

LNRS Priorities Shortlist Workshops May 2024

What you need to know - if you're short on time, you just need to read this page!

From this second series of workshops, we're looking for your:

- Feedback on whether the draft LNRS priorities shortlist focuses on what is most needed to recover the county's nature and sufficiently addresses the challenges facing our natural environment.
- Suggestions for additional priorities you consider should be included.
- Input on where there may be opportunities to further refine the shortlist, so that it is focussing on the most important and urgent needs of the county's nature.

The programme for each workshop will be the same (for the detailed outline, see page 4).

	Morning workshops	Afternoon workshops
1. Registration, refreshments and voting	9.30am	1.00pm
2. Welcome from chair and introduction to priorities and workshop.	10.00am	1.30pm
3. Will the priorities deliver nature recovery in Kent & Medway?	10.35am	2.05pm
4. Break	11.30am	3.00pm
5. Refining the priority shortlist	12.00pm	3.30pm
6. Report back and chair's wrap up	12.40pm	4.10pm
7. Close	1.00pm	4.30pm

There will be three workshops, held at different locations around the county:

- 2nd May – NIAB, East Malling (9.30am-1.00pm)
- 7th May – Three Hills Sports Park, Folkestone (1.00pm-4.30pm)
- 9th May – The Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks (9.30am-1.00pm)

A further four workshops will be held in May to develop the LNRS potential measures – those being the actions that will enable our nature recovery priorities to be achieved. Registration for both the priorities and potential measures workshops are online at [MS4N workshops](#).

Tea and coffee will be available at the start of the workshop and again at the break. There will not be a lunch provided for the half day workshops. If you have time, it would help your participation at the workshop to read [the LNRS priorities shortlist](#) in advance.

If you'd like to know more about the project and workshops, please read on – but you don't need to read this in order to take part in the workshops.

Introduction to Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Making Space for Nature is working with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent & Medway (LNRS). These strategies result from the 2021 Environment Act, with 48 to be created across England with no gaps or overlaps. Developed at a landscape scale by the Responsible Authority (with Kent County Council taking on this role for Kent and Medway), the LNRS will agree and map the local priorities and associated actions for nature recovery and wider environmental benefits, that collectively 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 on the [Making Space for Nature website](#).

Background to how we've got to the draft LNRS priorities shortlist

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will set out the priorities, in terms of habitats and species, for recovering or enhancing biodiversity and consider the contribution that this may also make to addressing wider environmental issues with nature-based solutions. In addition to identifying the county's priorities for nature recovery and enhancement, the project will also define the potential practical actions necessary to progress towards achievement of the priorities.

This is an important stage of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy preparation, as it establishes what the strategy is seeking to achieve, and the potential measures needed to support the ambitions. Whilst working with partners and stakeholders is important to the whole process, it is during this part of the project that we particularly require meaningful engagement - the stakeholders will be the delivery partners for the Strategy's priorities and actions. We also want to ensure that the priorities reflect what's most important to the people and organisations in Kent – to ensure it really is a LOCAL Nature Recovery Strategy, reflecting our local nature and environmental needs.

At the end of January and throughout February 2024, a series of workshops were held across the county to identify with stakeholders the pressures facing nature and the priorities that needed to be the focus of action to tackle these pressures and recover nature.

These five workshops were attended by a total over 200 people, representing 137 different organisations, bodies, businesses, affiliations etc. All sectors identified as relevant to the development of the LNRS were represented at the workshop, with exception of the health sector - the project has subsequently followed up with this stakeholder grouping.

Input to this initial stage was also achieved via online surveys and self-led workshops, using a toolkit provided by the project.

The outputs of this stakeholder input were:

- Pressures, threats and challenges for Kent and Medway's nature - those identified at the workshop were reviewed to determine which were in scope for the LNRS to address or influence and then edited into a list to be used in the priorities shortlisting process. The list also served as a check towards the end of the priorities development work to ensure all pressures were being addressed. The pressures collated with also be used to inform the strategy area description.
- Priorities for Kent and Medway's nature - over 800 priorities that stakeholders identified they would like to see for the county. These form the starting foundation of the LNRS priorities development.

