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Sussex Nature Recovery

A collective blueprint for targeted action

Sussex LNRS: Shortlisted Habitat Priorities and their Outcomes

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SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk



Round-headed Rampion and moth
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Introduction

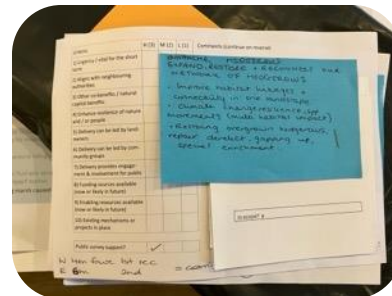
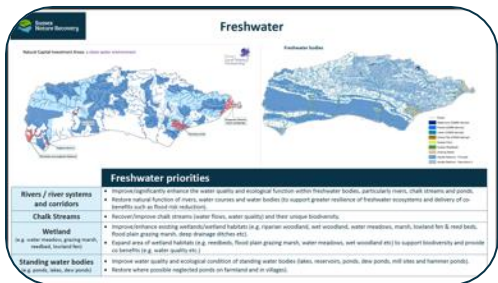
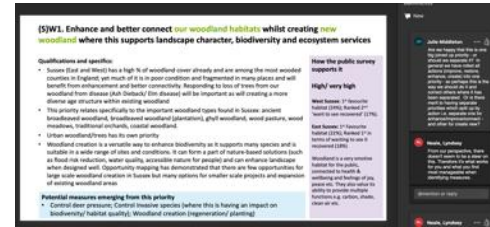
- The purpose of **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)** is to agree the **priorities** for nature recovery and propose **measures** (actions) in the locations where particular impact can be made to achieve them.
- For the two Sussex LNRSs, a **long list** of more than 130 priorities has been gathered, shortlisted and refined over the last year.
- The result of that process is presented in this document: **Shortlisted Habitat Priorities** that each have a **set of draft outcomes** to help us understand what success might look like over the next 10 years if actions are implemented.
- A companion document, draft **Principles for Nature Recovery in Sussex**, provides additional context.
- Please note, priority outcomes are draft and may change. Species and Nature-based Solutions priorities will be also added in due course.

Steps taken to develop the priorities

- **Review of all current Sussex published plans and strategies** (including Local Plans, Catchment Management Plans and Neighbourhood Plans) to identify and collate existing priorities for nature.
- **30 of the key delivery and enabling organisations for nature in Sussex were convened** to review these priorities and to put forward what they believe the most important priorities for nature in Sussex to be. [The majority of these organisations are part of the [Sussex Nature Partnership](#)].
- **A shortlisting process**, in which over 130 priorities were evaluated against a [set of criteria](#), including their contribution to national priorities and their importance to the public and other groups via analysis of surveys. Priorities were combined and rewritten so that they became broader and more comprehensive.
- **Feedback on the shortlisted priorities was sought** from supporting groups including the LNRS Working Group, Supporting Authority Group and Technical Review Panel. [View the membership of these groups](#).
- **Key delivery and enabling organisations were reconvened** to consider the new priorities and their potential outcomes, and to suggest actions for their delivery.

The process of developing priorities

<p>Review of published plans and strategies – identification of existing priorities</p>	<p>Key delivery partners for nature review existing priorities and add new ones</p>	<p>Shortlisting process undertaken following analysis of surveys</p>	<p>Feedback sought on shortlisted priorities from LNRS supporting groups</p>	<p>Delivery partners reconvened to review priorities and develop outcomes & measures</p>
<p>Jan-March</p>	<p>April</p>	<p>July</p>	<p>August</p>	<p>September</p>



How priorities are organised

In Sussex, similar or related habitat types have been grouped together for the purpose of developing priorities, outcomes and measures. At the time of writing, species priorities and two additional Nature-based Solutions (NbS) priorities are still in development. The below table shows the various habitat groups, and the number of priorities associated with them.

Habitat group	Number of priorities
Protected sites	1
Coastal habitats	1
Farmed landscape and soil	2
Species-rich grassland	1
Woodland, hedgerows and scrub	5
Heathland and sandstone outcrops	2
Freshwater	5
Urban Nature	2
Nature-based Solutions	3 – Only 1 NbS priority has been included in this document
Wildlife corridors	3
Species	TBC

Protected sites - PS1

Priority: Support the expansion and enhancement of a network **designated and protected sites***.



Above: National Nature Reserve at Willand Wood Ebernoe © Sussex Wildlife Trust.

What does success in 10 years look like?

