (M20) used as car parks and causing air pollution. - Infrastructure designed around car use - increases pollution. - Poorly located development = greater reliance on car use, resulting in more pollution.
Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased HGV and commuter road use in rural roads – increased light pollution
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor drainage (design of developments) leading to water pollution. - Water pollution - urban expansion, lack of water treatment facilities. - Water pollution - not material planning consideration. - Combined sewage overflows and nutrients from sewage works. - Runoff (pollution) due to misconnects. - Water companies' poor infrastructure. - Water companies' lack of investment in infrastructure leads to more water pollution and lower water quality. - Increased HGV and commuter road use in rural roads – damage to underground sewer pipes, resulting in sewage leaks.

3. Water use and management

Influence	Pressures
Inappropriate development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car parks on floodplains.
Sustainable drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SUDs good for biodiversity - but not enough resources to maintain into the future. - Grey water harvesting should be number one for SUDs not infiltration.
Water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population adding to water stress – in combination with pollution etc. - New development making more grey water.

4. Human intrusions

Influence	Pressures
<p>Connection, awareness and behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of historic memory, what Kent's countryside once was. - Lack of sustainable living and education which should be in the national curriculum (litter, plastics, excess packaging). - Lack of food literacy, lack of knowledge about importance of farming. - "It's pointless" attitude (so take no action). - Shifting baseline syndrome. - Behaviours - car to school/work - pollution and extension of road networks. - Changes in social norms such as increase in dog ownership. - Covid encouraged people outdoors and 'trashed' countryside, hostility to landowners and visitors, no respect of private land. - Public lack of understanding of what farmers and conservation groups do/are. Creates tension between landowner and public. - Lack of education about the countryside, lack of understanding of impacts of dog walking, rubbish on animals and waterways. - Homeowners wanting gardens designed to Chelsea flower show standards, with emphasis on hard landscaping - high carbon footprint, particularly if materials aren't locally sourced. - Public access - people trespassing off PROWs. - Public conditioned to expecting neatness. - Public ignore footpaths & disrespect private land. - Lack of education on why there are specific rights of ways. - No respect of the natural environment and why wandering off Public Right Of Way does more harm than good. - Pet ownership/lack of awareness, predation of birds, amphibians, small mammals.

Influence	Pressures
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses put profit first over nature. - Economic pressures - taking trees and deadwood for fuel. - Increasing demand for homegrown (domestic) resources. - Not enough money for the current environmental jobs - let alone the future need = less action for nature - Geopolitical - economic production and trade. - Costs of getting rid of waste (building materials, large household waste, asbestos) - pollution of countryside through fly tipping.
Land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inappropriate use of resources e.g. using treated water for gardens, golf courses, sports fields and pitches. - Expectations about how sports fields are used e.g. the use of weedkillers, mole traps, poisons. - Negative public perception of healthy habitats, i.e. mowing 'untidy' pollinator flower banks. - Culturally brainwashed into thinking manicured lawns and formal flower beds are good and long grass and wildflowers (weeds) are a mess.
Land take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demands for housing and holiday accommodation. - Industrial humans - housing, farming, waste, resource production and use, drainage and sewerage. - Loss of habitat out the front of residential buildings for car parking. - Proximity to London and Europe means large infrastructure projects - less space for nature. - Much of housing development being built is unaffordable. London housing associations buying land/sites here in Kent. Encouraging urban sprawl.
Politics and law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No enforcement of wildlife law. - War. - Lack of litter enforcement.
Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cars idling - reduces air quality. - Land contamination/discharge. - To be able to swim in rivers and seas without getting ill. - Greater inappropriate use of countryside – fly tipping and antisocial vehicle use. - Air pollution of air from traffic/industry/aircraft. - Increase of pollution events because of development/adverse weather events. - Pollution pressure will increase with population. - Dog flea treatments and pesticides. - Lack of dilution of pollutants. - Tyre plastics - toxic to water courses.

Influence	Pressures
Population growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased population - increased need for food production - lack of incentive for domestic food production, which would prevent fragmented landscape in this climate change. - Increasing populations putting small villages in danger of overdevelopment. - Too many flats and less family homes being built. - Over-population, resulting in too much housing development and traffic. - High population - pressure on land. - Spatial constraints.
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landfill. - Food consumption - mass produced plastic wrapping ends up in the surrounding environment as microplastics (concern for human health, environment and animal health) in water courses etc. - Recycling - motivation lacking - are things really being recycled properly? - Contaminants in recycling systems voiding all efforts. - Reduce the waste in the first instance - businesses should be under more pressure to reduce packaging/one-use, oil-based items for packaging and transportation. - Closure of recycling centres, charging for disposing of materials, booking systems put people off using sites - leads to fly tipping.