These 800 priorities were then taken through a refinement process to create the draft LNRS priorities shortlist, that we will consider at the MS4N Priorities Workshops. This process, which resulted in 69 draft priorities for the LNRS, is summarised at the end of this document and the full report [Creating the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy draft priorities shortlist](#) can be viewed online.

Also at the end of the document are the 69 draft LNRS priorities. The full [final draft priorities shortlist for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) document, and the [pressures](#) they aim to address, can both be viewed on line.

In viewing the draft priorities, you may wonder why there are seemingly no species priorities? This is because priority species for the LNRS will be identified through a dedicated LNRS species priorities work package, following guidance from Natural England. Therefore, the species priorities identified at the first series of workshops have been removed for the time being. Once the dedicated species prioritisation work has concluded, the species priorities removed from the long list will be reviewed. Any not

already picked up will be considered by the Species Recovery Technical Advisory Group. More information on the [species prioritisation work](#) can be found online.

Introduction to the workshops

This second series of stakeholder workshops is being held so you can assist us in further refining the priorities for our local nature recovery strategy.

Voting activity

We first want to know your immediate thoughts on the priorities. To capture this, when you arrive, you will be asked to identify from the 69 draft priorities:

- **Using your blue stickers, 10 priorities that you consider are both critical and urgent to recovering Kent and Medway's nature, and therefore must remain in the LNRS.**
These are the priorities that must be tackled now (within the next five years) as they have outcomes that directly affect us achieving our goals and long-term aspirations for nature recovery; and without action, there are clear and immediate consequences. These will be identified in the workshop session as **"MUST REMAIN" priorities.**
- **Using your pink stickers, 10 priorities that you consider important to recovering Kent and Medway's nature but perhaps can be addressed over a longer time period.**
These are the priorities that will affect our goals and long-term aspirations for nature recovery but can be tackled at a later stage, without consequence to our ambitions. These will be identified in the workshop session as **"IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT" priorities.**
- **Using your orange stickers, any priorities that you consider whilst necessary, are unlikely to be achievable or deliverable (you will have 10 stickers for this category but unlike the other two, you do not need to allocate all of them).**
These are the priorities that you consider, because of influences out of our control, may in fact not be achievable or deliverable and consequently may divert focus and resources away from other priorities. Such influences may be climate change, the cost of action or the difficulty/impracticalities of the sorts of interventions required. These will be identified in the workshop session as **"POTENTIALLY UNACHIEVABLE OR UNDELIVERABLE" priorities.**

The results of this activity will be used to frame the discussion in session 2 and start the conversation on where and how we might refine the draft shortlist.

Workshop session 1

Whilst the results of the voting are compiled, tabled-based discussions will determine whether or not the draft LNRS priorities shortlist does focus action on what is most

needed to recover Kent and Medway's nature, and sufficiently addresses the challenges facing our natural environment. We will consider:

- Are we suitably covering all habitats that are a priority for action in the county?
- Are all the pressures identified by stakeholders sufficiently addressed by the shortlist?
- Is there anything missing? Any proposals for additional priorities?
- Are any of the priorities unrealistic or unachievable?
- Is there anything considered not a priority?

Workshops session 2

After a break, we will then review the outcomes of the voting and determine where there may be opportunity to further refine the shortlist, so that it is focussing on the most important and urgent needs of the county's nature. We will consider:

- Is there agreement with the priorities identified as "**must remain**"?
- Can any of the "**important but not urgent**" priorities wait? If yes, is there anything that needs to be done in the meantime?
- Any disagreement with the priorities identified as "**potentially unachievable or undeliverable**"? Should these remain within the LNRS, or would it be best to focus on the priorities we can deliver against?

Detailed morning workshop programme timings

9.30am – Registration, refreshments and voting

- Please collect your voting stickers from a member of the MS4N team and assign to your chosen priorities.