- Protected sites (i.e. designated sites) within the LNRS area are better connected through the creation of new areas of habitat which are acting as corridors and stepping stones between them.
- The ecological function and resilience of designated sites is improving through buffering (expanding the size of sites through the creation of new habitat beyond their borders) and on-site improvements.
- The impacts of pressures on sites which originate beyond their borders are being reduced. This may be particularly relevant for 'water dependent' sites such as wetlands where water quality and supply demand beyond their boundaries has a direct impact on their condition.
- Management of habitats within designated and protected areas in poor condition (where known and within the control of the site owner or manager) is resulting in an improvement in habitat condition within these sites.

* International and European designations: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites. National Designations: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). Local Designations: Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Local Geological Sites (LGSs).



Coastal habitats - C1



Priority: Support the expansion, restoration, enhancement and creation of **coastal and intertidal habitats**.

What does success in 10 years look like?

- The condition and resilience of our most fragile coastal habitats* is improving through management, expansion and buffering of fragments and creation of new areas where conditions are suitable and feasible.
- Migration of those habitats most vulnerable to loss through sea-level rise and coastal squeeze is being achieved through areas of habitat creation where conditions and methodologies allow. Specific progress in the creation of new areas of saltmarsh and coastal floodplain grazing marsh is most notable.
- Pressures on the natural environment of our harbours and estuaries and their associated coastal and inter-tidal habitats and species from upstream diffuse inputs from land to sea are reduced via 'Nature-based Solutions' and land and marine-based actions.
- The implementation of flood and coastal erosion risk management infrastructure has delivered positive benefits for nature where possible, particularly where nature-based approaches such as managed-realignment projects have been possible and successful.
- Where areas of coastal habitat are at significant risk from sea-level rise and coastal squeeze, statutory bodies have led discussions and decision-making processes about options for the future, particularly where habitat loss and degradation of designated sites may result.
- Larger contiguous areas of coastal and inter-tidal habitat have been created in some areas (especially saltmarsh and mudflats) and are delivering a range of ecosystem services. These include a reduction in coastal flood risk and erosion, as well as improved carbon storage, healthy inshore waters and nursery areas for fish and other marine wildlife.
- Sensitive coastal sites are being buffered from encroaching development.
- Visitor management approaches are reducing the impacts of visitors on coastal habitats, as well as breeding birds and other species, and may have resulted in the creation of alternative sites or visitor opportunities to take pressure off the most sensitive and important areas.

*Coastal habitats at risk include sand dunes, saltmarsh, coastal vegetated shingle, saline lagoons, intertidal kelp, seagrass, mudflats, coastal grazing marsh, oyster reefs, mussel beds, cliffs, chalk platforms and islands.

Farmed landscape & Soils - FL1

Priority: Create and enhance opportunities for wildlife within the farmed landscape.



What does success in 10 years look like?

(These are in addition to those noted under other headings which apply to farmland e.g. woodland, hedges and heathland, freshwater and soils)

- Farmland bird species assemblages (e.g. skylarks, stone curlew, corn bunting, grey partridge, turtle dove) are being supported through the creation of specific habitat and suitable environmental conditions. The abundance of target species is increasing.
- Rare arable plant species are present and increasing through appropriate management (e.g. reduced use of pesticides, cultivated margins etc).
- Species-rich grass buffer strips around fields are protected and providing new areas of habitat, supporting pollinators and creating linkages/corridors between other habitats.
- Nature-based Solutions on farm holdings (through features such as hedgerows, riparian buffer strips etc) are being maximised and are making a positive contribution to wider environmental quality by capturing nutrients, storing carbon etc.
- In-field trees (including veteran trees and groups of trees) are being protected from agricultural operations and maintained/replaced/restored as landscape features where possible to support biodiversity including invertebrates, mosses, lichens and birds. Natural regeneration is enabled, or planting is done to produce veteran trees for the future and to create connectivity between lone trees.
- Appropriate (nature friendly/climate resistant) agro-forestry species and scrub are being used in places to provide shelter and shade for livestock, support biodiversity and deliver other benefits such as improved water quality, reduced flood risk and carbon sequestration.
- Existing hedgerows are enhanced and gapped up, and hedgerow trees planted to ensure they have good structural diversity. Yew is planted where appropriate to support flood run off prevention and carbon capture.

