



## LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

**DECISIONS** to be made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment,  
Councillor Claire Dowling

**MONDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 10.00 AM**

**COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, LEWES**

### **AGENDA**

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 19 January 2026 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
2. Disclosure of Interests  
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
3. Urgent items  
Notification of any items which the Lead Member considers urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda.
4. Petition: Improved Road Safety measures around Chyngton Primary School (*Pages 5 - 10*)  
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
5. East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy (*Pages 11 - 388*)  
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
6. Community Match schemes (*Pages 389 - 392*)  
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
7. Proposed Allocation of Bus Grant Revenue Apportionment (*Pages 393 - 408*)  
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
8. Any urgent items previously notified under agenda item 3

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6 February 2026

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## LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Claire Dowling, on 19 January 2026 at Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes

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Councillor Wright spoke on item 4 (see minute 42)

### 38. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 8 DECEMBER 2025

38.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2025.

### 39. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

39.1 There were none.

### 40. URGENT ITEMS

40.1 There were none.

### 41. REPORTS

41.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

#### 42. PETITION: INTRODUCTION OF TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ALONG THE VILLAGE, EASTBOURNE

42.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

42.2 Councillor Wright, on behalf of the petitioners for the petition calling on the County Council for the introduction of traffic calming measures around The Village, Meads, spoke to highlight the concerns of residents in terms of vans and larger vehicles travelling through The Village as a cut-through, the poor visibility of the corners, the occasional use of carriageway for pedestrians given the narrow width of the footways and the potential to implement traffic calming or gates to address the concerns.

#### DECISIONS

42.3 The Lead Member RESOLVED to advise petitioners that:

(1) a potential scheme to install a traffic calming system around The Village, Eastbourne including on Matlock Road and Colstocks Road, has been assessed through the approved prioritisation process but has not met the necessary benchmark score to be considered for detailed appraisal and possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme; and

(2) petitioners may wish to consider setting up a Community Speed Watch Group for the area to carry out occasional speed checks.

#### REASONS

42.4 The County Council has considered a petition calling on the Council for traffic calming measures around The Village and the request has been assessed through the approved prioritisation process.

42.5 Community Speed Watch groups work closely with Sussex Police to enforce speed limits across the county. Contact details for the Community Speed Watch coordinator can be provided to the Lead Petitioner upon request.

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Lead Member for Transport and Environment</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>16 February 2026</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Director of Communities, Economy and Transport</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Petition: Improved Road Safety measures around Chyngton Primary School</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To consider a petition calling on the County Council for the establishment of a School Street scheme and the installation of a new zebra crossing on Hillside Avenue, Seaford.</b>

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners that:

- (1) a potential scheme to install a new zebra crossing on Hillside Avenue, has been assessed through the approved Local Transport Plan 4 prioritisation process but has not met the benchmark score to be considered for detailed appraisal and possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme;**
  - (2) a new School Street Scheme assessment framework is currently under review and once this is finalised, Chyngton Primary School will be assessed alongside all other schools for a School Street Scheme; and**
  - (3) once an assessment for all schools has been completed through the approved School Streets Scheme assessment framework, officers will share the outcome for Chyngton Primary School with the Lead Petitioner.**
- 

## **1 Background Information**

1.1. At the County Council meeting on 2 December 2025, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Sam Adeniji. The petitioners are requesting establishment of a School Street scheme on Millberg Road and the installation of a new zebra crossing on Hillside Avenue, Seaford.

1.2. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and a spokesperson for the petitioners is invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room.

1.3 Crash data supplied by Sussex Police shows that there have been no personal injury crashes in Hillside Avenue or Millberg Road for the most recent 3-year period up to 30 November 2025.

## **2 Supporting Information**

2.1 Hillside Avenue and Millberg Road are subject to a 30mph speed limit, as indicated by the system of streetlighting. A plan of the road showing the position of Chyngton Primary School and the proposed location of the zebra crossing is shown in Appendix 1.

2.2 The County Council has a limited amount of funding available, and therefore, needs to prioritise the local transport schemes which will be of greatest benefit to local communities. The East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) was adopted in October 2024. This sets out the transport strategy for the county and focuses on enabling and encouraging people to walk, wheel,

cycle and use public transport. This is alongside developing measures to promote vehicles which use cleaner fuels and working towards achieving net-zero targets. With the adoption of the strategy, the process used to assess and help prioritise requests for local transport schemes has been updated to reflect LTP4.

2.3 The request for a zebra crossing on Hillside Avenue has been assessed through the approved prioritisation process but has not met the necessary benchmark score to be considered for inclusion in the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements for 2027/28. The request will however remain on the list of schemes for potential progression should other funding sources become available in the future.

2.4 During 2024/25, East Sussex County Council used Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders to deliver School Streets schemes at 3 pilot schools in the county: Southover CE Primary in Lewes, All Saints CE Primary in Sidley, Bexhill, and Langney Primary Academy in Eastbourne. These schemes and the Traffic Regulation Orders were made permanent in the summer of 2025.

2.5 Following the successful delivery of these pilot School Streets schemes, a draft assessment framework has been developed to identify a further programme of School Streets schemes across the county, subject to funding. This assessment framework is currently being tested and reviewed by officers. The assessment will be based on strategic and local factors including:

- Local Policy fit – alignment to the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 and the emerging update to the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- School specific factors – school and local community support, school roll numbers.
- Geographic considerations – such as the type of road, traffic flows, crash record, proximity to bus routes, existing parking restrictions, any traffic displacement, number of properties, businesses and services nearby, existing, or proposed infrastructure schemes or measures.

2.6 Once the framework to assess schools is in place, an assessment of all schools will be undertaken. If a school is suitable to become a School Street school, a road safety audit will take place as part of the design process for a School Street scheme. The assessments will be taking place in Spring 2026. A list of sites that can be progressed will be presented to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment at a later decision-making meeting.

