Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee

Monday 24 November 2025

Agenda Item 7.3

TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE EAST SUSSEX LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY (LNRS) CONSULTATION

1.0   Summary

1.1   The first Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove has now been drafted and is currently out for consultation until 26 November 2025.
This can be found via the following weblink:
https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/lnrs-east

1.2   A submission has been prepared for the Town Council, led by Councillor B. Reed on behalf of the Climate Emergency Steering Group. The draft Strategy seeks to map and identify key species within East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, and set out a number of actions to preserve these habitats. The Steering Group are asking for member approval for the submission, due to the importance this has for Uckfield's environment and ecological corridors.

2.0   Response to survey

2.1   The Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation closes on 26th November 2025.

2.2   There is information on how to review this LNRS, which is divided into three main parts, including a webinar recording which walks through what's in the strategies and how to navigate them, or you can download their guide.

3.0   Reference materials

3.1   A more fuller response has been prepared which addresses gaps within the current mapping of species and habitats in our local area and this appendix will be emailed separately to East Sussex County Council. Members have been provided with the draft response to the online survey, which can be found in appendix A of this report and will be submitted online before the deadline.

3.2   Members should note that Natural England issued a new list of Threatened Species 2025 (RP065). This list was released in earlier in 2025:
https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6106216194113536

3.3   When reviewing the draft strategy and associated mapping, it was found that Ancient Woodland and Woodland ground flora species indicators were under-represented for those outside AW APIB/ACIB maps and vascular groundflora plants appeared to not to be included.

3.4   There also appeared to be some species missing from the long list of Species Prioritisation.

4.0   Recommendation

4.1   Members are asked to view the draft response and approve its submission.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring

UTC LNRS SURVEY – consultation closes 26th Nov 2025

About you

1. **Where in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove do you live? (Select one)**
   - Wealden
2. **Which of the below best describes you? (Select one)**
   - Public body (Local government, town and parish councils etc)
3. **Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or an individual?**
Organisation (please specify which one)
   - Uckfield Town Council, Environment & Leisure Committee

Your awareness of this LNRS

4. Had you already heard about the strategy before public consultation?
   - Yes

5. Were you involved or engaged in some way in this LNRS? (Tick as many as apply)
   - Watched a webinar
   - Visited the website
   - Other, please specify - In preparation for leading nature recovery 30x30 across the town, the Environment & Leisure committee created an Uckfield Town Council Nature Pledge to Weald to Waves. https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3472d892d81045539b502e5012cf3297 - Uckfield Town Council's important ecological habitats support Ashdown Forest, Sheffield Park, and the Weald to Waves nature corridor.

6. Do you consider you have a good understanding of the purpose of Local Nature Recovery Strategies?
   - Yes

Your feedback on the different parts of the LNRS

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is split into four parts, each with a corresponding document (the PDFs that you can read and download from this site).

Parts 1 and 2 contain the main elements of the LNRS. Part 3 has additional recommendations related to Species, and Part 4 has supporting technical detail.

The following questions relate to the information contained in Parts 1 to 3.

7. Considering the strategy generally, how easy to read, clearly laid out and visually engaging do you find it?
   Easy to read?
   - Quite
   Clearly Laid Out?
   - Not very
   Visually engaging?
   - Quite

If you answered Not very or Not at all to the question above, how could we make the strategy generally better?
Clearly Laid out - not very

   - Part 3's shortlist is unexpectedly short. Appendix 3 needs expansion. Parts 1–2 only reveal later that ~40% of measures were mapped, leaving gaps of around 60% which weakens understanding. AW flora missing, iconic Sussex species/woods/water/ponds/habitat links incomplete.

The next questions relate to Part 1

Part 1 - Context & Description (opens in a new window)

This has the context to the strategy: what a LNRS is, what local people told us, the state of nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and what's already happening for nature

9. Considering Part 1 Section 4: Nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove - Description. Does this effectively set the scene for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove's current land use, the condition of the natural environment and the pressures it faces?
- Partially

10. If you answered No or Partially to the question above, how might we make the Description better?
- Sect.4 is not operational enough. It doesn't adequately reflect the public feedback on key species to be incorporated and with 60% of the measures unmapped there are subsequent gaps in delivery.

The next questions relate to Part 2

Part 2 - Priorities, Measures and Maps (opens in a new window)

This has the strategy's recommendations including the principles, priorities and measures that can help nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

11. Looking at the Seven Principles for Nature Recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove (found in Part 2 Section 3) – do they help you understand the issues impacting nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and how we might respond to them?
- Partially

12. If you answered No or Partially, what could we do to make the Principles better? 255 characters
- Principles are well described but only ~40% were mapped. Before publication improve the map measures on the Local Habitat Map before finalising, and add further layers to the mapping, in line with those we've detailed in our emailed consultation response.