5. The built environment and associated infrastructure

Influence	Pressures
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noise, dust, runoff pollution from new building sites. - Badly carried out mitigation. - Development abstraction pressures – water quality and quantity.
Economics of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mainstream culture of nature added as a nicety or to add value to property - not a priority. - Developer costs/inflation/need for profits and housing numbers.
Energy infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land use for energy production e.g. solar farms being built on high grade arable land. - Land and sea use for solar farms can be problematic. - Renewable energy production - land use and transportation needs (National Grid Expansion). - A need for huge electrical infrastructure upgrades in due course and more renewables linking into the grid. - Solar on farmland/countryside, changing the way countryside looks. - No movement to sustainable energy - just increasing fossil fuel consumption and polluting.
Green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of investment in green infrastructure.
Post construction development site management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of ongoing responsibility for mitigated lands from developers - no ongoing management or support for habitat created as part of development.
Sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grey water systems in new housing developments.

6. Land use for food production

Influence	Pressures
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsustainable economics of food production vs alternative land use. - British produce sent abroad and not utilised in the UK. - Not enough time/money to support farmers. - Pheasant releases on private land. - Loss of Grade 1 agricultural land. - Lack of financial support for small scale and regenerative agriculture. - Private land ownership - incentivising farmers. - Unlike past, new generations of farmers are not taking up use of land, hence it is sold, different career pathway. In some cases, farmers no longer think of themselves as stewards of land. - Diversification of farm revenue streams e.g. glamping, loss of space dedicated to food production.
External influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development in arable areas that are in or near to a farming cluster, or land managers that farm sustainably are broken by housing developments. Pressure on these groups, reduces the connectivity of larger conservation actions.
Food production and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food waste. - Food poverty - lack of education on food production / access to low-income households. - Pressure for cheap food. - Food production declines as area is managed for nature instead. - Population pressures = strain on food and water resources. - How can nature survive when we need the land to feed a growing population? - Less spring cropping leading to lack of overwintering stubble.
Knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to maintain traditional countryside ways, practices and skills. - Lack of funding to support and train farmers and communities. - Lack of some necessary and new professional skills. - Lack of understanding in our underlying forces and geology.
Move from food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solar farms being built on Grade 1 land - removes farmland for food production. - Huge popularity in British sparkling wine production - changing the land use, crop growth and wildlife it supports. - Biofuels, maize, solar replacing crops. - Farmers giving up and selling land for development - housing, solar farms etc.

Influence	Pressures
Politics and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short sighted policies from government. - Political cycles. - Policies and funding driving over cutting of hedgerows - less biodiversity. - Changing governments - policy that is never delivered on the ground. - Financial pressures on agriculture due to Brexit. - Lack of shared ownership of 'common land'. - Uncertainty of funding ultimately reduces habitat protection.

7. Extraction of resources

Influence	Pressures
Extraction process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mineral extraction from protected sites. - Mineral and waste regulations should be stricter and wide ranging. - Due to quarrying at Oakham woods, loss of habitat (woodland and grassland) and release of carbon.
Resource use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waste reclamation and upcycling. <i>(If improved there would be less taking of new resources and therefore more space/resources for nature).</i>

8. Alien and problematic species

Influence	Pressures
Alien species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exotic species, including garden escapees. - Poor biosecurity at ports allows nonnative disease and species to travel inadvertently. - Moving port biodiversity checks from Dover to Ashford - increased biosecurity risks - disease and INNS. - Economic impact of diseases e.g. ash die back, asiatic long horn beetle, blue tongue. - Impact on wildlife as well as farm livestock - potential to cross over and impact human population too?
Problematic species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic pets (cats and dogs) - causing a decline in our wildlife through predation and disturbance.
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Misinformation and lack of awareness when people think they are helping but are harming e.g. keeping honey bees to help bees but actually creating more competition for forage etc for native bees.

9. Planning

Influence	Pressures
Forward planning / local plan process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing isn't considered in terms of right house, right place. - Badly planned growth – identifies where jobs and development are needed but nature not factored in. - Focus on economic growth as a measure of local development. - Changing demographic, urban to rural. - Over-development, coupled with lack of infrastructure to support it. - Planning does not include water as a material consideration. New planning should account for this. Treatment plans on site need stricter standards. - Plans/strategies put in place are never followed up, poorly planned and not implemented fully long term. - Lack of strategic planning - review how construction is at the centre of economic system. - Policy change - use of 5-year housing land supply rule. - Policy change around development and industry - nature first or at least work out what nature needs and fit around it. - Little knowledge of locally important species and habitats. - Nature not thought about on a landscape scale or interconnectivity. - Poor development choices - locations chosen encourages London workers to relocate in Kent, increasing commuters and therefore the amount of cars on the road. Results in increasing car dependency (due to lack of public transport), increase in water quality pressure and loss of space.
Planning system / development management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big businesses influencing planning decisions. - Planning does not include water as a material consideration. New planning should account for this; treatment plans on site need stricter standards. - Lack of trust in the planning system, process is too slow. - Lack of planning control on development. - Power on the side of the developer - poor outcomes for nature. - Lack of transparency/accountability/understanding of biodiversity net gain - inappropriate planning approval resulting in loss of habitat and species. - No one checking if BNG is being delivered. - No resident ecologist in each planning authority. - Developers to be held accountable for loss of wildlife. - Developers don't pay the real price for their environmental damage.