Enabled (by government, protected landscapes, farming and conservation organisations):

- Farmers and landowners across Sussex are engaging with support, advice and funding options available to enable them to carry out nature recovery actions. The network of farmers working together locally through clusters, nature-recovery partnerships or projects has grown and is playing a critical role in delivering for nature alongside food production, both on their own land and collectively at a larger scale.
- More farms take a whole farm approach.
- 7• Farm and land-based business are supported to be sustainable, with Nature-based Solutions forming part of their farm business model. Successes and progress in achieving greater sustainability and contributing to delivery of LNRS are acknowledged.



Farmed landscape & soils - SL1

Priority: Enhance **soil habitats** and their health to support biodiversity and improve ecosystem services.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- The condition and health of soil across the farmed landscape of Sussex is improving through a range of management and land use practices including rotation, suitable tillage and grazing.
- This has been based on greater understanding of soil condition and soil type, their potential and their variability across the LNRS area, as well as a greater understanding of how soils can be improved to deliver soil health and other associated ecosystem services such as food production, soil biodiversity, carbon sequestration and greater farmland resilience to flooding and drought.
- Artificial inputs such as synthetic nitrogen-based fertilisers, fungicides, pesticides and herbicides have been reduced.
- Farmers have been able to access training and new insights into optimal management of soil for soil biology and organic carbon. The impacts of different farming systems on soils is understood.
- Rates of soil loss and erosion have slowed, particularly into rivers and other water courses. This is benefitting the quality of the freshwater and marine environment.
- Temporary habitats are recognised for the role they have on soil health.



Species-rich grassland - G1

Priority: Restore, expand, connect and enhance **species-rich grassland**



What does success in 10 years look like?

- The focus has changed from managing small fragments of species-rich grassland, to a more joined up approach that is delivering bigger, better and more joined areas of species-rich grassland and associated habitats such as scrub etc.
- More areas of existing species-rich grassland are being managed and restored to protect and enhance their value for nature (e.g. there is increased abundance of important plant species and the specific priority species associated with these habitats); this includes management of grassland with low chemical inputs and appropriate grazing regimes.
- Remnants of these valuable habitats have been identified and are being buffered and better connected through appropriate management of suitable adjacent modified grassland to create larger connected areas of species-rich grassland. Where creation of larger contiguous areas isn't possible, greater connectivity is being achieved through creation of corridors or stepping stones of habitat. This will often be within a mosaic of habitats dependent on underlying geology and current and historic land management influences (including grassland, woodland, scrub and/or hedgerows).
- Overall, a larger number of areas of modified grassland (which have the potential to become species-rich grassland) are being managed to increase diversity of important plant species and attract insects and other wildlife. Where possible this is being done in areas where this can help buffer or better connect existing areas of habitat as noted above.
- The enhancement and reduced fragmentation of low input species-rich grassland across Sussex is delivering wider benefits including for pollinators, water quality, aquifer recharge, soil retention and quality, and carbon storage. Some of this is contributing to local and regional ambitions to support the natural function of aquifers and the Seaford to Eastbourne Nature Recovery Project in East Sussex (e.g. Big Chalk).



Woodland, hedgerow & scrub – W1



Priority: Enhance, expand and better connect our **existing woodland** habitats, improving quality and diversity of habitats, structural diversity and resilience.

What does success in 10 years look like?

- A greater percentage of existing woodland in Sussex is being managed in a way which supports biodiversity and improvement of age and structural diversity.
- Small, neglected and fragmented areas of ancient woodland are being brought into positive management.
- Woodland management is addressing the significant pressures on woodland and its biodiversity, such as overgrazing by deer and invasive non-native species. Action is being focused on particular areas where the pressures are most severe.
- Existing Forestry Commission sites (particularly those which are plantations on ancient woodland) are in positive management for biodiversity.
- As a result of significant loss of trees from our woodland from ash dieback/elm disease, replanting and regeneration is enhancing the age and species diversity of woodland and its value for nature.
- Smaller areas of woodland are being expanded by buffering (creation of new woodland around its boundaries) where this is appropriate, thus increasing their resilience and supporting their value for wildlife.
- Connectivity of woodland habitats is being enhanced through creation of new areas of woodland (which act as stepping stones and corridors).
- The native black poplar population is stable and increasing through natural reproduction.
- West Sussex specific: areas of threatened coastal woodland in and around Chichester Harbour are being expanded and buffered through new woodland creation.
- More natural regeneration woodland is occurring due to deer management activities and a reduction in deer numbers.



Woodland, hedgerow & scrub – W2



Priority: Create **new woodland** where this supports connectivity, biodiversity, ecosystem services and landscape character

What does success in 10 years look like?

