



Buckinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot – Stakeholder Discussion Pack

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Introduction

Buckinghamshire has been chosen as one of five areas in the country to trial the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is your opportunity to help us plan a better Buckinghamshire for wildlife and people.

The aim is to help nature and people flourish together. Ultimately, these local strategies will form part of a national Nature Recovery Network – creating improved, joined-up, wildlife-rich places which will benefit people and wildlife.

Between now and the end of March 2021, we will engage with stakeholders to help shape our Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot.

This will not be the end of our engagement with you – in fact it will be just the beginning. Beyond April 2021 we will share the outputs of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot and work more with stakeholders to finalise the Buckinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

This discussion pack is a short summary of the information available to help you input into the Strategy. For more in depth information about how the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be produced and information on the existing natural environment in Buckinghamshire please visit our website: www.bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy



Finemere Wood Credit - BBOWT_Jim Asher

Have your say

Nature in Buckinghamshire needs **your** help.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is your opportunity to help us plan a better Buckinghamshire for wildlife and people.

Nature is under threat everywhere, and it is easy to imagine that we are powerless to prevent wildlife decline, but this strategy is one way of making a real difference. Whether you are in a local group, at school, a farmer, a landowner, a local business, a conservationist or a policy-maker - we want to know what you think.

The strategy will be influenced by a wide range of people and organisations, from farmers and landowners, to the public, and conservationists. We need to hear from you all. **What do you like about nature in Buckinghamshire? Why is nature in Buckinghamshire important to you? What parts of nature would you like to see recovered or improved over the next 25 years?**

Whether it's wildflowers for pollinators, more trees to fight climate change, more green spaces in our towns, or a habitat or species you're passionate about – we want your input to create a shared vision for nature's recovery over the next 25 years; in line with the Government's 25-year Environment Plan.

To help you have your say you can get more information by:

1. reading the information below
2. clicking through to the website (<https://bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy/>) where you will find an LNRS Pilot Overview and a Summary of Buckinghamshire's Nature

We are now inviting stakeholder input through various means, which include:

Buckinghamshire wide online survey (open to all)

Everyone is invited to contribute to our short online survey, which will be open until 26th February 2021. To go directly to our short online survey [click here](#).

Farmer, land manager, and forester online survey

If you are a farmer, land manager or work in the agricultural sector please [click here](#) to fill out the survey, which will be open until 26th February 2021.

Natural England are part of the Buckinghamshire LNRS Pilot team and are, in part, focused on aligning the pilot with the Local Nature Recovery component of Environmental Land Management (E.L.M.). As a farmer, land owner or land management worker, we ask that you respond to this survey as it is an opportunity to give insight into your thoughts on the

LNRS, the associated process and how it could work for E.L.M. This insight will help shape both schemes and their relationships with each other moving forward.

Farmer, land manager, and forester online workshops (invite only)

Specific farmer groups operating in Buckinghamshire have been invited to attend an online workshop in February. The purpose of these workshops is to discuss the LNRS pilot and the Local Nature Recovery component of E.L.M.

Organisation and groups online workshops (invite only)

With our facilitators, 3KQ, we are running a series of three online workshops in February.

These workshops are by invite only, and we anticipate that 1-2 people from each organisation or group will attend. At these workshops we are seeking your organisation's perspectives on nature's recovery. We are asking participants to speak to their colleagues prior to the workshop, and communicate at the workshop their organisational position on:

- What environmental outcomes do you want to see achieved in Buckinghamshire over the next 25 years?
- What environmental benefits (like carbon sequestration, and flood mitigation) you want to see delivered over the next 25 years?
- What activities do you think need to take place over the next 2 – 5 years to begin to achieve these outcomes or benefits?

We request that participants email us with any existing strategies or plans that you think are relevant to the Buckinghamshire LNRS pilot, via email:

nature.strategy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

If you or your colleagues have not received an invite and would like to attend, please email us at: nature.strategy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new way of helping nature, identifying which characteristics are most important at a local level to focus action and investment. You can read an LNRS Overview Document giving more detail of the LNRS [here](#). The aim of the strategy is to help nature and people flourish together. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are currently in a pilot phase, with Buckinghamshire one of five initial areas selected by Government to trial the process. Ultimately, once the pilot phase is completed across the

country, the aim is for local strategies to form part of a national Nature Recovery Network – creating improved, joined-up, wildlife-rich places which will benefit people and wildlife.