2.7 Progression of future School Streets schemes will be subject to the availability of funding.

### **3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 The County Council has considered a petition calling on the Council for the installation of a zebra crossing on Hillside Avenue and the request has been assessed through the approved prioritisation process. It is recommended that the petitioners are advised that a scheme to introduce a new zebra crossing on Hillside Avenue has not met the necessary benchmark score to be considered for detailed appraisal and possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme.

3.2 The School Streets schemes assessment framework is still being tested and reviewed ahead of finalisation. It is therefore recommended that petitioners be advised that Chyngton Primary School will be assessed against the new School Streets Scheme assessment framework when it has been finalised. The result of the assessment will be shared with the Lead Petitioner.

#### **RUPERT CLUBB**

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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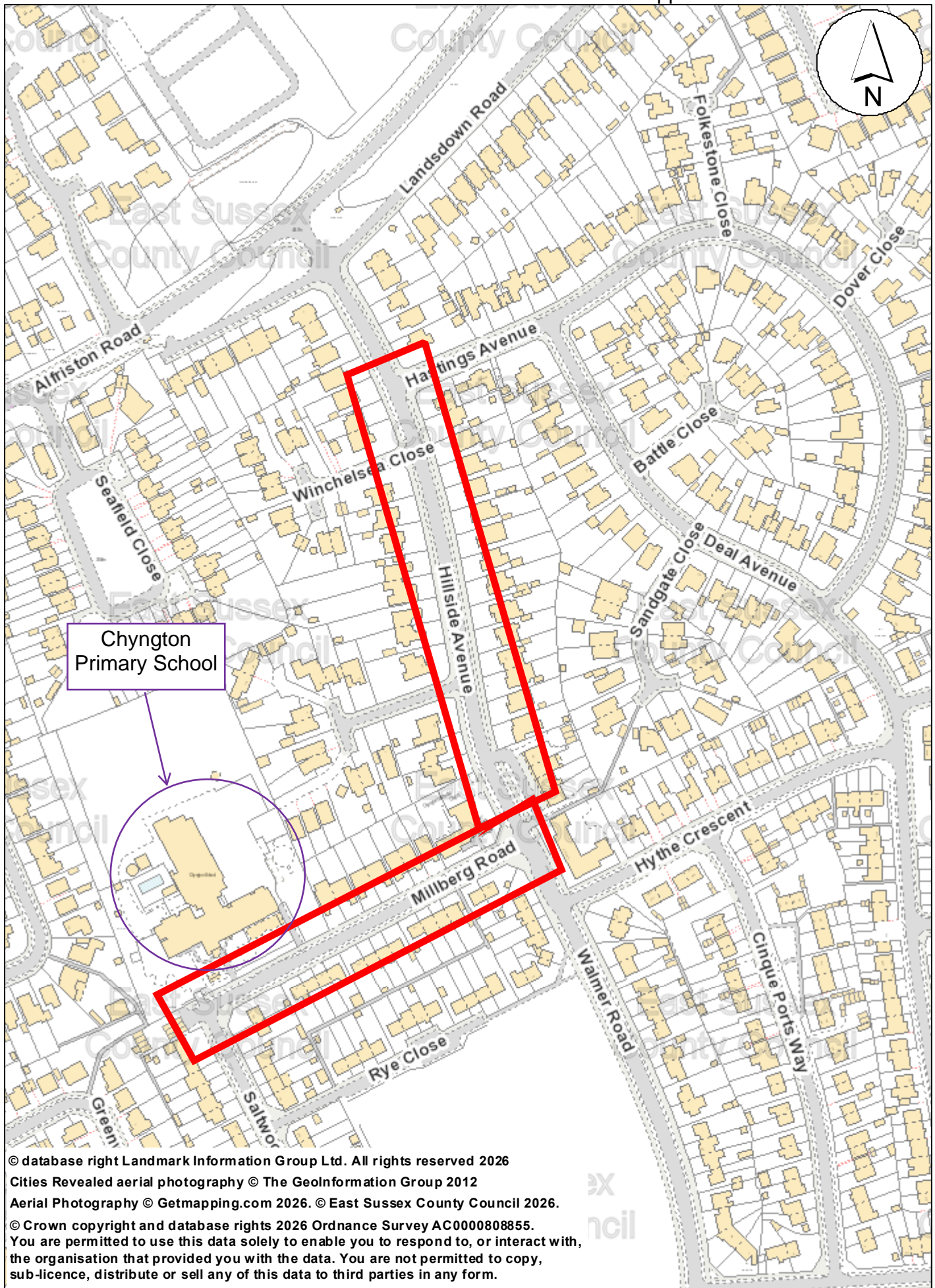
#### LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Sam Adeniji

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Map

Author: W Hadley

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Date: 08/01/2026



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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Lead Member for Transport and Environment</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>16 February 2026</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Director of Communities, Economy and Transport</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To seek Lead Member approval of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b>

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:**

**(1) approve the pre-publication version of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy as set out at Appendices 1 to 4 of this report;**

**(2) approve that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is provided to neighbouring and supporting authorities, in accordance with Regulations 13 and 14 of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 (the Regulations); and**

**(3) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to fulfil the requirements of Regulations 15 to 19, of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, to ensure that the final version of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is duly published.**

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## **1. Background Information**

1.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a statutory requirement for each upper-tier authority to prepare and publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). LNRSs are being introduced in England to encourage more coordinated practical and focused action and investment in nature.

1.2 East Sussex County Council is the 'responsible authority' for preparing the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove LNRS. The LNRS sets out a long-term vision for nature recovery and priority actions for the first 5 years (including opportunities for habitat creation, restoration of degraded sites, and improving ecological connectivity). It also provides a framework for delivering biodiversity net gain, climate resilience, and wider environmental benefits.