13. Looking at the 24 Priorities for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove (found in Part 2, Section 4), do they capture everything you feel strongly about?
- Partially

14. If you answered No or Partially to the question above, how might we make the Priorities better? 255 characters

- Page 154 - 7.2% priority habitats outside APIB are omitted from ACIBs. Ancient woodland connections are poorly protected. With only ~40% of measures mapped, 60% of the data missing. ACIB mapping needs improving as multiple gaps highlighted in GIS maps.

15. Looking at the 106 Measures for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove (found in Part 2 Section 4), are they generally written in a way that feels practical and easy to follow for those who might want to implement them?

- Partially

16. If you answered No or Partially, how could we make the Measures better?

- Measures make sense but some need improving and there's need for additions. Additional measures needed include expand species list (ancient woodland flora, iconic Sussex species), map ALL measures (not ~40%), targets, improve GIS layers.

Question 17. Part Two Measures

If you have a comment on a particular measure or measures, please let us know using the box below, making sure to include the measure number (e.g. C1.1)

Q17 summary with expanded requests, justification and bibliography

Uckfield Town Council supports the LNRS priorities but remains seriously concerned that only approximately 40% of core measures are mapped; leaving 60% unmapped and risk to those species and habitats not accounted for. An email with a list of Uckfield measures, examples and supporting evidence will follow. We would welcome a meeting with the representatives of the LNRS team to assist with mapping gaps and agree steps for delivery ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com and add our Uckfield TC Nature Pledge to the LNRS mapping ecological corridors.

More specifically we would like to see:

a. Agreement of a definitive list of Uckfield measures for mapping on the Local Habitat Map and the evidence types accepted (photos, grid refs, LiDAR snippets, historic map extracts, survey method used);
b. Explicit evidence and mapping rules adopted, GIS templates and clearer criteria so public submissions and parish LWS/LGS nominations are factored in at each review;
c. Worked examples prioritised and a timetable agreed for map updates prior to final publication to strengthen the outcomes of the LNRS proposals;

Critical asks to be included in finalisation of the strategy:

- Incorporate new Local Wildlife Sites (and Geological Sites) where they demonstrate high biodiversity value or mosaics of priority habitats. Discuss process and actions to extend or designating our requested new Uckfield LWS/LGS as an output and timetable item lws-sussex.org.uk meeting LWS criteria – important in ACIB layer
- Ensure Ancient Woodland (AW) and Local Ancient Woodland (LEW) standing advice and the most damaged AW sites are explicitly assessed and buffered in mapping; do not treat AW fragments as desk-only features. Consider root protection zones, ride/edge connections and associated ground-flora refugia
- Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK
  - We have evidence that Wealden is the most damaged AW in the UK. Uckfield Nature Reserves and AW is in severe decline. The ACIB maps need updating and the high spatial buffers need adding which are in MAGIC maps.
  - "*Nationally, the coverage of deciduous woodland has declined significantly since the 1960s as a result of clearance and replanting with non-native species, with the area of ancient woodland declining in area by 30-40% in the same period. The quality of woodland in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is also thought to be in decline.*"

- - We need more protection in the Uckfield AW/LEW APIB/ACIB layer and work with evidence led scientific results as part of a national project Uckfield have been involved with for AW evidence (results not yet in public domain);
- Increase part 3 species list. Currently missing EG Tawny Owl, rare Barbastelle Sussex bats, Atlantic woodland plants, notable acid-grass specialists and darker skies. This can be used to justify ACIB and measure mapping from Part 3 species guidance sussexnaturerecovery.org.uk;
- Map hydrology for ghylls, carrs, springs and wet woodland headwaters using LiDAR and long-term surface-water/flood risk layers to capture seepage, springs and headwaters that sustain wet habitats. Flag AW, LEW, LWS, Nature Reserves and SSSI impact risk zones around sensitive hydrological features check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk
- Integrate and improve ACIB mapped measures e.g. add ESCC definitive PROW, add Trees Outside Woodland (TOW), add all trees on Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) layers into ACIB; add both urban and rural paths separately and add indicative buffers (urban 3–5 m; rural/off-road 10–15 -25 wildlife corridor following rural footpaths) to show potential corridor measures and tree/hedge planting opportunities e.g. ATI trees here ALL of them in ACIB ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk.
- Record Sussex rare Barbastelle bat core sustenance/zones around woodland, darker sky areas, riparian and hedgerow networks and map bat foraging connectivity into the ACIB to prioritise lighting/planting choices and buffer zones;
- Note regional projects such as Weald to Waves. It appears to only be partially mapped at present. Identify where LNRS mapping gaps cut across these corridors and support cross-LNRS connectivity ambitions (consider B-Lines and IIA areas) storymaps.arcgis.com.

