



Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Final draft priorities shortlist for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy April 2024

	In top priorities scoring bracket (hatched green relates to a priority too general to be scored into this bracket but identified as critical to nature recovery)
	In middle priorities scoring bracket
	In lower priorities scoring bracket
	No score against criteria
	Additional priority to cover a pressure/habitat not addressed elsewhere (consequently not scored in original assessment)

Broad category	Theme	Priority bracket & LNRS priority ref	Proposed LNRS priority	Justification / further development needed (amendments and notes following Coastal and Marine Workshop 25th April denoted by blue text)
Grassland	Chalk grassland	CG1	Chalk grasslands protected from loss, restored to better condition through conservation management and connected across the landscape, supporting a high diversity of species, including species tolerant to climate change.	
	Grazing marsh	GM1	Existing coastal and floodplain grazing marsh restored to better condition and retaining more freshwater, with sensitive areas and the breeding waders they support protected from land management and recreational disturbance. Opportunities taken to create and extend areas of this habitat and increase its climate resilience.	Potential measures to consider how land behind grazing marsh can be created with areas of deeper water for water storage/preserve fresh water for when grazing marshes naturally become inundated with seawater as sea levels rise.
	Lowland meadow	LM1	Existing species-rich lowland meadow is protected from loss, restored to better condition and extended through sensitive land management practices to reduce soil nutrient levels. Through the extension of lowland meadow, this habitat is better connected, reducing the risk of isolated meadow species and declines in species richness.	
	Acid grassland	AG1	Restore to better condition and retain acid grassland through increasing low-intensity grazing/mowing practices. identify areas where removal of scrub or secondary woodland may present opportunities for further restoration, extension and creation.	

	Species rich grassland	SRG1	Protect existing extent, and connect and extend resource, of all species-rich grassland by returning appropriate, wildlife friendly and traditional management techniques to these habitats .	
Heathland	Heathland	HL1	Increase in extent of high quality lowland heathland.	

Woodland and trees	Ancient woodland	AW1	Ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees, are protected from loss, with damaged areas restored through management and the removal of non-native/invasive trees and plants.	
		AW2	Areas of ancient woodland buffered and better connected for climate resilience.	
	Wet woodland	WW1	Increase the extent of high quality wet woodland in the county and improve connectivity with the freshwater habitat network.	
	Woodland and trees	WD1	An increase in native woodland, with diverse ecology, well connected and under appropriate management to support natural regeneration and extension.	
		WD2	Appropriate deer and grey squirrel management in woodland (and connecting areas) to reduce impacts and support new planting and natural regeneration.	
		WD3	Increase the average canopy cover of Kent through woodland and trees outside woodland to 19%.	
		WD4	Restoration of native trees, once prolific in Kent, lost from the wider treescape as a result of disease, pest, climate change and drought (including poplar, ash and elm) to return the ecological functions these trees provided to the county's landscape.	

Freshwater	Chalk streams	CS1	Chalk streams reaching good ecological status and providing high quality river habitat, with natural and uninterrupted flows along their permanent course and well managed ephemeral headwater streams, protected from pollution and with a more natural channel shape, supporting a characteristic flora and fauna.	
		CS2	Protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater body on which chalk streams and associated habitats rely.	
	Ponds	PD1	Restore ponds with high ecological value and creation of new ponds especially as part of a mosaic of habitats, protecting all ponds habitats from run-off pollutants and invasive species, while allowing successional habitats to develop where appropriate.	
	Rivers	RIV1	All rivers and streams in Kent achieve good ecological status or potential, with more naturally functioning rivers able to move dynamically, free from physical modifications and barriers, supporting more diverse habitats, flows and channel shapes, connecting with their floodplain and a mosaic of habitats including wet woodlands, wet grasslands and temporary wetlands.	Potential measures will include: - protecting rivers and streams from pollution from agricultural pollution, waste water, urban runoff, road runoff, saline intrusion and pollution from historic mines. - restore and reconnect floodplain meadows and associated habitats, supporting a mosaic of habitats and providing space for the river to move dynamically.
		RIV2	Clean, sufficient, stable and passable freshwater environments to support an increase in freshwater species abundance and diversity.	
		RIV3	Establish wide, more natural buffer strips with a diverse vegetation structure along rivers, streams and springs, providing a balance of light and shade, supporting wetland habitats and protection from pollution.	
		RIV4	Protect headwater streams and restore a natural channel shape, allowing them to function as part of a mosaic of seasonally wet habitats including grasslands and woodlands, providing resilient flows to rivers and supporting a wide range of wildlife.	
		RIV5	Restore clay rivers to a more natural channel shape, removing physical modifications and the impacts of historic alterations and restoring a mosaic of connected wetland habitats along the floodplain and headwater streams.	
	Groundwater	GW1	Improve the health of groundwater bodies by protecting them from pollution and over-abstraction, in turn protecting and supporting groundwater-dependent terrestrial and wetland ecosystems.	Potential measures to include increasing extent of natural grasslands in areas where groundwater bodies are particularly impacted by pollution and over abstraction.
	Wetland	Lowland mire sites	LM1	Restoration of lowland mire sites (fen and raised bog), with the provision of buffers to allow the habitat extent to increase.
Reedbed		RB1	Increase the extent of high quality reedbeds across Kent and ensure existing reedbeds are in appropriate management.	