1.3 The LNRS has been prepared in partnership with West Sussex County Council (WSCC), Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), and Natural England. Preparation has also involved extensive engagement with key stakeholders, including the district and borough councils, the South Downs National Park Authority, landowners, farmers, conservation organisations, and community groups.

## **2. Supporting Information**

### The Local Nature Recovery Strategy Stages of Preparation

#### 2.1 The main stages of preparing the LNRS were as follows:

- collating and analysing ecological information about habitats and species and the pressures they face;
- reviewing over 150 published plans and strategies for Sussex to identify existing priorities for nature;
- meeting with farmers, landowners, community groups, young people, local councillors, developers, the health and wellbeing sector, and businesses to understand their views;
- online surveys to canvas local concerns to inform priorities;
- longlisting, then shortlisting priorities for nature's recovery;
- running workshops with experts from key local environmental and land management organisations to work through the detail;
- creating a set of measures to deliver the priorities; and
- mapping where any measures (that can be mapped) can be located to deliver the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment.

#### 2.2 Statutory public consultation on the draft LNRS ran for 6 weeks in October and November 2025. Comments were received across public bodies (district/borough councils, National Park), utilities and statutory bodies, Non Government Organisations (e.g. Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Weald to Waves, CPRE, South East Rivers Trust), landowners and estates,, developers/agents, and community groups and residents.

#### 2.3 In general, the response to the consultation supported the content of the Strategy and saw it as providing a practical framework for nature recovery. Responses to the consultation supported the emphasis on habitat connectivity, nature-based solutions and integration with planning policy. In light of the consultation comments, some minor and non material changes will be made to the Strategy, particularly to clarify roles and strengthen delivery mechanisms.

### What the LNRS contains

#### 2.4 The key elements of the LNRS are as follows:

- setting out what local people said about the nature they love, what they have noticed, and what they want to see happen;
- a description of the most important habitats and species in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove;
- seven principles for nature's recovery that address the key challenges;
- 24 priorities for nature's recovery, each with a set of statements describing what 'success looks like' in 10 years' time;
- 106 practical measures ('actions') that set out what needs to be done 'on the ground' to deliver the priorities, where, and how; and
- an interactive 'Local Habitat Map' showing current 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' (APIB - which cover 23.5% of the Strategy area) and, if the measures within the LNRS are implemented in a targeted way, 'Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity' (ACIB - which cover 34.9% of the Strategy area).

2.5 Appendices 1 to 4 set out the full LNRS. Appendix 4 is the 'Local Habitat Map', but is presented as a snapshot, rather than the interactive map. A link to the interactive version of this map is provided in the background documents.

#### How the LNRS will be used

2.6 The LNRS will help the County Council and others (including landowners and managers, other local authorities, developers, businesses and investors, local communities, and environmental groups) to help nature by:

- showing where effort should be focussed and why;
- providing a single set of priorities and actions for all to rally behind, seek funding for, and work together to deliver on the ground;
- helping those interested in nature recovery to see how their actions could contribute to the broader county-wide ambition for nature;
- serving as a benchmark of the current 'state of nature' to help measure future trends and recovery efforts;
- being a new source of evidence for local planning and local government decision-making processes, including local plan preparation and the planning applications process; and
- acting as a 'container' for existing recovery initiatives by providing a wider context and mechanism to coordinate and target action at all scales.

2.7 Following approval, the County Council's focus (in partnership with WSCC and BHCC) will turn to delivery of the LNRS, including: leading and convening a delivery partnership; embedding the LNRS into local decision-making; identifying strategic projects and facilitating project development; and monitoring and reporting on delivery of priorities.

2.8 In due course, the Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Combined County Authority will become the 'responsible authority' for both the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove LNRS and the West Sussex LNRS. This change will require a ministerial decision, for which there is currently no timeframe.

#### Next steps

2.9 Subject to some minor changes, as referenced in paragraph 2.3, the version of the LNRS that is being presented to this Lead Member meeting (Appendices 1-3) is the version that the County Council intends to publish as the final version of the LNRS. Before this is done, there are certain statutory requirements to be met. Firstly, pre-publication approval of the Strategy needs to be sought from the supporting authorities (District and Borough Councils, Brighton & Hove City Council, the South Downs National Park Authority and Natural England) and neighbouring authorities also need to be notified. In addition, there is a requirement to give notice to the Secretary of State of the Council's intention to publish its final version of the LNRS. Delegated authority is sought for these stages to be undertaken.

2.10 If supporting authorities serve notice on the County Council that they are not content for the final version of the LNRS to be published, the Regulations prescribe a process that the County Council will need to follow in order to resolve such a matter. Although this is considered unlikely, as the County Council has extensively engaged with these authorities throughout the production of the LNRS, delegated authority is also sought for the County Council to undertake the necessary actions to resolve any such dispute.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 The production and implementation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies across the whole of England represents a key element of the Environment Act. The County Council has

a statutory responsibility for producing a LNRS for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Following extensive engagement and consultation through a wide range of stakeholders and the public, a pre-publication version of the LNRS has now been prepared.

3.2 It is recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment approves this pre-publication version of the LNRS, as set out at Appendices 1 to 4, and delegates authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to undertake the latter statutory stages of the LNRS production.

## **RUPERT CLUBB**

**Director of Communities, Economy & Transport**

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## LOCAL MEMBERS

All

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Part 1 – Context and Description

Appendix 2 – East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and Maps

Appendix 3 – East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Part 3 – Priority Species

Appendix 4 – East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS Local Habitat Map

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The interactive version of the Local Habitat Map can be viewed at - [Local Habitat Map East Sussex and Brighton & Hove](#)





**Sussex  
Nature Recovery**  
A collective blueprint for targeted action



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# East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 1 – Context & Description of Strategy Area

Draft for consultation

Appendix 1





#### Cover image

📷 Ashdown Forest

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#### Illustrations

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# Section 1.