- New areas of broadleaved woodland are being created, increasing the percentage of tree cover in East and West Sussex but with a focus on expanding and connecting existing woodland sites.
- Vulnerable fragments of hanger woodland (on the South Downs), coastal woodland (South Coast Plain), and ancient semi-natural woodland (High Weald, Wealden Greensand and Low Weald) are being expanded and better connected, with a focus on areas where these are particularly concentrated.
- Woodland (including orchard, and wood pasture and parkland) is being re-established in locations where it has been 'lost', enhancing historic landscapes whilst providing woodland connectivity and habitat. This includes as part of wider habitat mosaics in medieval forests and 'deer forests' such as those found in the High Weald.
- Areas of scrub and other 'boundary habitats' are being created as buffers between woodland edges and adjacent habitats to create ecotones (transitional areas between adjacent habitats which support species). These are providing structural diversity, buffering the woodlands and providing other ecosystem services such as protection of soils and watercourses.
- Care is being taken to ensure that woodland is not created where this would be to the detriment of other priority habitats (particularly species-rich grassland), landscape character or archaeological heritage etc. The principle of the 'right tree in the right place' is being implemented.
- Techniques used for woodland creation favour natural colonisation and regeneration over tree-planting where this is possible.
- Opportunities are being taken to ensure succession of veteran and parkland trees, in-field trees, hedgerow trees and groups of trees in the landscape (replacement).
- New woodland creation is being located and designed to deliver multiple benefits where possible, including biodiversity, Nature-based Solutions for water, flood management and carbon storage, enhancement of landscape character and new opportunities for access to nature.



Woodland, hedgerow & scrub – W3

Priority: Enhance and expand our **urban treescapes/urban forest** in Sussex, taking opportunities to establish new urban/urban fringe woodland and street trees where this will support biodiversity and deliver multiple benefits.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- The presence of trees in our urban areas is increasing (as measured by the [Tree Equity index](#), held by the Woodland Trust).
- This helps to deliver multiple benefits in these areas, such as urban temperature regulation, flood risk reduction, enhancement of landscape character and increased access to nature in parks, streets and other green spaces and biodiversity.
- Native tree planting and woodland creation is encouraged in new developments through strong local planning policies.
- The treescapes of our Sussex cities and towns which have suffered losses of particular species (e.g. elm/ash) are being restored as advised by Forestry Commission.
- New woodland creation is enhancing biodiversity in urban fringe and peri-urban areas where this is compatible with other habitats and landscape character; where possible new areas of woodland in and around towns are providing opportunities for access.
- Suitable tree species are being used in urban areas to ensure resilience to climate change (as advised by Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust).
- The National Elm Collection in Brighton is being managed in a sustainable manner, to ensure its future resilience.



Woodland, hedgerow & scrub - Hdg1

Priority: Enhance, expand, restore and reconnect our network of **hedgerows**



What does success in 10 years look like?

- More hedgerows across Sussex are being managed to improve and enhance their condition and increase their value for biodiversity (e.g. providing nesting sites, shelter, food and song posts).
- 'Lost' hedgerows (where locations are known) are being re-established, providing benefits to wildlife, greater habitat connectivity and restoration of important historic landscape features.
- New areas of hedgerow are being created to improve habitat connectivity (either as corridors or stepping stones between woodland and grassland habitats) and deliver other ecosystem benefits.
- Existing hedgerows are widened and enhanced, e.g. through gapping up or infilling with native species, coppicing or laying.
- In suitable areas, hedgerows are being managed to support target species (e.g. turtle dove require tall, thick hedgerows or scrub) as part of suite of actions to best support these species.
- Areas of scrub and other 'boundary habitats' are being created and managed as buffers along hedgerows (and woodlands) to create ecotones (transitional areas between adjacent habitats which support species).



Woodland, hedgerow, scrub - Scr1

Priority: Create and enhance **scrub** habitats, as edge habitats, as part of habitat mosaics, and as a habitat in its own right.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Areas of scrub are being created to provide valuable habitat for wildlife. In some places this is helping to support specific species such as red shrike and turtle dove.
- There is a greater appreciation for scrub and how it should be managed.
- Scrub is being managed and created as a vital part of a dynamic mosaic of other habitats, such as heathland and species-rich grassland, where it helps to provide 'wilder and messy' areas which support a wider range of species. Creation of scrub is helping to expand these mosaics of habitat around existing core sites. It is also a dynamic habitat within rotational management.
- Scrub is helping to create valuable transitional or edge habitat along hedgerows, woodlands and areas of grassland, and as soft edges and buffer zones for woodlands.
- Scrub is recognised as a valuable nursery habitat that helps in the restoration of habitats.
- In parts of West and East Sussex, areas of coastal scrub are being established and expanded as part of an existing coastal woodland and scrub mosaic.
- As a successional habitat, scrub continues to be managed to ensure it provides the transitional type of habitat needed by many species, rather than taking over and dominating an area.



