

Five local authorities announced to trailblaze England's nature recovery pilots

Cornwall, Buckinghamshire, Greater Manchester, Northumberland and Cumbria local authorities have been selected by the government today [Friday 14 August] to help kick-start nature recovery on a countrywide scale.

The selected authorities will receive a share of £1 million of funding to set up 'Local Nature Recovery Strategies' (LNRS) pilot studies to help map the most valuable sites and habitats for wildlife in their area and identify where nature can be restored. This could see the creation of wildflower habitat for pollinators, green spaces for people, or new woodlands and wetlands which are important for both healthy communities and in the fight against climate change.

The pilots will enable local authorities to set out their local priorities for restoring and linking up habitats so species can thrive, and agree the best places to help nature recover, plant trees, restore peatland, mitigate flood and fire risk, and create green spaces for local people to enjoy.

The forthcoming Environment Bill will go even further – requiring all areas in England to establish LNRSs. This will help bring a broad range of groups together – from farmers to businesses to local communities – to deliver priorities for nature recovery at a local and national level. The pilots will also help kick-start the creation of over a million acres of habitats for wildlife.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Coronavirus is shining a light on the importance of our natural world, and the positive impact nature can have on our health and well-being.

These first pilots will be a key part of our green recovery and help kick-start the creation of over a million acres of joined up habitats that people can enjoy across the country.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

If we wish to have rich and abundant wildlife, more carbon captured in trees, soil and hedges, better protection from extreme weather and enough places for people to gain the wellbeing benefits of good quality green spaces, then we must invest in Nature's recovery, and at scale.

National ambitions for Nature's recovery will need to support local action and today is a significant milestone in doing just this. We look forward to working with our partners in these five areas to create bigger, better and more connected natural places to halt and then reverse the decline in our environment.

Defra is investing around £1million in the five pilots which will be run in collaboration with Natural England. Each LNRS pilot will:

- develop a set of maps which show most valuable existing sites and habitats for wildlife
- use these maps to identify opportunities for recovering nature – for wildlife, for people, and as a contribution to tackling climate change and improving the environment
- bring a broad range of groups of people together to identify and agree priorities for restoring nature.

The LNRSs will underpin the new Nature Recovery Network (NRN) – a flagship element of [the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan](#). The NRN will benefit people and wildlife by increasing, improving and joining-up wildlife-rich places across England. It will create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat outside protected sites, more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green infrastructure (such as trees, hedgerows, parks, fields, forests) and urban blue infrastructure (such as rainwater tanks, bioswales, rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, and floodplains).

This landscape-scale approach to restoring nature was recently demonstrated by Natural England's recent designation of the [Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve \(NNR\)](#) in Dorset.