## Introduction

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📷 Starling murmuration, Eastbourne Pier  
© iStock.com/Pavel Babic



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)

# Foreword

To be written by an elected member after the public consultation.



# Overview

**This Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out the main principles and priorities for nature recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and the actions needed to deliver them.**

**East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is blessed with nationally and internationally important biodiversity.** Nature shapes our iconic landscapes; nearly two thirds of the area is designated for its natural beauty. Our ecosystems support our health and wellbeing and provide us with many benefits and services such as carbon storage, clean water, flood risk reduction and pollination. Nature also underpins vital sectors within our economy such as farming and tourism.


**But nature is at risk.** Many of our important sites are under pressure from impacts such as development, disturbance and pollution. Most are too small and fragmented to function as they should. Some of our most precious habitats have been lost and degraded and many of our species are at risk of extinction. The quality of our water systems has been compromised while water scarcity is a significant concern for the future. Climate change impacts such as drought, flooding, storms and erosion further threaten the health of our habitats and species, and in turn, our own.

**Addressing these systemic challenges requires us to think big.**

We need to hold on to what we have and make it better, enhancing our important sites and habitats and making them more resilient into the future. We need to support this through the creation of more nature-rich areas, forming a network of 'bigger, better, more and joined-up' habitats and sites. We need to use nature more effectively as part of the solution to challenges such as flood risk, poor water quality and increasing temperatures in our towns and cities.

**Across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove there is a lot of incredible work already happening for nature.** Bold, new initiatives are gaining traction and inspiring action; dedicated efforts continue to conserve and nurture our natural environments over the long term; partnerships are bringing councils, landowners, community groups and environment experts together; community action is thriving with individuals and groups making a difference at the hyper local level.

To bring about the type of change needed to move from 'nature's decline' to 'nature's recovery', **we need to build on this and move into the next 10 years, sustaining and growing the level of action for nature and harnessing it to deliver a collective, focused and shared ambition for its recovery.**

 The High Weald National Landscape, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, covers 49% of East Sussex.  
© iStock.com/Matthew J Thomas





The role of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is to guide this recovery.

This LNRS starts by providing, for the first time:

- a **comprehensive description** and in-depth catalogue of our most important habitats and species;
- a summary of the wider benefits and services nature provides and the main pressures and threats;
- **24 habitat priorities** and **160 priority species** with **detailed measures (or actions) that can support their recovery**, building on **seven key principles**;
- a **Local Habitat Map showing where action can best deliver the greatest benefit** (though there are many actions that can be taken, regardless of location, that will benefit nature even if not mapped).

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📷 Crowborough Wildlife Group volunteers clearing scrub from damp meadows on land owned by Servomex.

© Paul Gaterell



**This LNRS brings together expertise and knowledge of existing projects and initiatives for nature** that are already underway and acts as an ‘umbrella’ for them – providing a wider context and a mechanism through which to coordinate and direct action at all scales. In an era of scarce funds and resources for nature, it shows us where we should be strategic in focusing our effort and why. For those working at a more localised level, its measures are designed to be as practical and as relevant to local conditions as possible.

**Nearly a thousand people across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove were involved in the development of this LNRS**, from leading species experts and large estate owners, to residents and representatives from community groups and parish councils. Locally led, and developed through a collaborative process, it sets out a consensus about how and where our actions will deliver the most benefit for nature and people.

**But this LNRS cannot deliver nature’s recovery on its own and is not intended to do so.** It is limited in its legal scope, focusing primarily on where and how we can create and enhance habitats or support species. It cannot confer added protections to land or tackle pressures on nature that are covered by other regulatory mechanisms, such as pollution or development. It cannot force anyone to deliver what it sets out or includes on its maps and it does not come with direct sources of government funding for implementation on the ground.

What it does though, is for the first time, provide all those interested in nature’s recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove with a **single set of priorities and actions for nature’s recovery to rally behind, seek funding for and work together to deliver on the ground.** With its statutory footing and collaborative, participative approach, it provides confidence for funders, investors, landowners and delivery partnerships on the actions and locations that will deliver the greatest benefits for nature.