Coastal	Coastal habitats	CL1	Coastal habitats are allowed evolve, with natural dynamic processes and progression restored, to enable adaption and resilience to climate change and minimise the loss of intertidal habitats.	Priority CL1 and CL3 combined - movement of hard and fixed lines of sea defence and other measures to enable transitional land (incl. preservation of land behind to allow natural progression) to be looked at as a potential measure for CL1.
		CL2	Sustainable management of estuaries and open coast to be promoted, allowing a range of high functioning coastal habitats such as saltmarsh and mudflats to develop.	The role of managed realignment in delivering this priority to be considered within potential measures development. Inclusion of open coast in priority.
			Loss of beaches and chalk platform as a result of coastal squeeze to be minimised with hard and fixed lines of sea defence moved where appropriate so that these intertidal habitats are given the opportunity to migrate landward.	Priority deleted and combined with CL3
		CL3	Improved condition of saltmarsh and mudflats, with functioning ecosystems supporting wildlife.	New priority focussing on the key intertidal habitats identified at workshop.
	Saline lagoons	SL1	Saline lagoons are appropriately protected and managed to increase their resilience and adaptation to climate change and secure their ecological functions, including the role they will play as transitional habitats.	
	Vegetated shingle	VS1	Protect and restore vegetated shingle, ensuring there is no unavoidable loss and areas remain in, or are returned to, a favourable condition.	Priority revised following comments.
Marine	Marine	MAR1	Reducing small scale loss and increasing connectivity and functionality of intertidal mud for foraging birds.	
		MAR2	(removed)	Priority for marine sand and gravel considered not required.
		MAR3	Rocky and biogenic reefs nurtured and protected from erosion and marine development. In particular, ross worm and blue mussel reefs recovered and acting as functional habitat.	
		MAR4	Reverse the decline in seagrass off Kent's coast.	Potential measures to include the need to understand the reasons for the decline, so this can be addressed and reversed.
		MAR5	Chalk reefs nurtured and protected from erosion and damage from marine development.	
		MAR6	Sustainable management of oyster beds to allow them to reach their habitat building potential.	Potential measures to include the need to understand the reasons for oyster bed decline, so this can be addressed and reversed.
		MAR7	Priority relating to fish nursery areas?	To be defined based on how they are impacted by other activities.
		MAR8	Reduction in marine life disturbance resulting from leisure pressures on coastal zones and marine environment.	

Connectivity	Fragmentation	FRG1	County's key wildlife sites better connected by addressing the fragmentation and barriers preventing movement of species.	
		FRG2	Fragmentation caused by arterial roads, railway and other major infrastructure retrospectively addressed, reconnecting habitats and wildlife pathways.	
	Connectivity	CON1	Habitats connected at both a county and local scale, delivering bigger, better and more joined up with no important wildlife habitats, or species populations, left completely isolated.	
		CON2	Management of habitats to deliver a connected mosaic of habitats at a large scale, where nature can flourish and species requirements are considered.	
		CON3	The county's highway, cycleway, pathway and PROW networks acting as functional networks for wildlife.	
	Scrub	SB1	Reduce the amount of unmanaged scrub, and the loss of grassland and heathland from its encroachment.	
		SB2	Increase the extent of low level, scrub/successional habitat, providing a mix of young and mature scrub to enable structural diversity and the support of a wide range of species. Link this scrub habitat with hedgerows, woodland and other habitats to support wildlife corridors.	
Climate change resilience	Climate change resilience	CR1	Improve connectivity of the landscape, with dynamic habitats which evolve and change, to support climate change resilience, with particular attention paid to <<habitats>> and <<species>>.	<p>Need to identify the habitats and species most in need of connectivity to support climate resilience and expand the priority (or create individual priorities to support climate change resilience of that habitat). Potentially may duplicate habitat specific priorities so will need to be reviewed and decided where it best sits.</p> <p>For habitats NE habitats report suggests: river habitats and standing water bodies; lowland beech and yew woodlands; wet woodlands; coastal grazing marsh; wet and dry lowland heath; fen, marsh and swamp; coastal (machair, saltmarshes, mudflats, saline lagoons).</p> <p>https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6095916432621568</p> <p>For species, LNRS priority species to be checked against NE species report. Need to decide if species and associated potential measures are included here or within species priorities.</p> <p>https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4674414100177216</p>
		CR2	Proactively address the migration of new species into the county as a result of a changing climate, with strategies for both naturalised species and invasive/pests.	
		CR3	Landscape scale management, with partners beyond the county, to address habitat change and species migration as a result of climate change.	Priority developed in response to pressure of climate change speeding up the dynamic and evolving nature of habitats and the need to work at a large landscape scale to address this.