Example Uckfield worked examples:

1. Upper River Ouse ghyll network needs remapping using LiDAR + surface-water overlays and public reports to capture lost ghylls and wet woodland carrs;
2. Remnant acid grassland and pocket heath patches near Uckfield to be mapped and linked to H1/G1 measures (rare habitat protection and corridor designation);
3. PROW corridor Uck 15/2 → Frm 66/1 as a mapped ecological corridor with 10–15 m buffer to connect woodlands and strengthen commuting/foraging links for dormouse, hedgehog and bats;
4. Urban footpath treescape, verge and street-tree opportunities in Uckfield town centre to apply W3.2 measures and record as urban ACIB features (TOW/ATI cross-check);
5. Small PAWS and coppice remnants needing conifer removal sequencing and mapped PAWS restoration polygons for W1 restoration prioritisation;
6. AW and LEW indirect and direct issues already faced and to be improved in LNRS outcomes
7. Stepping stones, geodiversity and ecological and priority habitats mapped in terms of functional connectivity
8. Uckfield have responded to the Call for Ideas for the Natural England Species Recovery Programme.

Checklist for pre-publication mapping:

- Confirm inclusion of ESCC PROW definitive layer and tag urban vs rural paths experience.arcgis.com.
- Overlay LiDAR-derived valley lines, surface-water/flood risk tiles and historic watercourses to locate candidate ghylls and headwater springs check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com.
- Cross-check Priority Habitats Inventory and Natural England datasets for priority grassland, heath and TOW/ATI features to avoid double-counting and to prioritise protection buffers naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com ncea.maps.arcgis.com ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk.
- Incorporate community pinned map submissions and evidence;
- Apply species trigger rules from Part 3: clearly state recency for species like dormouse and bats so records are admissible for ACIB nomination;
- Review Map and publish proposed buffers for AW/LEW, ghylls and SSSI impact risk zones and include Sussex rare bat sustenance zones in to avoid development or inappropriate interventions near core resources ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com.

- Add new LWS/LGS candidate polygons where local evidence and mosaic habitat quality justify designation; include a timetable for formal LWS review and incorporation for these important habitats part of ecological stepping stones missing from LNRS.

Bibliography and data used to prepare this submission

- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Part 2 Priorities, Measures and the Local Habitat Map (Part 2 PDF) ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com.
- Local Habitat Map (LNRS Measures / ACIB viewer and comments experience) experience.arcgis.com.
- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Part 3 Priority Species (species triggers and survey guidance) ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com.
- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Part 1 Context & Description (background, pressures, principles) ehq-production-europe.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com.
- Weald to Waves corridor background (Weald to Waves story map) storymaps.arcgis.com.
- Priority Habitats Inventory (Natural England Priority Habitats dataset) naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com.
- Trees Outside Woodland public map (TOW) ncea.maps.arcgis.com.
- Ancient Tree Inventory (Woodland Trust ATI) ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk.
- East and West Sussex Local Wildlife Site selection criteria and evidence thresholds lws-sussex.org.uk.
- Appendix 3A East Species Prioritisation (species list and targets) sussexnaturerecovery.org.uk.
- GOV.UK long-term flood risk / surface-water mapping (hydrology and risk overlays for ghylls / headwaters) check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk.
- Additional local map sources: ESCC Public Rights of Way definitive map (standard map)
- Uckfield parish mapping (local pins and PROW examples) as provided by the councils (ESCC, Uckfield, possibly adjoining parish councils with mosaic adjoining habitats

Question 18 - Species

Do you agree with the list of prioritised species for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove that appears in Part 3, Section 5?
- Partially

19. If you answered No or partially, what could we do to make the list of priorities species better?
It is beautifully put together, but part of the previous public consultation feedback has been lost in its translation and those species wanted by the public don't appear to feature in this consultation. The public also expressed other concerns of what they wanted to see in a LNRS. Lawton 2010 is about connecting more, bigger, better, but must not limit the public species pathways to less species. Surely it is about opening up pathways.

If species that act as practical local indicators (but also have strong public resonance) are not included as triggers or targets, parish-level evidence and public submissions will be harder to translate into mapped ACIB measures and into planning material (BNG, planning consultations). That weakens delivery and public trust.

The Part 3 presentation is clear, well-structured and grounded in strong expert input. This is a very important step for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and we welcome the thorough consultation and care taken to assemble the shortlist.