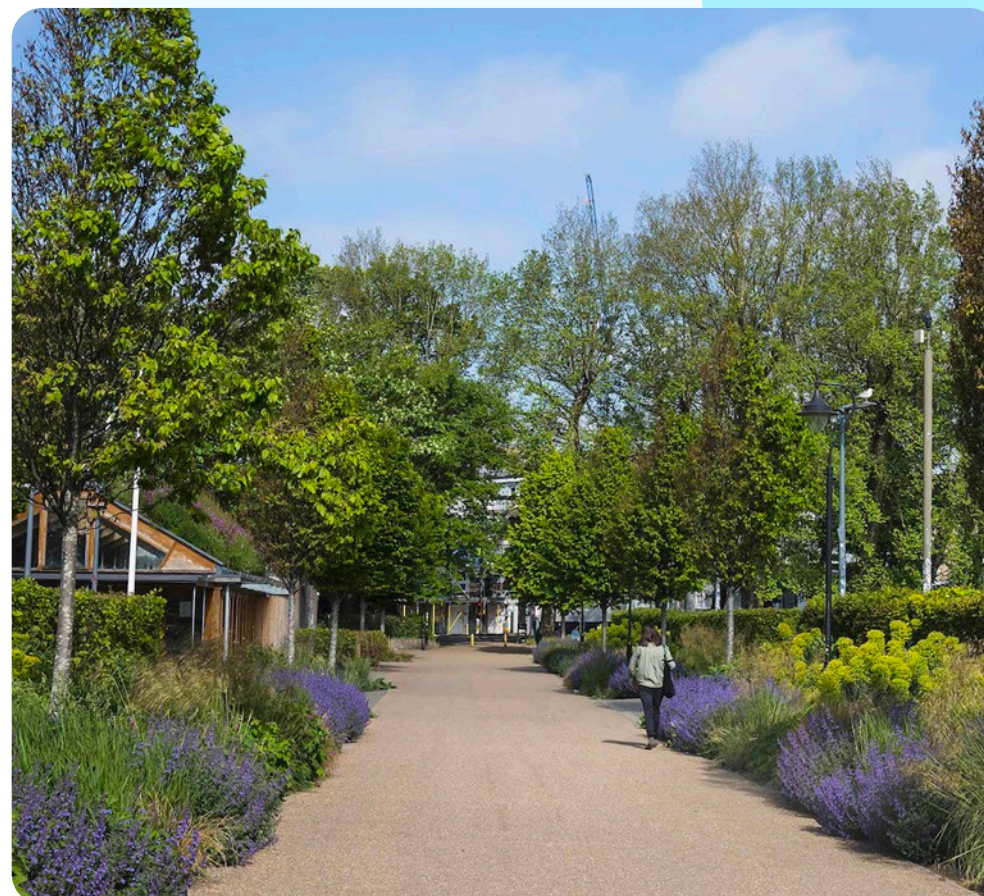
**Formally, it has an important role to play as a new source of evidence for local planning and local government decision-making processes.** It also helps to direct new habitat creation from Biodiversity Net Gain to where this would be most beneficial in terms of restoring, expanding, buffering and connecting existing habitats. More informally, it provides a guide for any interested organisation, community group or individual (at whatever scale) to understand how their actions could make an important contribution to a wider county-wide ambition for nature. It specifically highlights the importance of urban nature and seeks to encourage actions which individuals, local authorities and businesses can take to bring more nature into our villages, towns and cities.

**This is the first LNRS to be prepared for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove** and has been prepared alongside the LNRS for West Sussex to reflect the long-standing 'Sussex-wide' approach to nature and the common stakeholders that work across this wider area. It is part of a suite of 48 LNRSs across the country, they are intended to guide action for nature over the short to medium term (8-10 years). But for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, this LNRS also provides us with an important benchmark for our 'state of nature' against which we can measure future trends and the effectiveness of our actions. Whilst not a delivery plan, it does provide a sound basis for one and that will be our next step.

**We all can and need to do more for nature. This Local Nature Recovery Strategy helps us do that. It sets out the journey for realising the recovery of nature across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and the wider benefits this will provide for people, society and our economy.**

📍 **The Level, a large, restored urban park in central Brighton.**

© The Living Coast





## Section 2.

# About Local Nature Recovery Strategies

📷 Torpid dormouse in nest  
© Kate Ryland



## 2.1 Nature needs our help

Wildlife across the world is in crisis. Between 1970 and 2020, populations of amphibians, birds, fish, mammals and reptiles plummeted by 73% on average ([2024 WWF Living Planet Index](#)). Over the same time frame, it is estimated that we have lost 50% or more of our insects.

When species populations fall, whole ecosystems can weaken and even collapse. This not only impacts the species within that system, but the benefits these ecosystems<sup>◇</sup> provide to people which we often take for granted, such as clean air and water, [pollination](#)<sup>◇</sup>, [carbon storage](#)<sup>◇</sup> and the positive impact that the natural environment has on our [health and wellbeing](#)<sup>◇</sup>.

In the UK, trends in our wildlife have been measured by the [State of Nature Partnership](#). Their reports provide a comprehensive review of our biodiversity<sup>◇</sup>.

### Why is nature declining?

Space for nature is being squeezed or is deteriorating across the world.

The [habitats](#)<sup>◇</sup> on which species depend are increasingly:

- **Lost** – replaced by urbanisation, industrial farming or infrastructure development.
- **Fragmented**<sup>◇</sup> – pockets of habitats become smaller and more isolated from each other, so are less able to cope with pressures. Fragmentation also means many [species](#)<sup>◇</sup> can no longer move safely across the landscape, which limits their ability to find food, breeding partners, shelter and escape from predators.
- **In poor condition** – pollution, climate change, [invasive species](#)<sup>◇</sup>, more [intensive agriculture](#)<sup>◇</sup> and a decline in [traditional land management practices](#)<sup>◇</sup> are some of the pressures on habitats, reducing their health and their ability to support wildlife.

### The 2023 State of Nature report revealed:

- 1 in 6 UK species is at risk of extinction
- A 55% decline in farm birds since monitoring began in the 1970s
- More than half of our plants have decreased their [distribution](#)<sup>◇</sup>
- The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world

Words underlined in purple with a diamond symbol <sup>◇</sup> are defined in the [Glossary](#)





## 2.2 Some of the habitats and species in decline in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

### Habitats



#### Chalk grassland

80% of the UK's chalk grassland has been lost since WWII making South Downs chalk grassland one of the rarest habitats in the country ([South Downs National Park](#)).



#### Elm tree cover

Brighton & Hove's National Elm Collection of 17,000 trees is threatened by Dutch elm disease with 850 trees felled in 2023 alone ([Brighton & Hove City Council](#)).



#### Hedgerow

Hundreds of miles lost since WWII ([Hedgerows – British Habitats – Woodland Trust](#)).



#### Vegetated shingle

Virtually the whole of the Crumbles – a 160ha shingle foreland at Eastbourne, and one of only six sites over 100ha in the UK – has been lost to development<sup>1</sup> ([Coastal vegetated shingle – Buglife](#)).