10.00am – Welcome and introductions

- Welcome and introductions from chair.
- An introduction to the LNRS priorities shortlist.
- Questions.
- An overview of the workshop task.

10.35am – Workshop session 1 – Will the priorities deliver nature recovery in Kent & Medway?

- Are we suitably covering all habitats that are a priority for action in the county?
- Are all the pressures identified by stakeholders sufficiently addressed by the shortlist?
- Is there anything missing? Any proposals for additional priorities?
- Are any of the priorities unrealistic or unachievable?
- Is there anything considered not a priority?

11.30am – Break

12.00pm – Workshop session 2 – Refining the priority shortlist

- Is there agreement with the priorities identified as “**must remain**”?
- Can any of the “**important but not urgent**” priorities wait? If yes, is there anything that needs to be done in the meantime?
- Any disagreement with the priorities identified as “**potentially unachievable or undeliverable**”? Should these remain within the LNRS, or would it be best to focus on the priorities we can deliver against?

12.40pm – Workshop conclusions

- Group report back (each table will be asked to report back on one of the three priority refinement categories).
- Chair’s wrap up
- Close (1pm)

Tea and coffee will be available at the start of the workshop and again at the break. There will not be a lunch provided for the half day workshops.

Detailed afternoon workshop programme timings

1.00pm – Registration, refreshments and voting

- Please collect your voting stickers from a member of the MS4N team and assign to your chosen priorities; one sticker per priority and please use all stickers.

1.30pm – Welcome and introductions

- Welcome and introductions from chair.
- An introduction to the LNRS priorities shortlist.
- Questions.
- An overview of the workshop task.

2.05pm – Workshop session 1 – Will the priorities deliver nature recovery in Kent & Medway?

- Are we suitably covering all habitats that are a priority for action in the county?
- Are all the pressures identified by stakeholders sufficiently addressed by the shortlist?
- Is there anything missing? Any proposals for additional priorities?
- Are any of the priorities unrealistic or unachievable?
- Is there anything considered not a priority?

3.00pm – Break

3.30pm – Workshop session 2 – Refining the priority shortlist

- Is there agreement with the priorities identified as “**must remain**”?
- Can any of the “**important but not urgent**” priorities wait? If yes, is there anything that needs to be done in the meantime?
- Any disagreement with the priorities identified as “**potentially unachievable or undeliverable**”? Should these remain within the LNRS, or would it be best to focus on the priorities we can deliver against?

4.10pm – Workshop conclusions

- Group report back (each table will be asked to report back on one of the three priority refinement categories).
- Chair’s wrap up
- Close (4.30pm)

Tea and coffee will be available at the start of the workshop and again at the break. There will not be a lunch provided for the half day workshops.

Preparing for the workshop

If you have time, you may wish to familiarise yourself with the [final draft priorities shortlist for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) and consider which priorities you would like to give your various votes to.

If possible, we ask that you discuss with colleagues and partners who may not be attending their views, so you can represent the views of your organisation and/or sector.

All discussions on the day will be facilitated by a member of the MS4N team, who will also have to hand the full list of draft priorities, pressures the LNRS is seeking to address and notes to aid the conversations.

If you have any questions in advance of the workshops, please contact makingspacefornature@kent.gov.uk

How will we use the workshop outcomes and next steps

The outcomes of the workshops will be collated into a workshop report, to ensure that there is a public record of the full findings.

Any additional priorities proposed, amendments and removals will be drawn out for consideration by the MS4N project team, under the guidance of the MS4N Delivery Group and Board.

The identification of the of the priorities against the three importance/urgency categories and the resulting input from stakeholders, will be collated and used to inform the next steps in the priority refinement process.