Heathland & sandstone outcrops - H1



Priority: Expand, enhance and better connect heathland habitats

What does success in 10 years look like?

- Core areas of heathland in Sussex are being expanded to create larger contiguous and connected areas of heathland and associated mosaic habitats (e.g. acid grassland, scrub, woodland).
- More areas of core pioneer, dynamic and mature heathland are being actively managed to create a diverse mosaic of vegetation including wet heath, dry heath, bare ground, scrub and woodland, which benefits heathland species and creates greater resilience to climate change and fire risks.
- New areas of heathland are being created, where conditions provide opportunity, to include mosaics with acid grassland and open ground. Opportunities are being taken to use sites such as disused mineral workings for this purpose.
- Non-native invasive species, such as rhododendron and deer, are being controlled where they pose a threat to areas of heathland.
- Visitor pressure at core sites (such as Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, and the Wealden Heaths SPA) is managed to reduce disturbance, nitrogen deposition (due to traffic levels), and other impacts on heathland species.



Heathland & sandstone outcrops – SO



Priority: Enhance the unique biodiversity of sandstone outcrops

What does success in 10 years look like?

- The sandstone outcrop habitats in the High Weald of Sussex are being safeguarded and enhanced through suitable management of the surrounding vegetation to prevent overgrowth and overshadowing of the rare lichens, mosses and liverworts they support.
- Visitor management approaches are protecting the vulnerable plant communities on the sandstone outcrops from damage from recreational use such as climbing.



Freshwater: rivers and river systems– R1

Priority: Support the recovery of our **Sussex rivers and river systems**, their health, biodiversity and natural functions.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- The principle of ‘re-wetting the landscape’ is driving activity to restore the natural functions of our catchments, increase biodiversity and deliver wider ecosystem services such as protection of base flows in rivers and streams at times of drought, improved water quality and reduced flood risk. This includes targeted use of ‘Natural Flood Management’ (NFM) techniques which (amongst other mechanisms) create and enhance habitats in locations where this will help to store water and slow its flow.
- Where possible, watercourses are being ‘re-naturalised’ to improve their habitat and flow paths, un-doing ‘straightening’ and removing man-made barriers to flow and species movement. This is giving rivers and streams room to flow more naturally over a greater length.
- Opportunities are being taken to enhance connectivity between our rivers and their floodplains where this is suitable. Mosaics of dynamic floodplain habitats deliver benefits for nature and support the natural function of river systems in times of flood and drought.
- Pollution is being reduced through targeted work to reduce harmful inputs and landscape practices, and through the creation of riparian habitats (‘interceptor’ and buffer habitats). Changes in land use practices in targeted areas are helping to reduce pollutants and sediment from agricultural land and other sources reaching water courses, thus supporting improvements in their water quality and ecological status.
- Using the Catchment Based Approach, Catchment Partnerships, Environment Agency, water companies and farmers are working in partnership towards the strategic delivery of these approaches.
- Nature-based Solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are being used to treat contaminated surface water and discharges, such as constructed wetlands at waste-water treatment works, and buffers to reduce the impact of road and urban runoff, particularly in areas of concern or high risk.
- NFM actions are being delivered across catchments, in areas where these can slow and store water in the landscape and reduce the impact on areas at highest risk of flooding. Floodbanks are being removed where it is agreed they are no longer required for flood protection. The multiple benefits of NFM for biodiversity and habitat provision are being maximised (e.g. via the creation of floodplain washlands and meadows, wetlands, ponds, riparian woodland, floodplains and wet woodland, bank side trees, rough grassland, cross-slope hedgerows, woody debris dams, permeable surfaces, rain gardens and water butts etc).
- The addition of woody features on rivers, such as riparian woodland, bank side trees and scrub in key locations, is helping to create shade along stretches of rivers and streams vulnerable to rising water temperatures due to climate change.
- Catchment scale work is being targeted to eradicate and control Schedule 9 Wildlife & Countryside Act non-native invasive species that pose a threat to freshwater ecosystems and species, particularly in areas of most concern.
- Willing landowners and farmers understand areas of potential beaver suitability, and the available grants and potential benefits of beaver reintroductions. They have network support and are supported by Catchment Management Plans.
- Food production areas and agricultural enterprises are supported and empowered to deliver management which does not pollute water sources.