### Species



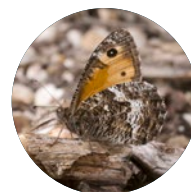
#### Corn bunting

82% decline since the 1960s and considered lost in neighbouring Surrey ([Sussex Ornithological Society](#)).



#### Spiked rampion

An endangered and legally protected plant. Only found at eight sites in the UK, all in East Sussex ([The Species Recovery Trust | The Species Recovery Trust | spiked rampion](#)). 85% of its population is on a single site.



#### Grayling

Single population in East Sussex is the only one on chalk in the UK. In imminent danger of extinction.



#### Hedgehog

Vulnerable to extinction – between 30-75% of UK hedgehogs lost since 1950s ([Hedgehogs – People's Trust for Endangered Species](#)).

<sup>1</sup> Doody, P. and R. Randall, 2003. *A Guide to the Management and Restoration of Coastal Vegetated Shingle*. Natural England.

**Habitats (top to bottom):** Chalk habitat © D Alcroft; Elm tree © iStock.com/Ban Yue Rong; Hedgerow © D Alcroft; Vegetated shingle © Ben Rainbow  
**Species (top to bottom):** Corn bunting © iStock.com/Wirestock; Spiked rampion © Kate Cole; Grayling © Derek Middleton/Sussex Wildlife Trust; Hedgehog © Darin Smith





## 2.3 What we need to do

We need to make our natural environment healthier, more plentiful, and more resilient. That means creating more of the habitats that support our species, and making existing habitats bigger, better, and more connected to each other.

Our land has multiple uses. It supports nature and the wider benefits that healthy ecosystems provide, such as improved air and water quality, carbon storage, temperature regulation and flood protection. It is also where we grow our food, where we live and work; it provides space for our recreation and is vital to our economy.

All of these things are important, so we need to work more collaboratively and with better coordination at the local level to identify where we can work with nature, and where action for nature can be delivered that is both achievable and will have most impact.

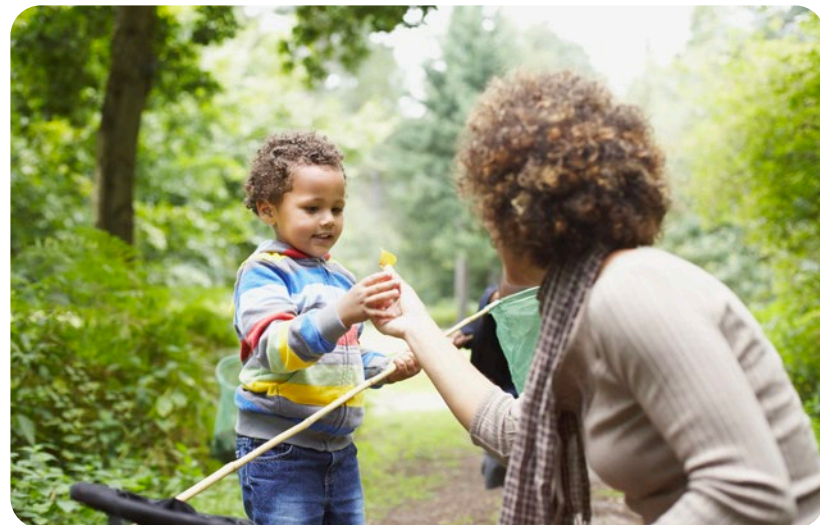
**Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new way to help us do that.**

## 2.4 What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

The [Environment Act 2021](#)<sup>o</sup> contains plans and policies for improving our natural environment. It includes the production of [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#)<sup>o</sup>, a new initiative to drive more collaborative action for nature.

48 strategies are being produced to cover the whole of England, each led by a [Responsible Authority](#)<sup>o</sup> chosen by the Secretary of State.

**East Sussex County Council was appointed to produce the first [Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)](#) to cover the area of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.**