We support the methodology and ask the LNRS team to strengthen public confidence and delivery by restoring the public-nominated species, increasing freshwater and invertebrate indicators, and publishing simple species with mapping rules so local records reliably convert into ACIB measures. We will forward an email for response to question 18 and review our species lists with rangers.

Suggestions include:

- Include a visible **public-nominated species overlay** that identified top public votes (e.g. skylark, swifts, kingfisher, barn and tawny owl, hedgehog, starlings, kites) so community priorities are explicitly recognised.
- Add **Ancient Woodland ground-flora indicators** (bluebell, wood anemone, early purple orchid, dog's-mercury) to Part 3 as triggers for AW verification and buffering as well as memories of lost woodlands;
- Prioritise **barbastelle** and other locally rare RP065 species, and map bat sustenance/foraging zones with lighting controls as deliverable ACIB measures.
- Expand **invertebrate representation** (e.g., tormentil mining bee, specialist bees and key butterflies such as white-admiral, wall, small skipper and small heath) and tie each insect to a specific habitat action so measures are spatially deliverable.
- Make **pond and freshwater species** (GCN, toads, eels, lamprey where present, kingfisher) explicit mapping triggers and accept LiDAR/surface-water overlays and simple photographic evidence for rapid verification.
- Add **urban and farmed-land indicators** (swifts, house martins, hedgehogs, farmland birds, pollinators) so town and farm measures are supported by species data.
- Increase the short list of species from the long list. And assemblages use heat maps from SxBRC data to remap ACIB with more species.
- Provide a short **reconciliation appendix** showing which public-nominated species are representing the public and parish voices (not just the scientists) because this is a nature recovery strategy for the public voice as well.
- Create a formal **public-evidence exception route** that accepts validated iRecord/iNaturalist submissions with guidance so parish councils and community groups can contribute usable records connecting people, species and nature recording.
- Convene a **meeting or workshop** with parish teams and the LNRS mapping unit to update the mapping of key records prior to publication.

We congratulate the LNRS team again on a strong, evidence-led draft and offer to provide the local records and worked examples needed to implement these constructive improvements.

We are in the process of surveying and seeking guidance on our sensitive habitats. We are in the heart of Sussex with sites of incredibly rare biodiversity and geodiversity. For example, the beetle list of the SSSI Buxted Park is not on the citation but we know there are more than 50, the species list of Lake Wood is rare, the abundance of high biodiversity areas needs work with the LNRS team to ensure assemblages are well represented. We are concerned that the ACIB maps are using slightly older data maps and reference points and will need a refresh connecting the new species lists.

Appendix 3

Need more of the species brought forward from the public voice/consultation.
Too few have come forward from this list Appendix 3A East Species Prioritisation v9c.pdf

Working through the Part 3 list and looking at the appendix 3 LNRS list we cannot see why some species are not on the short list. There is need for a larger subset for Sussex assemblages including more common species not just uber rare ones.

Notes

Uckfield Town Council requests more weighting to be given on the public voice recorded in Part 1 (1,834 responses) by adding the top public species if they are not on part 3 species list such as skylark, swifts, kingfisher, barn and tawny owl, kites, starlings, hedgehog, butterflies and pollinators, bluebells, early purple orchid, adders, grass snakes, common lizard and seals, ensure the species short-list represents the public-nominated species.

Also, we recognise that Ancient Woodland can include open elements and wood pasture, hedgerows, and verge features as ACIB elements to reflect public priorities for farmland birds and invertebrates; ensuring Trees Outside Woodland and all woods outside the Ancient Tree Inventory are fully incorporated so veteran and future veteran trees are represented; expanding the short list to include urban and farmed-land indicators (swifts, house martins, pollinators, hedgehogs, bats including barbastelle, dormouse).

Our current work is looking at nature recovery corridors within the Uckfield pledge, Constantia, Lake Wood, Buxted citations and other LWS citations and making comparisons between known and endangered species.