Freshwater: rivers and river systems – R2

Priority: Support recovery and resilience of **chalk streams** and **greensand streams** and their unique biodiversity.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Targets have been agreed for base flow levels to support the environmental quality of chalk streams and greensand streams. Abstraction levels are within these targets.
- Chalk streams and greensand streams are buffered from pollutants and given more room to perform natural functions through riparian habitat creation and sensitive land use within the wider catchment.



Freshwater: wetland habitats - WT1

Priority: Create, restore, expand and enhance the condition of our **wetland habitats**.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- More of our existing wetland sites are in positive management, delivering improved ecological condition, sufficient water levels and reduced threat from invasive species.
- Measures to support river systems and aquifers (R1 and A1) are increasing their resilience to changes in water levels that occur due to an increase in wet weather events caused by climate change. Opportunities for aquifer recharge are being maximised.
- Our large, iconic wetland sites are improving in their condition through measures beyond their boundaries to increase the area of contiguous and stepping stone habitat, improving connectivity and reducing pressures from poor water quality and insufficient water levels.
- Areas of our most fragile and vulnerable wetland habitats have increased, such as fen, reedbed, coastal and flood plain grazing marsh etc., through expansion of existing sites and creation of new sites where conditions and water levels permit.
- Areas of wet grassland and water meadow have been increased and expanded and are supporting associated species such as waders and wildfowl.
- Floodplain and wet woodland areas have been created as part of the wider restoration of floodplain function.
- Harmful impacts from surface water runoff and combined sewer overflow discharges are being mitigated and reduced through Nature-based Solutions. Constructed wetlands are creating space for water, with benefits for water quality and pollution reduction.
- Defunct infrastructure which is inhibiting wetland expansion is being removed (e.g. sluices, field drainage etc.).
- Greater use of grey water and water storage is helping to reduce abstraction pressures and water demand.



Freshwater: standing water bodies (lakes, ponds and ditches) - SB1

Priority: Support the enhancement and restoration of existing **standing water bodies** and creation of new standing water bodies for biodiversity and other benefits.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- The water quality and ecological condition of standing water bodies, such as reservoirs, lakes, ponds, ditches, dew ponds, hammer ponds, mill sites etc., is improving through appropriate restoration activity, the creation and enhancement of habitats that prevent nutrient and sediment runoff, and supportive land management practices in the wider catchment.
- Ponds of high existing ecological value have been identified and are being managed to retain and enhance their condition.
- New ponds and networks of ponds have been created in suitable rural and urban locations.
- People are educated about how to manage and treat ponds and other standing water bodies to reduce impacts caused by misdirected actions (e.g. adding bread to ponds for duck feeding, swapping plants between ponds, adding invasive non-native species such as terrapins).
- Ditches of high environmental value are under management that is enhancing their value for all related species.
- Invasive non-native species are under control and being managed.
- There is more awareness that ditches can be part of the river network and are not just standing water bodies.



Freshwater: Aquifers - A1

Priority: Support the health and function of our **aquifers**.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Larger areas of priority habitats on our aquifers and particularly within the priority catchment areas of water companies are being managed to restore and enhance their ecological condition and deliver key ecosystem services including the recharge of the aquifer and protection of groundwater from pollution.
- The restoration and expansion of priority habitats in key areas for groundwater protection is also taking place, again to support biodiversity and aquifer function.
- Localised areas of 'interception' and buffering habitat are being created around karst features to reduce risk of ground water pollution.
- Impacts on ground water quality and recharge from runoff are being reduced through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and rain gardens where appropriate; these are providing additional habitat and space for water.
- Landowners and farmers are being supported to reduce water usage and increase water sustainability and resilience.
- Misconnections in the supply network are being addressed in combination with education to reduce household water usage, and measures are being taken to reduce abstraction pressures.