Further refinement of the priorities shortlist is expected to be required. A new assessment of the draft priorities shortlist will consider:

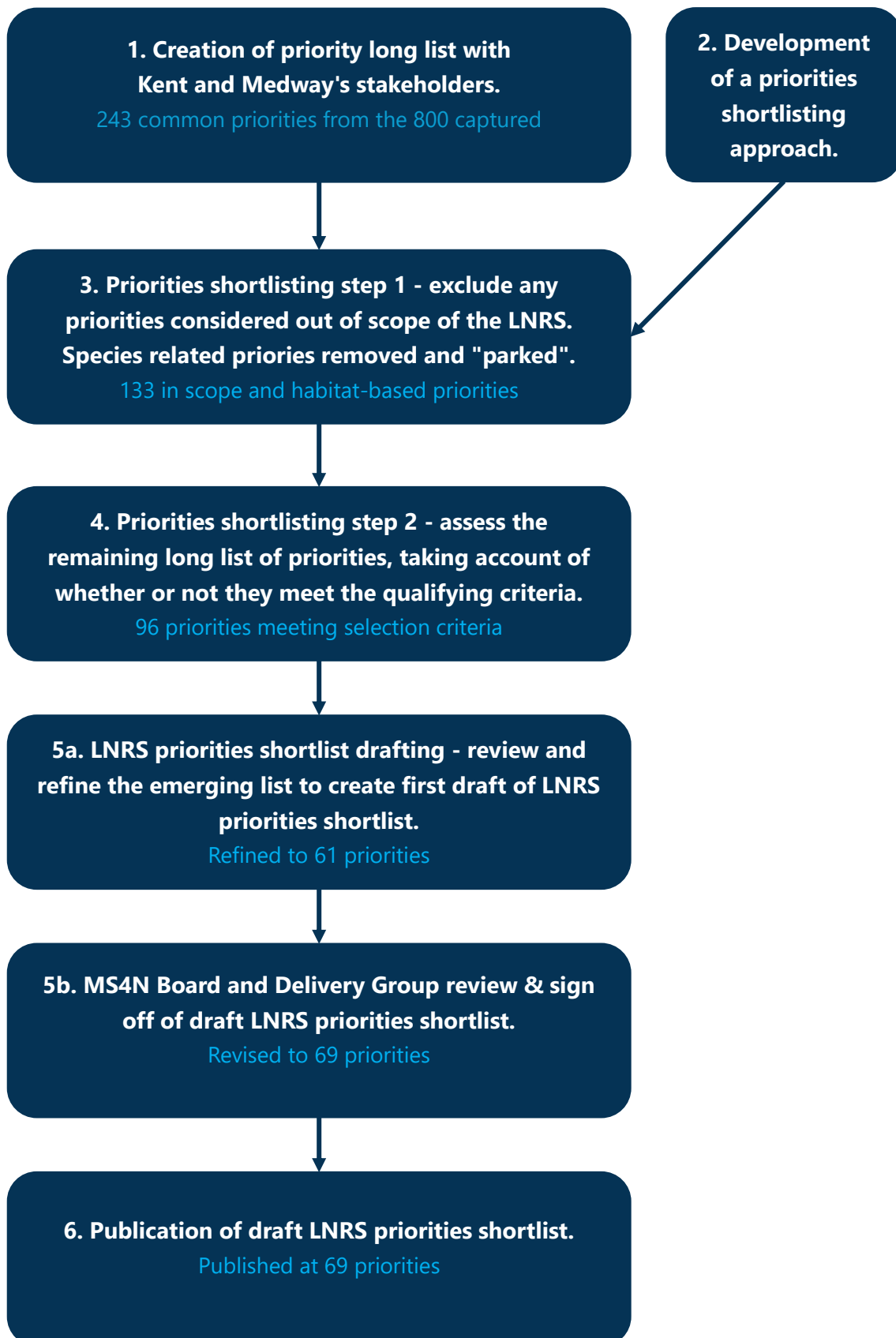
- Further opportunities to combine priorities.
- Whether any current priorities could instead be reflected as a potential measure (action).
- Whether any current priorities are already being picked up elsewhere and inclusion in the LNRS would not offer any additional advantage.
- Outcomes of importance/urgency ratings at the workshop.
- Outcomes of the potential measures' workshops, which will indicate the level of achievability of the priorities.
- The final three shortlisting criteria, not yet applied:
 - Deliverability

- Opportunity to build on pre-existing initiatives.
- Shared priorities with neighbouring LNRSs.