These were important to the public and should be added:-
1. AW direct and indirect is missing from ACIB. Yet part 3 clearly states in decline. Public woodland indicators included bluebell, woodland primrose, we would add wood anemone, early purple orchid, dogs mercury, violet, creeping buttercup, white admiral;
2. Species should include the public feedback from Part 1, section 3 and what it means to local people in East Sussex page 25+ 1834 responses include in habitats - naturalness, wild, tranquillity, darker sky areas;
3. Coastal birds - curlews, oystercatchers, egrets, terns and cormorants
4. Rivers - kingfishers, herons, coots;
5. Fields and hedgerows - public wanted hedgerows these should be mapped with TOW in the ACIB map hedgerows for farmland species;
6. Urban - swifts and house martins;
7. Heathland - Dartford warbler, add woodlarks and redstarts for the public response, page 27 replies;
8. Page 28 owls add barn owl and tawny owl, noted kites and starlings;
9. Top 10 most mentioned species should be in the short list - increase butterflies to high priority species, pollinators, hedgehogs, orchids add early purple orchids for old woods and indicator of wider biodiversity, bluebells, bats, darker sky areas, coastal.
10. Residents - page 30 want to prevent loss of fragmentation (use the ACIB layer Natural England National Habitat Network);
11. The public wanted to protect areas already managed for nature - including all the Weald to Waves corridor including the areas where landowners (including UTC mapped but not in ACIB) corridor being mapped is not in the ACIB and should be;
12. Wetlands in the maps;
13. Insects need more provision - page 31, hares, badgers, kestrels, greenfinch decline;
14. Page 32 - residents want to connect habitats;
15. Insects are of concern and functioning ecosystems including data on meadows for important grasslands, marsh areas and hedgerows, urban tree cover, wildlife corridors (again that's the National Habitat Network). Need buildings to have more nature related options installed, owls need protecting (add barn owl and tawny owl iconic Sussex species from the public vote);
16. Bats, page 33 especially Barbastelle
17. Native fish, hedgehog, hazel dormouse
18. Page 38 – the strategy doesn't reflect that the High Weald sweeps across half of Uckfield, so our characteristics and habitats actually represent both the Low Weald and High Weald as well as the NCA 122 transition area between the two.
19. Streams etc add 12m margins to hedgerows and footpaths page 46;
    Map 3 - those habitats for farmland birds should in the ACIB, then the abundance of long list heat map in the ACIB. Needs to reflect woodland species on the edge of woodlands within 100m;
20. Adder needs to be added and consider grass snake and common lizard;
21. Heritage landscapes - add both Rural Parks and Gardens and National Monuments should be included for culture and their contribution to designated land and wildlife corridor;
22. Species list is too short for a long-term baseline. Iconic species need to be included, along with a reassessment of actions of species released in the 2025 RP065 Threatened Species list;
23. Butterflies - add as a high conservation priority so they can be recorded and monitoring as part of the baseline, to ensure no decline;
24. Concerned that species noted in the State of Nature Report 2023 are not adequately represented

a. What have public asked for to be added into the shortlist :-
   i. Bluebell
   ii. Wood anemone
   iii. Primrose
   iv. Kingfisher
   v. Barbastelle Bat
   vi. Top 10 species
   vii. Owls (Tawny and Barn)
b. Butterflies we are requesting to represent our Uckfield and adjacent parish habitats to include in the ACIB20.

Looking at the prioritised species measures, are you happy that these are right?
- Partially

21. If you answered No or Partially, what could we do to make the prioritised species measures better?

i. Further species missing are as follows:
ii. **Curlew and Lapwing** - for Constantia wintering birds and breeding birds;
iii. **Woodcock** - is on the 2025 Natural England Threatened Species List with targeted measures as conservation status is VU(br) NT(nbr);
iv. **Green woodpecker**- in decline nationally;
v. **Acid Grassland indicators** for unmapped areas;
vi. <u>**Tormentil Mining Bee (and tormentil erecta)**</u>- RP065 2025 Threatened Species. We would welcome the setting up of monitoring surveys within appropriate sites including West Park LNR which has acid grass and tormentil and tormentil common nearby at Budletts Common. Populations are localised, emerge late spring–summer, and require a combination of nectar sources, bare or lightly vegetated sandy/eroded ground for nesting, and low-intensity grazing or disturbance to maintain habitat mosaics. Key habitat components
vii. **Zoned Rosette *Podoscypha multizonara*** – near Lake Wood. Add to shortlist, important indicator. https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0001494307 confirmed Lake Wood area.
viii. ***Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* Frogbit** this is under Uckfield visitor impact pressure, disagree not being on shortlist from appendix 3 as visitor impacts already. Mapping each record as a point on the waterbody with a targeted ACIB and action of 10–25 m contextual buffer Treat frogbit records as a high-priority indicator to identify unmapped ACIB layers (pond networks, backwater refugia and marginal wetland). Sussex NBN records found here <u>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae : Frogbit | NBN Atlas</u>
ix. **Genista anglica (petty whin)** is a low, spiny shrub of acidic lowland heath, unimproved acidic grassland and heathy pasture, often occupying short turf, rides and the edges of wet flushes. Locate and map petty whin records both within and outside Ashdown Forest and ensure ACIB layers capture populations on adjacent commons, hedge banks and pasture fragments. Treat petty whin occurrences outside Ashdown Forest as priority indicators when identifying unmapped ACIB fragments and propose provisional 10–50 m contextual buffers to capture the supporting short-sward habitat and management zone. https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000003207
x. **Allis Shad** – this is an observation from learning these are noted in the river Ouse, Kent added to their LNRS as well. Further information about the species here https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/species/S1102/
xi. **Ancient Woodland Ground Flora - vascular species**
xii. Ancient Woodland Ground Flora outside mapped Ancient Woodland APIB and ACIB
   i. Uckfield parish contains woodland and areas that support characteristic ancient-woodland ground flora but are not currently mapped as Ancient Woodland or included in the ACIB. We request that the LNRS treats these areas as potential irreplaceable soil habitat, and that Part Three and the ACIB include targeted measures to identify, verify and provisionally protect them pending formal confirmation.*You should consider wood pastures identified as ancient in the same way as other ancient woodland when making planning decisions.*
xiii. Add a discrete list of Ancient Woodland soil indicator species to Part Three and use a simple rule (e.g. presence of four or more indicator species from Francis Rose list) as a screening tool to flag potential old woodland soils for ground-truthing and ACIB inclusion - heat map

