





# Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery strategy

Making space for the county's nature

Consultation draft  
January 2025

Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

The draft Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) sets out the county's priorities for nature recovery and the recommended actions to deliver these. This spatially framed Strategy also identifies where in the county this action should be targeted to deliver the greatest outcomes for the county's habitats and species.

This "first of its kind" Strategy for the county has been prepared by Kent County Council, appointed by Defra as Responsible Authority. It is one of 48 strategies across England, with the shared aim of halting and reversing the decline of nature.

The LNRS for Kent and Medway has been developed with extensive input from partners and stakeholders, with over 1,000 individuals attending events designed to enable full participation in the process. The public consultation provides a further opportunity to input into the Strategy's finalisation ahead of publication later in 2025.



Once published, the Strategy has the potential to be a real game changer for nature recovery work, with the LNRS being linked to local planning and to various funding and investment streams. Crucially, the real focus of the LNRS will be not in the areas already protected for nature but the parts of Kent where opportunities to enhance, extend and create can deliver benefits not just for nature's recovery but also for Kent's society.

The intention of the Kent and Medway LNRS is to direct action and investment to areas where it is needed, and will achieve the most. The aim is also for the LNRS to steer losses and impacts away from the county's most valuable natural assets. The need for this approach has never been greater. We are in a climate and ecological emergency – the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with monitoring since the 1970s indicating a decline in species abundance of 19% and nearly 1 in 6 species threatened with extinction (State of Nature 2023). The county's own assessment of the State of Nature in Kent and Medway 2021 mirrored this national trend of species decline, with species continuing to go extinct from the county and many more threatened, along with their habitats.

Kent is one of the largest counties in England and its complex geology, soils, topography and other environmental conditions has resulted in a varied landscape with a wealth of natural features and wildlife habitats. Many of these areas are designated for their national and international importance. This breadth of habitats supports a rich and varied wildlife. Over 20,000 species have been recorded in the county, representing nearly 30% of all UK species; and over 3,400 of these are rare and threatened species. The county's landscape and wildlife are also a key part of the county's identity and as evident from the participation in the strategy's development, very important to many of the people of Kent and Medway.

The Strategy is framed around the Lawton principles and aims to deliver better, bigger, more and joined up. It is also developed on the basis of better consideration of land management and land use, so that we can work with nature and use natural processes to tackle the challenges our county faces.

The Kent and Medway Nature Recovery Strategy has **ten ambitions for nature recovery**, that the 53 more detailed priorities, and their associated potential measures, sit under:

1. Connectivity
2. Nature-based solutions
3. Land management and land use
4. Species
5. Grasslands
6. Successional habitats
7. Woodland, trees and hedgerows
8. Freshwater
9. Urban
10. Coast

The Local Habitat Map for Kent and Medway is a key part of the LNRS, comprising of the “Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity” (APIB), areas already afforded protection, and the “Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity” (ACIB), the target areas identified by the LNRS as the focus for the delivery of the strategy’s potential measures.

Many of the potential measures identified in the LNRS have also been mapped, targeting their delivery to where they would best be implemented with a focus on greatest need or opportunities for greatest benefit.

Whilst the Strategy makes no requirement for its measures to be implemented, it offers a comprehensive guide to nature recovery that will present many strategic and financial benefits to farmers, landowners, planners, developers, community groups and others, in taking forward the measures.

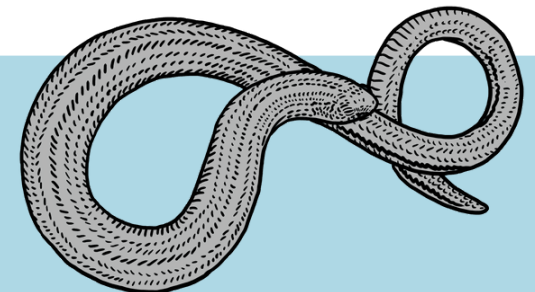
These measures are habitat based and will in turn benefit many species found in the county, but above and beyond this the Strategy identifies some 141 priority species from a long list of 1,503 species assessed as rare, threatened or significant within the county. It is expected that the identified targeted action for these priority species will also offer benefits to the wider species of the county.

The Kent and Medway LNRS is not starting from scratch nor from a point of inaction – we already have significant and important areas for wildlife, many of which benefit from action to protect and enhance. But we’re also not starting from a point of perfection. Many of our protected sites are in unfavourable condition, our wildlife is declining, and our habitats are degraded and fragmented.

This is why the Strategy’s principles start with improving and safeguarding what we already have and aim towards connectivity between these areas, giving nature more resilience.

The Strategy is indebted to the extensive contributions of all partners and stakeholders who contributed so much time, expertise and support throughout the process. This now established framework of collaboration for the LNRS provides a firm footing on which to take the strategy forward following publication.

**The LNRS will be reviewed and updated as instructed by Defra. Details of how strategy delivery will be coordinated, monitored and supported will be published by the government in 2025.**



ROADSIDE NATURE RESERVES



GREEN BRIDGES

# JOINED UP

IMPROVE QUALITY OF LAND IN BETWEEN SITES TO ENCOURAGE CONNECTIONS + CREATE NEW PHYSICAL CORRIDORS

MOSAIC HABITATS



ACCESS TO NATURE



## Good Quality HABITAT MANAGEMENT

RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

SAFEGUARDING OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSETS



## CONSERVATION



ANIMAL HIGHWAYS

ANIMAL BANKS



## Connection to NATURE

MORE ABUNDANCE

MORE DIVERSITY

MORE GREEN SPACES



More HABITATS  
More SPECIES

# MORE

THROUGH HABITAT RESTORATION + CREATION, ESTABLISH NEW NATURE-RICH SITES THAT PROVIDE MORE SPACE + CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN EXISTING SITES

# BETTER

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR EXISTING HABITATS + BY RESOURCING + MANAGING BETTER, CONSERVE + SAFEGUARD WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE

# BIGGER

INCREASE THE SIZE + BUFFER OUR MOST VALUABLE HABITAT SITES + PROTECT THEM FROM THE PRESSURES OF HUMAN INFLUENCE



CHALK GRASSLAND



WHITE CLIFFS



ANCIENT WOODLAND



LONG + VARIED COASTLINE

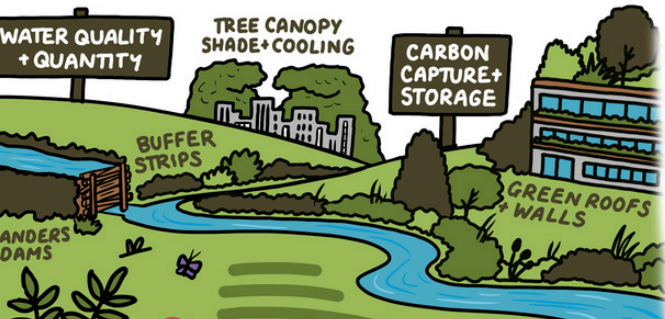


CHALK STREAMS



NATIONAL LANDSCAPES

Cleaner air



## NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

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## NATURE RECOVERY PRINCIPLES



IT ALL STARTS IN THE SOIL


## LAND MANAGEMENT & LAND USE


The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been developed by the Natural Environment and Coast Team at Kent County Council.



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Illustrations by Amber Anderson.

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