Urban nature - U1

Priority: Create and connect new nature-rich areas within the **urban environment**, for wildlife and people.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- New and additional ‘nature-rich’ greenspaces (e.g. local nature reserves, allotments, parks, verges, public gardens, burial grounds) are being created in urban areas to complement existing parks and greenspaces and to provide benefits for nature and people. This is being done at different scales depending on circumstances and opportunities. For example, in densely populated urban areas where pressure on land is high, innovative use of pocket parks and **smaller scale** interventions for nature (e.g. green roofs, green walls, planters, verges etc). Opportunities for **larger scale** interventions are being sought for community and neighbourhood green spaces that benefit nature and people.
- Communities are being encouraged to develop community led plans which address nature recovery and include actions that can be delivered by residents.
- New areas are creating much needed connectivity for nature within the urban environment, particularly those of a linear nature such as verges, new green walking and cycling corridors etc.
- Creation of these areas is being targeted, particularly where the provision of existing green space falls below national standards and where there is known income and health inequality. Creation and enhancement (see U2) of our urban green spaces must do more to reflect the ‘voices’ of those communities and individuals that are often not heard in decisions about where to target resources.
- Priority is being given to ensuring that new development includes sufficient accessible natural greenspace of value to both residents and wildlife; inclusion of habitats within developments is ‘landscape-led’, linking to and enhancing surrounding habitats and the natural environment.
- Existing business and industrial zones are creating new habitat-rich and green areas of value to nature and employees.
- New urban ponds and wetlands are being created (where hydrology is suitable), particularly where these can also provide ecosystem services such as flood risk reduction and water storage in the urban landscape.
- Street trees, hedgerows, wildflower planting and other urban habitats (e.g. green walls and green roofs) are being included in the built and public realm across our villages, towns and cities to create additional habitat and a range of ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, support for pollinators, shading, flood risk reduction and improvements to health and wellbeing. Planting schemes ensure ‘future-proofing’ against potential changes in climate.
- 22 • Open mosaic habitat on existing brownfield sites is being encouraged and managed, particularly where these areas are unlikely to proceed to development in the near future.



Urban nature - U2

Priority: Enhance the value for nature of **existing parks, buildings and other blue/green spaces** in urban areas.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Existing parks and other open spaces in our urban areas (e.g. gardens, school grounds, playing fields, hospital grounds etc.) are being managed with nature in mind, using suitable mowing regimes for grassland management and by creating new areas of habitat such as woodland, individual trees, hedgerows and ponds etc.
- Disturbance to wildlife on sensitive accessible sites is being reduced through careful management of visitor and dog use.
- A more sustainable approach to ‘fine turf management’ (i.e. high intensity management of sports pitches and other areas of amenity grassland) is supporting biodiversity, pollination, carbon sequestration and soil health in parks, recreation grounds, golf courses and school playing fields across Sussex.
- In our publicly owned green and blue spaces, the management culture seeks to optimise wildlife benefits, and this guides in-house and contractor practices.
- Use of herbicides and pesticides in urban parks, greenspaces and private gardens has reduced significantly. In our publicly-owned spaces, there is a principle of ‘no pesticide/herbicide use’ with agreed protocols in place which identify alternatives and specify the very limited exceptions where use may be permitted. In private gardens, a greater awareness of the impacts of pesticides and herbicides on nature and the alternatives available is reducing their use across the board.
- More buildings in urban areas are providing nesting habitat for birds and bats (via provision of suitable boxes); this is targeted where specific species can benefit most (e.g. swift populations in Brighton).
- Golf courses, both within urban and rural locations, are creating and enhancing habitats for the benefit of wildlife and acting as important strategic locations for nature’s recovery.
- Residents are playing an active role by managing areas of their gardens for nature, providing nest boxes etc.
- Community based organisations are being supported to manage local green spaces (recreation grounds, ponds, orchards, allotments, community gardens) for nature and wider benefits, and feel part of a bigger movement for nature’s recovery across the LNRS areas. Innovation in the identification of green spaces as ‘community assets’ and the use of mechanisms such as Community Land Trusts is bringing more greenspaces into community management with a specific focus on delivering local benefits for nature and people.



Nature, health and wellbeing - NH1

Priority: Create new opportunities for access to nature in urban, per-urban and rural areas to support health and wellbeing.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Specific opportunities are being taken to increase opportunities for access to nature in areas of nature and health inequality in Sussex; target areas have been identified for action specifically to benefit those communities and wards which are under-served, e.g. their current lack of green space is below the national standard, the existing greenspace is of low quality, and/or there is a history of under-provision of local authority spend on greenspaces
- This 'asset-based' approach is creating places and opportunities which are led by health-information and best practice for the design of 'healthy places'.
- Nature and access to nature is acknowledged by decision-makers across all sectors as part of the solution to supporting health and delivery of health-related policy priorities.
- Green and blue spaces, particularly in urban areas, are valued as important community assets which bring people together and contribute to community cohesion.
- Cross-sectoral work is supporting people and communities to access 'nature nearby', again driven by an understanding of where social and cultural barriers may be preventing this.
- Accessible natural green spaces have been created for cultural celebrations and gatherings.
- Public engagement initiatives are creating a more diverse range of opportunities for connection with nature (e.g. via food growing, natural play areas, green social prescribing) and as such a larger and more diverse percentage of the population of Sussex are receiving benefits for their health and wellbeing.