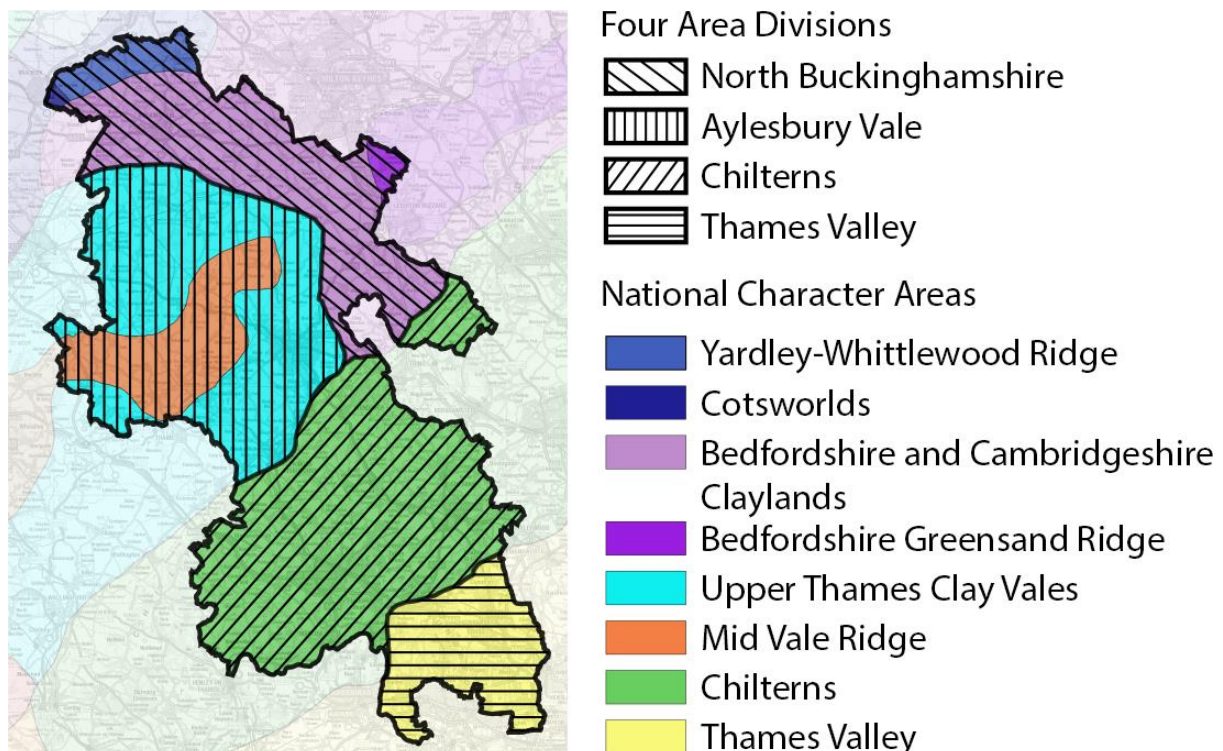
Where we are now?

Buckinghamshire hosts a wealth of wildlife, and as part of the pilot process we have compiled a set of baseline maps showing the area's key habitats. We have also developed a written description of the LNRS area highlighting some opportunities for improving biodiversity. You can find both the maps and a detailed description in the document '[A Summary of Buckinghamshire's Nature](#)' and you can read a brief summary of the four Key Areas below.



A Summary of Buckinghamshire's Nature

For the purpose of developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy we have divided the county into four broad areas (North Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury Vale, Chilterns and Thames Valley) based on natural character as defined by Natural England's National Character Areas (Map 1).



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Map 1. The four area divisions and the National Character Areas



North Buckinghamshire

The Yardley Whittlewood Ridge retains a rural character with remnants of 13th century hunting forests. It is rich with ancient woodland, wood pasture and parkland and mature hedgerows. The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands are mostly arable farmland crossed by shallow river valleys. The Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge provides views over the lower landscapes and is a mosaic of acid grassland, heathland and woodland.

Key Habitats & Species: **Woodlands, wood pasture and parklands** support **butterflies** including **white admiral, wood white, purple hairstreak** and **black hairstreak**, rare mammals such as **hazel dormice** and **barbastelle bat** along with **saprophytic (dead wood) invertebrates**. The agricultural areas support **farmland birds**, with **meadow grasslands** hosting **rare plants** such as **green-winged orchids**. **Water voles** are present on the **Great Ouse**.