these species records and include the public consultation vote of "**bluebell**" and "**Wood Anemone**" in the species short list

    xiv.   Accepted indicator records can be from the SxBRC record centre or verified botanical survey records

    xv.   **Bluebell and Wood Anemone**

        i.   Bluebell and Wood Anemone were specifically identified by the public as important to them. Where these species occur outside the current ACIB or AWI — including nearby woods, hedgerow bases and small fragments — they should be treated as indicators of long-continuity soils and flagged for preferred protection in the Part Three shortlist.

        ii.

  c. Other species requested in short list:

    i.   **Southern marsh orchid** (Dactylorhiza praetermissa) prefers damp, base-rich to neutral soils in wet meadows, marshes, damp pastures, fens, dune slacks and pond or ditch margins, and can also occur in damp calcareous grassland; recoverywildlifetrusts.org. https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/wildflowers/southern-marsh-orchid .

    ii.   **Lowland / Hay Meadow indicators** - There are now less than 6,000 ha remaining in England. characteristics and value of MG5 grassland and consider how further losses can be prevented. Assemblage:

- **Yellow rattle** (Rhinanthus minor)
- **Oxeye daisy** (Leucanthemum vulgare)
- **Common knapweed** (Centaurea nigra)
- **Meadow buttercup** (Ranunculus acris)
- **Bird's-foot-trefoil** (Lotus corniculatus)
- **Lady's bedstraw** (Galium verum)
- **Selfheal** (Prunella vulgaris)
- **Cuckooflower / Lady's-smock** (Cardamine pratensis) JNCC Open Data
- **Sweet vernal grass** (Anthoxanthum odoratum) and other fine-leaved grasses typical of MG5 communities
- used to identify and prioritise hay meadow habitat GOV.UK Natural England Access to Evidence.

    iii.   **Water Meadow indicators** - Typical sedges and rushes include greater pond sedge, glaucous sedge and sharp-flowered rush. Characteristic forbs are cuckooflower, marsh marigold, ragged-robin and marsh bedstraw. Orchids such as the southern marsh orchid and common spotted orchid indicate long-term continuity. Frequent grasses and condition markers include meadow foxtail, sweet vernal grass and yellow rattle. Faunal indicators are diverse wet-meadow invertebrates (dragonflies and damselflies), amphibians breeding in ditches and ponds, and wetland birds such as snipe.

Freshwater Species

We are concerned for the freshwater species lists ref. ponds, streams, ditches and migratory fish in rivers, or on margins of woods / farms, insects of ecosystem health

- Add map ponds and lakes for eels to ACIB and their migratory course we know of
- Add map ponds for toads to ACIB
- Add map ponds for GCN we know of (and surveys of)

See https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6524433387749376
A narrative for conserving freshwater and wetland habitats in England (NERR064)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-national-biodiversity-strategy-and-action-plan

Health of rivers through fish populations especially as the Uck and Shortbridge are some of the most important for eel migration and sea trout (both on part 3 species lists) but other indicators missing e.g. lamprey https://oifdata.defra.gov.uk/themes/water/B7/

1. Relative Abundance measures to ensure halting decline Nature 2030 https://oifdata.defra.gov.uk/themes/wildlife/D4/
2. Freshwater habitats need more mapping in ACIB and functional connectivity https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6524433387749376

Local Habitat Map

The next questions relate to the interactive Local Habitat Map. This is made up of the following layers:
- **The APIB: Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity - A map which shows where our designated sites for nature are located.**
- **Measures maps – these identify locations where our measures could be carried out to deliver the greatest benefit to biodiversity and/or the wider environment.**
- **The ACIB: Areas that could be important for biodiversity - any measures mapped outside of the APIB**

Please note, while all the measures in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS are valuable and beneficial for nature, not all of them are mappable. More than 50% of our measures are not mappable, in the main because a) we have insufficient data to map them accurately, b) we lack a clear rationale for mapping them or c) they could be implemented in a vast number of locations e.g. installing nesting boxes or wildflower strips.