Wildlife corridors – COR1

Priority: Enable **nature recovery at scale** across landscapes and large-scale nature corridors where this supports biodiversity, ecosystem services and landscape character



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Farmer and landowner-led landscape scale initiatives have been enabled and supported and are delivering joined-up nature-recovery projects and actions on the ground.
- Parishes within these corridors and areas of landscape scale recovery are playing a role, by identifying opportunities for recovery that can contribute to delivery of action on the ground (via Parish Priority Statements and Neighbourhood Plans).
- Large scale corridors and landscape scale initiatives are playing a particularly important role in areas of sensitive and fragmented habitat where a joined-up and bigger scale approach is needed, and in river valleys and sensitive areas of catchments where they can deliver wider benefits for the freshwater environment.
- Where Landscape Recovery bids have been developed between farmers, landowners and other partners in Sussex but have been unsuccessful (e.g. Arun Valley, Brighton-Lewes Downs, Ashdown Forest), Arms-Length Bodies, Protected Landscapes, conservation organisations and others continue to support the development of these initiatives.
- District-scale approaches, where local government can play a role in supporting and enabling nature recovery at a larger scale, are emerging (such as Wilder Horsham, Adur Landscape Recovery project, Chichester District Council Wildlife Corridors), and are playing an important role in coordinating delivery at a sub-county scale.



Wildlife corridors – COR2

Priority: Safeguard and enhance the value of **existing green and blue corridors** for nature and create new corridors where this will improve connectivity between habitats/designated sites and between rural and urban green spaces.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- Existing green and blue corridors are identified and being safeguarded from loss or degradation where possible via a range of mechanisms including the planning system, best practice management, landowner commitment etc.
- Opportunities are being taken to create and enhance habitats along existing corridors thus enhancing their ecological function and resilience, particularly where they are surrounded by more 'hostile' land for wildlife.
- New corridors of linking habitat are being created between particularly important and isolated areas of habitat and/or designated sites, and these are targeted where they will create much needed connectivity for species.
- Within urban areas, new 'green and blue linkages' between parks and greenspaces are being created by including corridors in new urban infrastructure. These are delivering multiple benefits for nature and people in the urban environment including increased resilience to the impacts of climate change (e.g. flood risk reduction, urban shading and cooling etc.). Care is being taken to use species that will be resilient to future changes in climate to ensure these new linkages ensue.
- Gardens – both private and public – are making a vital contribution to creating and linking habitats within urban environments through more wildlife-friendly approaches and more areas dedicated to wildlife habitat.
- Within the urban and peri-urban fringes new accessible green corridors are providing greater ecological connectivity between urban areas and adjacent rural areas whilst enhancing the landscape and providing opportunities for access and recreation.



Wildlife corridors – COR3/RV1

Priority: Enhance transport corridors, verges, historic routeways and footpath networks for wildlife.



What does success in 10 years look like?

- New and existing travel routes (road and rail) are being managed for nature via the creation and enhancement of habitats, creating bigger, wider and more joined up areas of habitat along their length; they are also increasing connection to the adjacent habitats and where possible, enabling connectivity across their corridors via construction of green bridges or wildlife underpasses.
- A greater number of our road verges are being managed to improve biodiversity, with all of our 'notable' and designated verges in Sussex monitored and under sensitive management which retains and enhances their particular value for wildlife.
- Historic routeways such as sunken lanes, droveways, tracks and paths, that are characteristic in many parts of Sussex, are being enhanced as natural corridors, with suitable habitat management and creation to support their wildlife rich banks, verges, hedges and trees.
- Abandoned sunken lanes are being protected from use for dumping, fly-tipping, and loss through appropriation into neighbouring gardens.
- Bridleways, footpath corridors and networks are, where possible, being enhanced through habitat creation and management actions. This is creating wider and more connected areas of habitat. Such work is also being delivered along the National King Charles III Trail which runs along the West and East Sussex coastline.



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