Influence	Pressures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of ecological education, knowledge and awareness within planning. - Local authorities need better networks and knowledge of land within their authority, lack of "Joined up thinking".
Ecological information for planning applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local surveyors/records not contacted regarding ecological consultations for local area. - Too much importance on desktop study and restricted view of employed ecological consultant. - Lack of data collection - lack of resources and trained ecologists to carry out surveys onsite. Not an accurate representation of what nature exists on a particular site potentially leads to undervaluing nature, and loss of habitat and nature. - Lack of recording - lack of skills to truly understand what wildlife is there on a site.
Lack of enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of enforcement for development mitigation - due to lack of funding.

10. Policy, law and environmental priorities

Influence	Pressures
Environmental priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of government prioritisation of nature. - Competing priorities of decision makers - nature isn't prioritised. - Failure to make nature recovery a Board level requirement. - Environmental issues should be a bigger part of a business model. - Lack of commitment/statutory obligation on larger companies. - Shifting baseline syndrome - so lack of ambition for nature recovery. - Lack of drive from central governance to protect the landscape and educate people. - Political intransigence.
Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current protection isn't enough...drilling for oil in National Landscape (previous AONB). - Legislation limitations on biodiversity recovery. - Lack of law and legislation enforcement.
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature protection policies currently in place being manipulated or avoided by developers through loopholes. - National planning policy not strong enough to protect wildlife. - Lack of joined up thinking, local-county- national level. - Changes in policy and lack of consistency.

11. Funding, finance and employment

Influence	Pressures
Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Channels of investment for nature goes to more affluent areas, rather than deprived areas. Results in polarisation of nature, and disconnection of nature for major towns as they have no protected landscapes.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of potential/funding to remediate poor planning, to integrate considerations for biodiversity into existing developments. - Lack of wide access to ELMs and other funding opportunities. - Lack of funds for woodland management - eg coppicing. - Better funding for hedgerow/ploughing management schemes. - Difficulty in justifying spending on nature when councils are going bankrupt and need to meet basic social obligations. - Lack of access to suitable and sustainable funding. - Lack of long-term funding. - Lack of funding to deliver nature-focussed projects - many conservation projects are better funded elsewhere and so restoration is harder to plan without a private funder. - Lack of funding /investment in technologies/innovation - for solutions re. alien invasives, reduction of pesticides - negative impacts: delays in addressing issues in agriculture which could be handled with more environmentally friendly alternatives.
Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of market for timber, means lack of management of woodland.
Green employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low salaries in environmental careers leads to lack of available knowledge and expertise. - Resilient and well paid conservation industry - with diversity. - Investment in green jobs and careers - currently poorly paid and/or temporary. - Lack of skills and knowledge in local authorities to implement strategies.
Education for entry to sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behaviour change and education needed- lack of British environmental and land management skills from an early age. - Lack of nature studies in mainstream education, new generation don't understand links (nature & life/food).

12. Other pressures

Influence	Pressures
Miscellaneous	- Kent is a transactive county, pressures arise from disease, transport impacts, tourism impacts (en route to Europe).
	- Lack of local targets of measures to reduce loss of species.
	- People/organisations who want to help nature don't know how to contact organisations.
	- Lack of knowledge shared between organisations with data- KWT, records centre.
	- Patchy use of green prescribing- missed opportunities,

13. Pressures and dependencies needing national attention

Pressures
- Brexit – impact of Operations Stack and Brock on local environment. Should be seen as a national issue, not Kent.
- Demand for water, power, construction materials.
- Education for all ages on native ecosystems, woodland, management and farming.
- Fishery policy – national fish quotas/by-catch quotas to stop impact on food supply for seabirds breeding in Kent.
- Food education.
- Funding/clearer routes to funding for baselining/projects – e.g. natural flood management.
- Government must strengthen existing protections i.e. SSSI and ancient woodland to properly protect these diminishing areas of rich biodiversity.
- Government needs to learn how the countryside works (not just Westminster).
- Government to be very specific about what is required to allow <u>any</u> disruptions of these precious commodities (protected sites and irreplaceable habitats) and hold council planners to account.
- Increased funding for nature and conservation projects.
- Independent assessment teams to adjudicate these significant sites and stop self inspection.
- Kent is gateway to Europe and Garden of England.
- Lack of money and government.
- London housing associations buying and demanding housing to be built in Kent (due to extremely high prices in London).
- London-centric development.

Pressures

- National Land Use Framework needed ASAP.
- Nature connection education.
- Need draconian (massive_ fines for pollution being spilled in water courses to deter big companies from polluting.
- Overdevelopment in Kent.
- Population growth vs utilities upgrades or availability.
- Population growth.
- Remove use of harmful chemicals (e.g neonicotinoids) to stop them destroying habitats.
- Road widening.
- Secretary of State for planning needs to respect the democratic rights of local people (referring to reversal of local planning decisions).
- Supermarket supply chain means there is low/zero profitability in farming and lack of money to invest in nature.
- Tax treatment (APR/BPR) for land set aside for conservation to be the same as for farmland.