For detailed information about what we can and can't map, please refer to Part 4.

Please take a look at our interactive <u>Local Habitat Map (opens in new window)</u> If you have a comment on a specific location you can add this directly to the map. We are particularly interested to hear from you if you own, manage or advise on land in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.
22. Do you find the interactive Local Habitat Map easy to use and navigate?
- Partially

23. If you answered No or Partially, what can we do to make the Local Habitat Map better?

Overall impression of the Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map is a strong and accessible foundation. The web viewer presents Areas That Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB) clearly, links to Parts 1–3, and lets users zoom to place-level detail which helps local stakeholders spot mapped measures and gaps experience.arcgis.com.

What is good

- Clear spatial focus on ACIB areas and linkage to the LNRS documents makes the map a usable delivery tool for local action and consultation experience.arcgis.com;
- Interactive zoom and commenting features support local verification and the co-production you request with parish teams experience.arcgis.com.
- The map brings together a range of datasets as a reference for planners, communities and NGOs during implementation experience.arcgis.com.

What to improve (practical priorities)

- Other GIS map layers are needed within the LNRS mapping to close the 60% mapping gap before the strategy's publication. Improvements are needed to the ACIB layer, by increasing mapped measures through adding Priority Habitat Inventory, National Habitat Network (MAGIC) layers, Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) and the Ancient Tree Inventory so the ACIB better reflects existing habitat and potential restoration corridors;
- Add freshwater layers: overlay LiDAR-derived valley/ghyll lines, the surface-water/flood-risk tiles and pond/ditch inventories so wet meadow, ghylls and pond networks trigger ACIB measures and species mapping;
- Add the species to the LNRS, and a published triage field for species evidence (recency, evidence type, verifier) so points (e.g., bat records, kingfisher, GCN) convert reliably into polygons, buffers and core bat sustenance zones implemented in the ACIB.
- Show buffers and IRZs: display provisional buffers around Ancient Woodland, SSSI IRZs and mapped ghylls so the map openly signals zones where development or damaging activities should be avoided or assessed;
- Integrate people's evidence routes: add a simple upload/validation workflow and an "accepted public evidence" layer for iRecord/iNaturalist pins and parish submissions so community records can be triaged and added to ACIB with metadata. And that the maps will

be "live" and not static, as evidence evolves and species records improve - update the map for the latest evidence layers 2025. Advise the public how they are able to update the maps on an ongoing basis, how they will be refreshed yearly and how to apply to refresh or update a map in future, and how the public can participate in the review for local knowledge (an important part of the LNRS experience is the local knowledge)
- Improve transparency of sources: include an on-map legend or metadata panel listing the priority GIS layers and their update dates so users can see currency and provenance at a glance.
- Include an option to nominate changes in the next publication, and how to add new Local Wildlife Sites where they show an abundance of species in the LNRS or meet LWS criteria as part of the LNRS process;

Easy wins for a rapid pre-publication update

- Import Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory and the National Habitat Network (MAGIC) layers to capture restorable habitats and stepping stones.
- Add the ESCC definitive PROW and a default corridor buffer option for rural (10–15 m) and urban (3–5 m) footpaths to help show connecting opportunities for hedgerow and tree planting

Endorsement

The LNRS team and stakeholders are to be congratulated on a significant project and its delivery for this public consultation.

The habitat map is an excellent delivery platform and a vital step for LNRS implementation; with targeted layer additions. By adding visible buffers/IRZs and an operational species-to-mapping triage it will become a decisive tool for local verification, planning and landscape recovery leading towards improving the nature recovery network in the future.

24. If there are measures mapped to land that you own, manage or advise on, do you think this could help support the planning, designing or the seeking of funding for actions for nature's recovery?
- Don't know / not sure

25. If you own, manage or advise on land and we've missed anything, or you have any concerns about measures that overlap with your land, please email us at: EastSussexLNRS@eastsussex.gov.uk
We will provide an additional email with information we have not been able to include online
See follow up email
- Copy of Nature Pledge link and copy of plot points / map of pledge Uckfield Town Council Nature Pledge to Weald to Waves
  - The Weald to Waves Corridor needs to include all the landowner pledge areas, not just the middle area of the map.
  - We have pledged as a landowner for West Park Local Nature Reserve and working on Wilder Uckfield
- Links from Geodiversity Report
- Request for meeting
  - to map our pledge;
  - improve map and prevent omissions pre-publication;
  - work together to improve the outcomes and mapped measures;
- Question 17 – further detail included in our emailed appendix.