Pressures and threats: High levels of future growth and associated increases in leisure and recreation, increasing demand for resources, particularly water, historic land drainage and disconnection of watercourses from their floodplain, land use change, development and infrastructure improvements such as East West Rail.



Aylesbury Vale

The Aylesbury Vale is a low-lying agricultural area with mixed arable/pastoral farming with hedgerows and mature trees. The River Thame and River Ray run through the landscape with floodplain meadows and lakes associated with mineral extraction. The town of Aylesbury lies to the south and is the only major settlement. The area includes ancient woodlands including a remnant of the former Royal Forest of Bernwood.

Key Habitats & Species: The river valleys are regionally important for **wading birds** including small breeding numbers of **lapwing** and **curlew** which use the **floodplain** habitats. Nationally important numbers of breeding and **wintering wildfowl** are associated with water-filled gravel pits and reservoirs. Nationally significant populations of **native black**

¹ Dormouse in hand, Credit: Clare Gray (Gwent Wildlife Trust)

² Lapwing, Credit: BBOWT

poplar occur in the area particularly along watercourses. The grasslands support **rare plants** and **invertebrates**. The **ancient woodlands** support important populations of **Bechstein's Bat**, as well as uncommon and rare **butterflies** including the nationally rare **black hairstreak** butterfly and **brown hairstreak** butterfly. Arable land supports nationally important assemblages of **farmland birds** and **arable weeds** along with mature field and hedgerow trees.

Pressures and threats: High development pressure particularly around urban areas and relates to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc concept, High Speed Rail 2 and East West Rail. Land use changes and habitat fragmentation resulting from urban growth.



Chilterns

The Chilterns Ridge is a north-west facing chalk escarpment offering long views over the adjacent Upper Thames Clay Vales to the Mid Vale Ridge and beyond. The ridge is divided by valleys which descend south-east towards the River Thames. The Chilterns is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with habitats associated with traditional land management over many millennia. These habitats include ancient hedgerows and veteran trees, traditional orchards, heathland and acid grassland. The area also includes 150km of internationally rare chalk stream habitat, in addition to lowland calcareous grassland, ancient woodland, heaths, bogs and ponds.

Key Habitats & Species: The **lowland meadow grasslands** support species of **rare plants** including many species of **orchids** and specialists such as the **Chiltern gentian**. The grasslands also support invertebrates such as **Chalkhill Blue** and **Duke of Burgundy butterflies**, **glow worms** and **Roman snails**. **Juniper scrub** can be found on the escarpments. The **chalk streams** support a huge range of **aquatic plants**, such as **rare starworts** and **watercress**. They also support animals such the **water vole**, fish including **brown trout** and **aquatic invertebrates**.

The **woodlands** and **traditional orchards** support numerous specialist species including a wide variety of **plants**, **fungi** and **invertebrates**, for example **marsh violet**, **red helleborine** and the **black darter dragonfly**. **Box woodland** can still be found here. Farmland hosts rare **arable weeds** and **farmland birds** such as **Cirl Bunting** and **Yellowhammer**.

³ Bee Orchid, Credit BBOWT

Pressures and threats: Poor management of woodlands, Ash die-back, invasive non-native species, reduction in livestock farming and grazing threatens meadow grasslands, intensification of arable farming, over abstraction and channel modification of chalk streams, lack of buffers between urban areas and watercourses and infrastructure projects including High Speed Rail 2.



Thames Valley

The River Thames is a key feature of this area, with its tributaries, streams, lakes, canals and open waterbodies resulting from mineral extractions in the area which is also rich in historic parkland. Burnham Beeches is a designated SAC containing wood pasture and many ancient pollards and other parkland sites include Black Park, Langley Park, Dorney, Clivedon and Dropmore. Important habitats in the Thames Valley include acid grasslands, fens, heaths, orchards, ponds and ancient woodlands.

Key Habitats & Species: The grassland associated with the river valley is important for **breeding birds**. Temporary **ponds** on **heathlands** are important for **starfruit**. The ancient trees and woodlands support many species of **fungi**, **rare plants**, **invertebrates** and **birds**. **Parkland** features in the area at sites including Black Park, Langley Park, Dorney, Clivedon and Dropmore with some including remnants of **acid grassland**.

Pressures and threats: Climate change deteriorating wetland habitats, woodlands and river flow, development pressure and increases in pollution from roads, urban and airport expansion, land use changes away from commons and heaths - e.g. golf courses and horse grazing - fly tipping and other illegal uses.

⁴ Common Frog, Copyright Andy Fairbairn