© iStock.com/Paul Bradbury

## 2.5 Our LNRS area

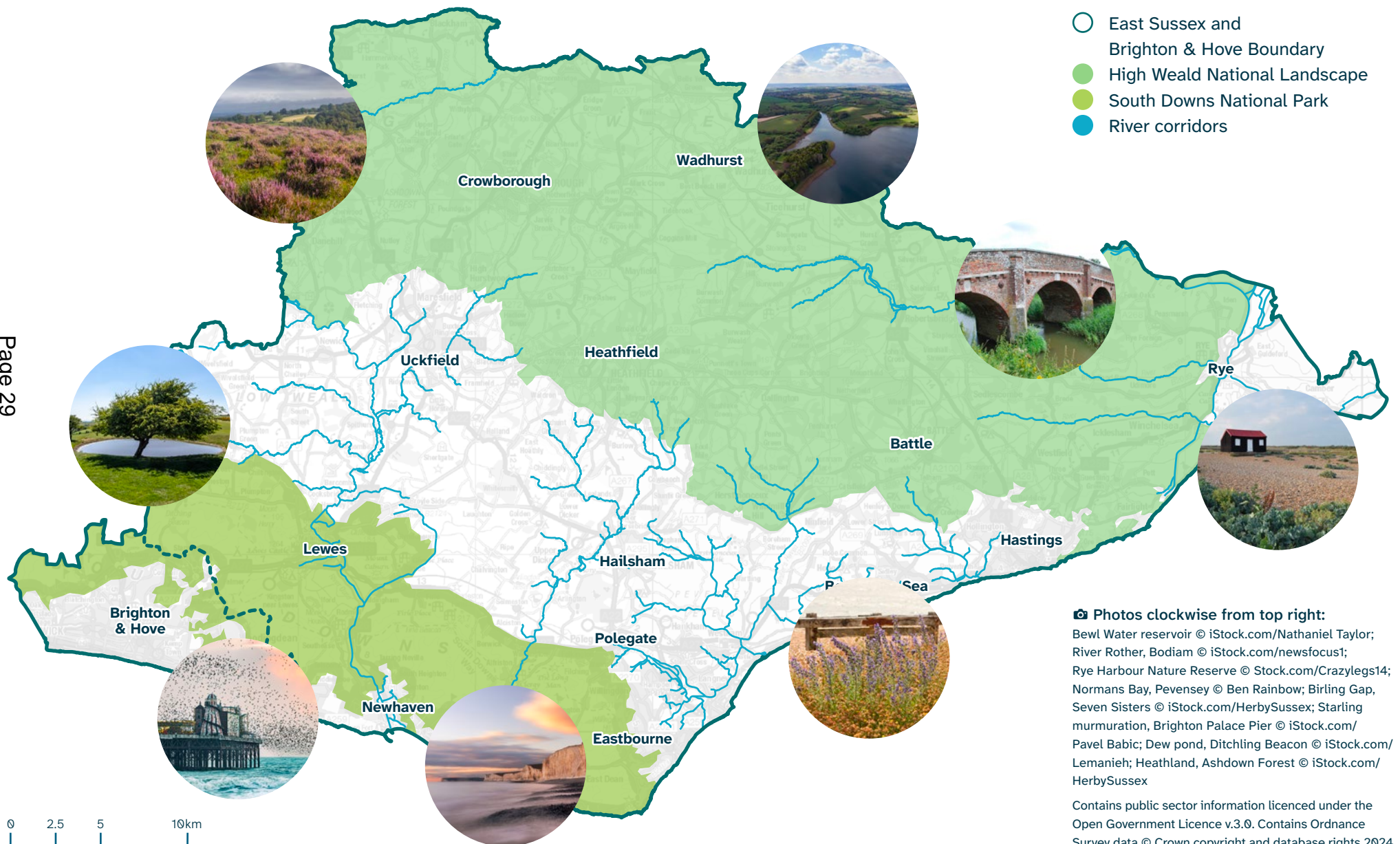
The East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area covers about 1809.2km<sup>2</sup> and lies along the south coast of England. It is bordered by West Sussex to the west, Kent to the east, and Surrey to the north, with the English Channel to the south. The largest settlements are concentrated along the coast, including Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings. The centre and north of the LNRS area are largely rural, with Hailsham being the largest inland settlement. In terms of governance, there are two upper tier authorities covering the area: East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, with East Sussex being further divided into three districts (Rother, Wealden and Lewes) and two boroughs (Hastings and Eastbourne).

Nearly two thirds of the LNRS area is designated for its natural beauty: 49% lies within the [High Weald National Landscape](#)<sup>o</sup>, and nearly 16% is within the South Downs National Park. Many of our landscapes are considered iconic and are internationally recognised – Beachy Head is the tallest chalk sea cliff in Britain at 162m. Two main rivers, the Ouse and the Cuckmere, drain from north to south into the English Channel, as well as the smaller Brede and eastern Rother rivers which drain out at Rye Harbour.





## Map 1: East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area



## 2.6 What LNRs aim to do

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are designed to be **evidence-based, locally led** and **collaborative**. They follow statutory guidance and meet [Regulations](#).

Each strategy describes the area's current biodiversity in terms of the habitats and species found in our terrestrial and coastal environments. They highlight the pressures on biodiversity in the area, and the opportunities<sup>9</sup> and priorities<sup>9</sup> for enhancing it.

**Crucially, they also set out how and where action can be taken across the LNRs area that will make a particular contribution to achieving the priorities.**

By doing so, Local Nature Recovery Strategies will:

- Focus future effort and funding into local priorities for nature, including [Biodiversity Net Gain \(BNG\)](#)<sup>9</sup>;
- Aid collaboration by enabling public, private and voluntary sectors to work more effectively together;
- Guide local planning, informing public authorities' strengthened duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Identify opportunities for 'nature-based solutions'<sup>9</sup> to wider environmental problems like flooding, climate change or poor water quality;
- Improve targeting – ensuring the right things are done in the areas where they will be most effective.