26. If you have any general comments on the Local Habitat Map, please add them below.

We will email a larger set of local GIS layers and pinned records to support ACIB updates; these additional map layers will materially improve the mapping outcomes described in Parts 1 and 2 and help translate public consultation responses into deliverable on-the-ground measures. Please treat the public submissions as evidence: where residents took the time to place pins and add notes, accept those pins for triage and

verification so community knowledge is visible in the map and contributes to outcomes rather than being confined to a county expert-only process.

During the consultation the viewer was a useful start but difficult for many to navigate: the pin interface should show submitted pins clearly on the map (or, where visibility is a technical constraint, show the pin labels) and the zoom resolution needs finer increments so parish-scale features are inspectable. The ACIB would be far stronger if the Priority Habitat Inventory, National Habitat Network/MAGIC layers, Trees Outside Woodland, Ancient Tree Inventory, LiDAR-derived ghyll/headwater lines, surface water extent, PROW and pond/ditch maps were included as core layers for pre-publication verification.

We welcome the LNRS team's expert work and public consultation, and ask you to support the comments from the public voice recorded in Part 1 as translates into Part 2/3 outputs. Please review actions detailed in our email (to follow) which will strengthen outcomes for parishes, wildlife and wider nature recovery. Thank you for the careful presentation and consultation to date; we look forward to working together on these map updates.

27. Does the LNRS provide you with a better understanding of what we have to do to help nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove?

- Partially

28. What one word below best describes how you feel about the LNRS for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove?

- Optimistic or Hopeful

29. Thinking about your answer to the question above, could you tell us a little more about why you feel that way?

The LNRS is an important statutory step with strong technical foundations and public engagement; it can genuinely guide landscape-scale recovery if the maps, species shortlist and delivery rules are hardened and improved now before its publication. I'm hopeful because the draft shows ambition and expertise, and because local communities (parish councils, rangers, recorders and volunteers) are ready to supply the on-the-ground evidence, practical fixes and stewardship needed to make it work.

However, the gaps need addressing before its publication to incorporate Priority Habitat, MAGIC and TOW/ATI layers, to restore public-nominated species and freshwater/invertebrate indicators, and publish measures to enable community records to be converted into ACIB measures. If those steps are taken the strategy will move from a very good draft to a robust, deliverable plan that balances nature recovery with local planning realities.

Recent central government policies signal that statutory protections and the foundations that underpin them are being weakened, which makes this LNRS even more essential now. The strategy must be made as robust, practical and inclusive as possible at this stage so it provides the strongest local safeguards and delivery pathways available rather than relying on later iterations that may come too late.

30. If you are involved in nature recovery, do you think the strategy could help support funding, collaboration or the delivery of recovery projects? Yes

31. Which of the following actions are you likely to take in making the LNRS happen?

(Tick any that apply)

☐ Making my garden more wildlife friendly

☐ Supporting or volunteering with a nature-related community group

☐ Starting a community or nature related group if none exists

☐ Using the LNRS in my work

☐ Incorporating nature better on the land I own, manage or farm

Other ? Creating Wilder Uckfield and taking nature recovery and 30x30 strategies forward

32. If there is anything else you'd like to tell us, including anything you think we have missed or needs to be included in this LNRS, please let us know.

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. Long term, residents of Sussex feel the loss of nature and feel it is becoming one of the most nature-depleted parts of the country. Our rivers, ancient woodlands, wet ghylls and species are under intense pressure.

The work you have produced for the LNRS is fantastic and an important step, but this is a critical moment. With rapid urbanisation, the Low Weald sitting in the eye of a development storm, and moves by the UK Government to build more, will weaken national protections. This means the LNRS must be made as robust and practical as possible now, not left for later iterations. Please adapt the strategy to reflect local knowledge and the public voice by expanding species lists, incorporate the unmapped habitats in the Low Weald to High Weald transition areas, and apply clear mapping so parish and public responses are converted into deliverable ACIB features.

We truly welcome the LNRS work to date, and the hard work of many of your colleagues and experts, thank you.

We will email a larger package of verified local GIS layers and pinned records to close the mapping gaps and help strengthen outcomes across Parts 1–3 for our local area and East Sussex.

Please treat submitted public pins as evidence to include in the LNRS going forward, to show the public on the Local Habitat Map their time was listened to. We would be grateful if you would accept our offer to meet so the final LNRS is constructively improved, and accurately reflect the parishes, wildlife and traditional Sussex landscapes.

END OF SURVEY ON LINE