

Classification:	Decision Type:
Open	Key

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 09 July 2025
Subject:	The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations	

Summary

1. Nature and biodiversity are in decline across England. Locally, and in recognition of this, the GMCA declared a biodiversity emergency in March 2022. The extent of this decline is set out in the “State of Nature in Greater Manchester” report, published in March 2024.
2. Nationally, the government introduced legislation under the Environment Act 2021 to put in place measures to support the reversal of this decline. This includes a new mandatory requirement for local areas in England to establish Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). These are spatial strategies aimed at bringing public, private and voluntary sectors to work more effectively together for nature’s recovery and enable collective effort to be focused where it will have the most benefit.
3. The Mayor of GM has been appointed as “responsible authority” for the preparation of a LNRS for GM. The footprint for this covers the combined areas of Greater Manchester and will involve a wide range of partners and stakeholders in helping to agree priorities for nature’s recovery, investment and action over the next 10 years.
4. This report explains the mandatory requirement to establish a LNRS; sets out the findings from the public consultation on the draft version; and summarises the content of the final version.

Recommendation(s)

5. That Members Agree that they are content for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be published and authorise the Executive Director of Place to confirm the same in writing to the GMCA and the Mayor as the responsible authority for the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

6. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, requires responsible authorities to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify opportunities and priorities for nature recovery, develop an action plan and map areas where funding and efforts to work together to help nature should be targeted. The GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy will fulfil this obligation. As a supporting authority, Bury Council is obliged to support the production of the LNRS.

Alternative options considered and rejected

7. Not to agree with or raise an objection to the final GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This option has been rejected because, whilst Bury is not the 'responsible authority', legislation requires that responsible authorities involve all 'supporting authorities' (such as Bury Council) in the preparation process so that key users are able to shape content. Bury has been involved in the preparation of the strategy, the strategy is considered to be justified and there are no valid reasons to object. Additionally, Bury Council still has a key role to play in delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and it will inform the roll out of Biodiversity Net Gain and provide important evidence to inform the emerging Local Plan.

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Background

8. The Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to cover the whole of England, to identify opportunities and priorities for nature recovery, develop an action plan and map areas where funding and efforts to work together to help nature should be targeted. The Environment Act also includes a strengthened biodiversity duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, to "have regard" to relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
9. There are 48 strategy areas across England, including one for Greater Manchester. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has been responsible for developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the city-region, including Bury.

10. GMCA (on behalf of the Mayor) has been working in consultation with the ten local authorities and stakeholders across the city-region over the past 18 months to develop the Greater Manchester LNRS.