Nature based solutions	Nature based solutions	NBS1	Increase of woodland and trees outside woodland to deliver air quality improvements.	Potentially NBS priorities maybe instead included under relevant habitat(s).
		NBS2	Work with nature to restore river catchments' functions to improve water quality, manage flood risk and deliver enhanced biodiversity.	Potentially NBS priorities maybe instead included under relevant habitat(s).
		NBS3	Increase the extent of carbon sequestering habitats in the county, that are purposefully managed to function as a carbon store whilst prioritising a nature recovery function.	Need to identify what specific habitats will be targeted or provide this detail with potential measures. Potentially NBS priorities maybe instead included under relevant habitat(s).
		NBS4	Protect habitats delivering critical ecosystem services in the county.	Need to identify the critical ecosystem services and the habitats delivering them. Potentially NBS priorities maybe instead included under relevant habitat(s).
		NBS5	Protect and restore wildlife-rich and functioning freshwater wetlands across the county, providing not only shelter, nurseries and breeding grounds but also carbon sinks and water management.	Potentially NBS priorities maybe instead included under relevant habitat(s).
	Species	SPP1	All management of Kent's priority habitats taking account of the needs of the priority species that both contribute to, and depend on, that particular habitat. With management utilising the role of species to help deliver more dynamic, natural, intact and climate resilient ecosystems.	

Farmland	Farm & land management	FM1	Increase in number of farms employing nature friendly farming practices and sensitive land management, resulting in farmland across the county that is rich in wildlife.	Potential measures will identify nature friendly farming practices and sensitive land management. Will need to consider whether this is restricted to land under stewardship schemes/membership of other schemes or bodies or whether the definition can be wider and include more voluntary action.
		FM2	Farmland delivering targeted action for nature recovery.	Will need to identify what specific habitats and what specific farmland wildlife the priority should be targeting - to be done by amending priority or through potential measures.
		FM3	Protect freshwater habitats and groundwater bodies in farmland from agricultural diffuse pollution (caused for example by soil, nutrient or livestock management practices and physical modifications) and the impacts of over-abstraction.	
	Hedgerow	HW1	The extent of species-rich hedgerows through the county is increased, with lost hedgerows replaced, gaps filled and management of existing hedgerows improving the quality as well as quantity.	
		HW2	Improvements in hedgerow quality and extent providing a coherent network of shelter, nesting and forage for wildlife across the landscape and allowing other habitats to be linked.	
		HW3	Hedgerows protected from loss, aggressive management, neglect and chemicals.	
	Soil health	SH1	Improve soil and structure throughout the county by enhanced and increased soil management so that it is better delivering for invertebrates, carbon sequestration, water retention and management and production/provisioning.	
	Traditional orchard	TO1	An increase in traditional orchards, under sensitive management, supporting an abundance and diversity of wildlife.	
	Arable weeds	AW1	Restoration of arable fields with a diversity and abundance of arable weeds.	Holding priority to be further developed on the advice of Kent Botanical Recording Group, Natural England, Kent Downs National Landscape team and Plantlife. May be more appropriate as a potential measure under FM1.

Urban	Urban	OHM1	Protection from loss and damage of open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land for the benefit of species which rely on the early successional habitats.	
		URB1	Increase the extent of green space, trees and hedgerows within urban areas to not only provide more habitat for wildlife and increase but also deliver other benefits including urban cooling, air and noise pollution regulation and surface water management.	
		URB2	Address habitat fragmentation of the urban environment, ensuring urban species can freely move about and developed areas and infrastructure does not impede passage.	
		URB3	Public greenspace and land management delivering wildlife benefits.	
Access and connection	Access and connection	AC1	Protection of habitats and species sensitive to disturbance by employing site management, and other measures, which support connection to, and experience of, wildlife but ensures our most sensitive sites remain undisturbed.	
		AC2	Kent's population have a greater connection, and increased engagement, with natural areas and nature; and are inspired to deliver benefits for nature.	This priority does not score against the shortlisting criteria but was a suggestion raised a lot within the workshops; likewise responds to a number of pressures.