The outcomes of this review and the resulting revised LNRS priorities shortlist will be considered by the Delivery Group and approved by the Board before publication. Publication of this, along with the associated potential measures, is scheduled for mid-summer.

The next step in the LNRS development is to identify where in the county these priorities, and their potential measures, would be best targeted in order to achieve the greatest benefits for nature, whilst also contributing to wider environment goals and other co-benefits of a healthy natural environment. You can keep up to date with the development of this work on the website page [What we want – mapping areas of opportunity](#).

Process for creating the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy draft priorities shortlist



Draft Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities shortlist

Grassland	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.
	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.
	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.
	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.
	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	Increase in extent of high-quality lowland heathland .
Woodland and trees	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.
	Areas of ancient woodland buffered and better connected for climate resilience.
	Increase the extent of high-quality wet woodland in the county and improve connectivity with the freshwater habitat network.
	An increase in native woodland , with diverse ecology, well connected and under appropriate management to support natural regeneration and extension.
	Appropriate deer and grey squirrel management in woodland (and connecting areas) to reduce impacts and support new planting and natural regeneration.
	Increase the average canopy cover of Kent through woodland and trees outside woodland to 19%.

	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 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.
	Protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater body on which chalk streams and associated habitats rely.
	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.
	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.
	Clean, sufficient, stable and passable freshwater environments to support an increase in freshwater species abundance and diversity.
	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.
	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.
	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.
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.	
Wetland	Restoration of lowland mire sites (fen and raised bog), with the provision of buffers to allow the habitat extent to increase.

	Increase the extent of high quality reedbeds across Kent and ensure existing reedbeds are in appropriate management.
Coastal	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 .
	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.
	Improved condition of saltmarsh and mudflats , with functioning ecosystems supporting wildlife.
	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.
	Protect and restore vegetated shingle , ensuring there is no unavoidable loss and areas remain in, or are returned to, a favourable condition.
Marine	Reducing small scale loss and increasing connectivity and functionality of intertidal mud for foraging birds.
	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.
	Reverse the decline in seagrass off Kent's coast.
	Chalk reefs nurtured and protected from erosion and damage from marine development.
	Sustainable management of oyster beds to allow them to reach their habitat building potential.
	Reduction in marine life disturbance resulting from leisure pressures on coastal zones and marine environment.
	Priority relating to fish nursery areas ?
Connectivity	County's key wildlife sites better connected by addressing the fragmentation and barriers preventing movement of species.
	Fragmentation caused by arterial roads, railway and other major infrastructure retrospectively addressed, reconnecting habitats and wildlife pathways.
	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.
	Management of habitats to deliver a connected mosaic of habitats at a large scale, where nature can flourish and species requirements are considered.
	The county's highway, cycleway, pathway and PROW networks acting as functional networks for wildlife.

	Reduce the amount of unmanaged scrub , and the loss of grassland and heathland from its encroachment.
	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	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>>.
	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.
	Landscape scale management , with partners beyond the county, to address habitat change and species migration as a result of climate change.
Nature based solutions	Increase of woodland and trees outside woodland to deliver air quality improvements.
	Work with nature to restore river catchments' functions to improve water quality , manage flood risk and deliver enhanced biodiversity.
	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.
	Protect habitats delivering critical ecosystem services in the county.
	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.
Species	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	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.
	Farmland delivering targeted action for nature recovery.
	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.

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Hedgerows protected from loss, aggressive management, neglect and chemicals.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>An increase in traditional orchards, under sensitive management, supporting an abundance and diversity of wildlife.</p> <p>Restoration of arable fields with a diversity and abundance of arable weeds.</p>
Urban	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Address habitat fragmentation of the urban environment, ensuring urban species can freely move about and developed areas and infrastructure does not impede passage.</p> <p>Public greenspace and land management delivering wildlife benefits.</p>
Access and connection	<p>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.</p> <p>Kent's population have a greater connection, and increased engagement, with natural areas and nature; and are inspired to deliver benefits for nature.</p>