Consultation on the draft Greater Manchester LNRS

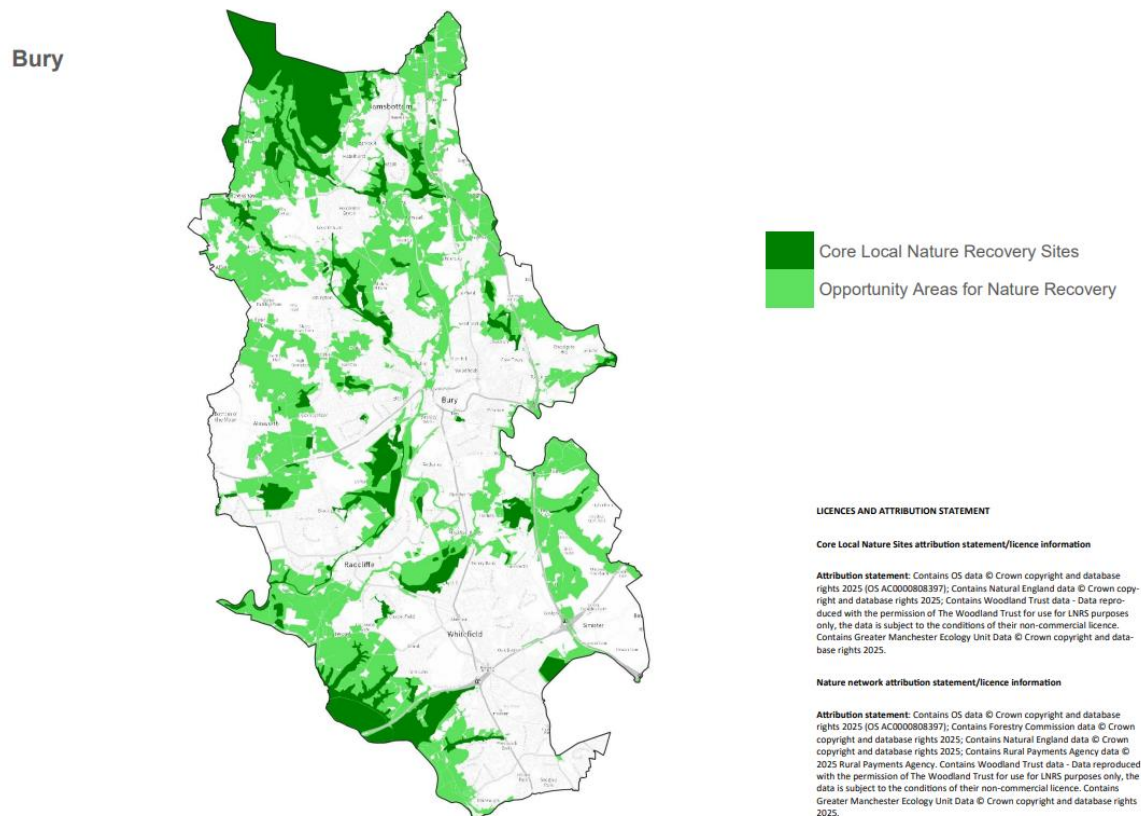
11. In preparing the strategy, to meet the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, underpinning regulations and statutory guidance, and to adapt this to what's needed locally, the GMCA produced a draft for public consultation in October 2024. This draft then underwent public consultation from 15 November 2024 – 31 January 2025 which included a drop-in session at the Millgate Shopping Centre on 8 January 2025. There were just over 400 responses to the public consultation.
12. There was broad support for the vision, aims and priorities set out in the strategy and no significant disagreement with key components of the draft strategy emerged during the consultation. GMCA has assessed the feedback received through the public consultation and will publish the full response to the public consultation alongside the final strategy.

The final Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

13. The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out our vision for a greener Greater Manchester, where space for nature to flourish is grown and enhanced, more people can access and enjoy the natural environment, and the many benefits nature brings are increased for everyone – from supporting mental and physical wellbeing to creating leisure space and supporting biodiversity.
14. The strategy is aimed at encouraging all organisations, communities and residents to take action to support nature's recovery. It will be of particular importance for landowners and, once adopted, will incentivise investment through Biodiversity Net Gain and environmental land management schemes.
15. The strategy covers the following:
 - A shared vision for nature recovery in Greater Manchester.
 - Shared priorities and targets for nature recovery.
 - Actions to help deliver the Strategy.
 - Maps of a Nature Network, including:
 - **Core local nature sites** - existing valuable areas for nature such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and Local Wildlife Sites.
 - **Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas** – potential opportunity areas for improving species movement and the linking up of core areas. These areas are not designated or protected, nor are they barriers to development. Development within these opportunity areas

(or where it could have an impact on these areas) should seek to support and deliver on the priorities set out for these areas and help to work towards the wider ambitions of the Nature Network alongside other ambitions.

16. The core local nature sites and the Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas for Bury are shown on the following plan.



Status of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including the maps

17. As a local authority, Bury Council will have to have regard to any relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy when performing its duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2016 when considering what action they can take to “further the general biodiversity objective” of conserving and enhancing biodiversity when delivering their functions.
18. With regard to planning, the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 included a clause which creates a new requirement on all relevant plan-makers and requires all tiers of planning to take account of the relevant LNRS in both plan-making and decision-making where relevant.
19. Taken together, these legislative provisions are designed to support development plans and provide closer alignment with the planning system and environmental outcomes.

20. However, it is important to note that the LNRS (which includes the mapping of opportunity areas) does **not** introduce any new protections of sites or designations – for example, the opportunity areas do not have any status in planning – nor introduce any new barriers to development. However, the GMCA and local authorities will continue to work together as to how the LNRS can best be reflected in the planning process.

Next steps

21. If agreed, the Director of Place will endorse the LNRS in writing to the GMCA and Mayor.
22. The GMCA will then consider the GM LNRS at the CA meeting on 22nd August.
23. Should the LNRS be approved by the Mayor, the Council will then be required to give regard to the LNRS in order to comply with our Biodiversity Duty. The LNRS will also be used by plan-makers to inform policies to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

As part of 'Section 4 – Vision for the Borough in 2030' in the Let's Do It Strategy there is a commitment to Carbon Neutrality by 2038 and the support of green and blue infrastructure as part of Local Neighbourhoods, which is closely related to conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix B.

The analysis has been completed alongside a GM wide analysis. It is anticipated there will be only positive impacts for any characteristics or circumstances that are impacted by this activity. There are no further equalities considerations required at this stage.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

This report demonstrates how the GM LNRS will agree priorities for nature recovery, map the most valuable areas for nature, and map opportunities to create or improve habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. It is envisaged that this will have a significantly positive impact on the Council's carbon emissions and environmental impact.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That Bury do not have an adopted Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as required by the Environment Act (2021), to have regard to when meeting our Biodiversity Duty.	By endorsing the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Borough can have regard to this strategy in meeting our Biodiversity Duty.
That the actions set out in the adopted Bury Biodiversity Strategy are not delivered, including adopting the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy and seeking funding for priority sites and habitats.	The adoption of the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy will meet the Biodiversity Strategy actions and support funding of nature recovery in the borough.

Legal Implications:

- A LNRS is a statutory document, and the Environment Act 2021 provides that the Mayor of Greater Manchester is the “Responsible Authority” with the statutory basis to co-produce a locally led, evidence-based LNRS for the Greater Manchester area.
- Bury and the other nine Greater Manchester local authorities are “Supporting Authorities” and under Regulation 13 of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 must be provided with the final LNRS prior to publication. Each Supporting Authority is asked to confirm it is content for the publication of the strategy to proceed.
- Under Regulation 15 of the 2023 Regulations, Supporting Authorities can give a publication advisory notice to the Responsible Authority if they disagree with the publication of the strategy based on the following grounds:
 - (a) the Supporting Authority considers that part of a final LNRS cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation undertaken by the responsible authority; or
 - (b) the Supporting Authority considers that the final LNRS is materially deficient.

- A publication advisory notice must be given in writing to GMCA within 28 days of the receipt of the final strategy and must set out the reasons for the objection.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Appendices:

Please list any appended documents.

Appendix A – GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers:

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

- Policy paper: **Local nature recovery strategies**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies/local-nature-recovery-strategies>
- Guidance: **Natural environment** https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=9cfadc7b-c74f-4922-a2df-7dd5ea411ca0&utm_content=immediately#full-publication-update-history
- Guidance: **Complying with the biodiversity duty**
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Biodiversity	The variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat
Biodiversity Duty	The general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity that a public authority has and must consider when exercising its functions

Nature Network	These are areas where action to enhance, restore or create different types of habitats (i.e. woodlands, grasslands, moorlands, waterbodies and wetlands) would expand and better connect our core local nature sites (our “areas which could become of particular importance for biodiversity”).
Core local nature sites	The areas of particular importance for biodiversity i.e. existing wildlife sites, including those designated and protected at an international, national and local level, as well as irreplaceable habitats