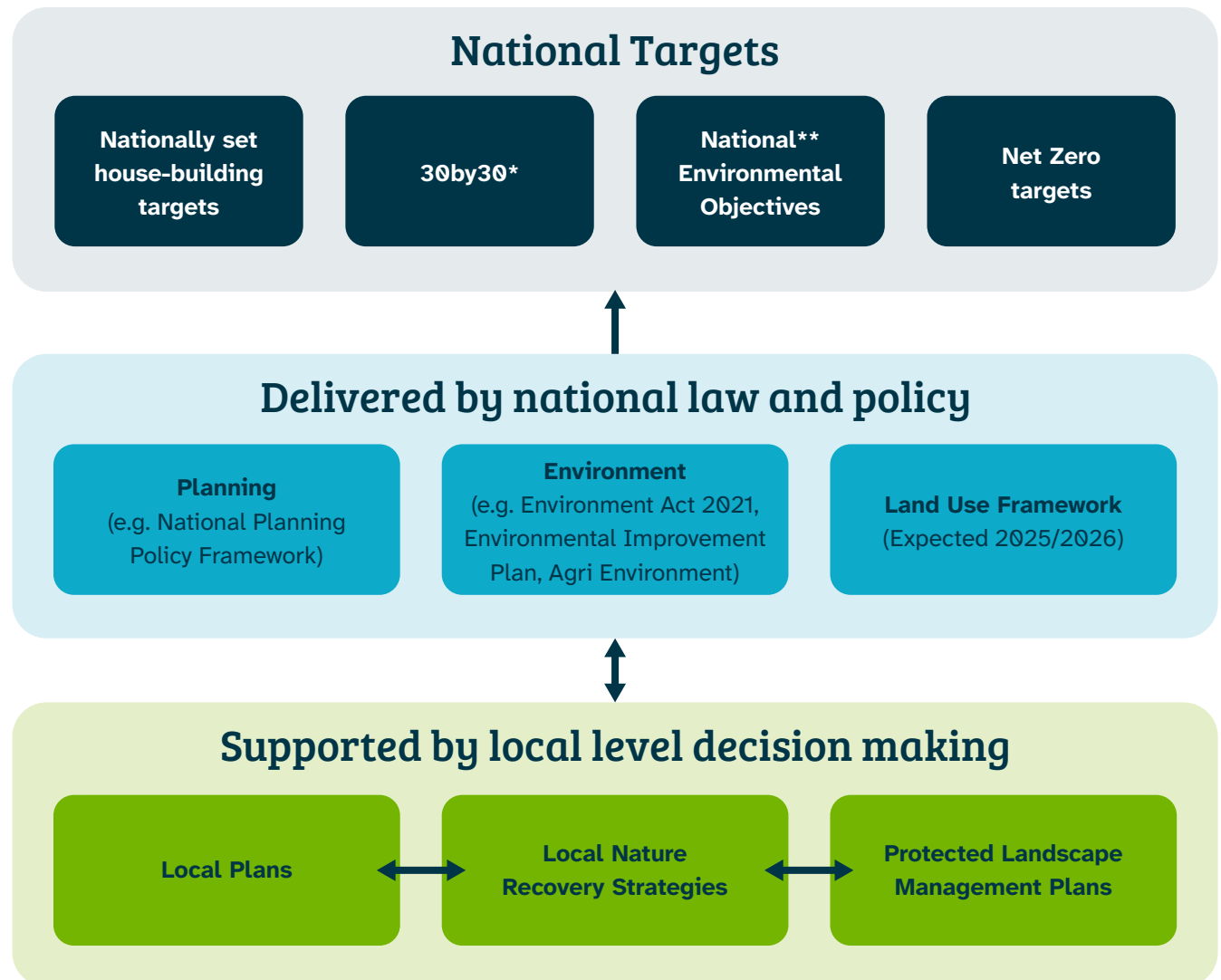
📷 Martin Hole shares actions for nature taken by Pevensey Farmers Cluster in the internationally important **Pevensey Levels**. © D Alcroft



## 2.7 The scope of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

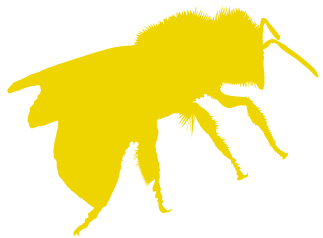
This strategy sits alongside a wider set of policies and strategies that cover the environment, but doesn't override them or any other existing plans, policies or best practice. Nor does it change any protections that are already in place for nature, nationally or locally.

**Figure 1. How LNRS fits within the existing policy framework**



\*The UK has committed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30), to support the [global 30by30 target](#) agreed at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022 (source [gov.uk](#)).

\*\* How this LNRS helps to deliver National Environmental objectives is set out in Part 4.





## It is important to understand what an LNRS can and cannot do.

While every effort to recover nature is necessary to restore our environment, Local Nature Recovery Strategies seek to identify *which* efforts will have the greatest impact and *where* they are best concentrated.

They do not and cannot cover everything that is required to recover nature, so if areas, species and aspects are not included in this strategy, that does not mean that these things are not important or should not be undertaken. This LNRS does not prevent nature conservation work from taking place in areas that are not prioritised by it.

The seas of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are just as diverse and species-rich as habitats on land, but fall outside the scope of the LNRS. We recognise their vital importance and the urgent need to support their recovery. Our opportunities, priorities and measures<sup>o</sup> have been developed recognising that activity on land can impact marine habitats. We are working closely with [Sussex Bay](#) who are developing a Seascape Restoration Strategy for our marine and coastal waters, which will complement this LNRS.



Farmland in the Ouse catchment which has been supported by Wilder Ouse project. © D Alcroft

### Some key aspects of Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- They *cannot* dictate how land will be used and place no obligations on landowners or any other organisation to carry out actions.
- Areas that are mapped in the LNRS for habitat creation or improvement do not prevent other legitimate land uses, do not place new restrictions on developing land, and do not identify areas to be given legal protection.
- While they highlight the pressures such as pollution and housing development are putting on our natural environment and wildlife, they cannot tackle the sources of these pressures if they are covered by other frameworks.

It is also important to note that the preparation of this Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been limited by the data, resources and capacity available to East Sussex County Council as the Responsible Authority.

## 2.8 Their legal implications

Local Nature Recovery Strategies *do* have legal implications within the planning system.

The Environment Act establishes the following key mechanisms to support their implementation:

### Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for developments

Since April 2024, all new developments must show a 10% uplift in nature. This aims to ensure biodiversity is in a measurably better state than before the development took place.

Developers must first assess if they can create biodiversity on-site, within the area of development itself, but if they cannot achieve all of their BNG there, they can deliver some or all of the BNG off-site. Local Nature Recovery Strategies play a key role in BNG by encouraging off-site BNG is delivered in areas most beneficial for nature recovery.

### A Strengthened Biodiversity Duty<sup>o</sup> on Public Authorities

The Environment Act strengthens a duty that local planning authorities already have to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in carrying out their functions.

“Local planning authorities should be aware of those areas mapped and identified in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the measures proposed in them and consider how these should be reflected in their local plan. In doing so, they should consider what safeguarding would be appropriate to enable the proposed actions to be delivered, noting the potential to target stronger safeguarding in areas the local planning authority considers to be of greater importance. This will enable local planning authorities to support the best opportunities to create or improve habitat to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including where this may enable development in other location.”

### For planning decisions

“The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is an evidence base which contains information that may be a ‘material consideration’ in the planning system, especially where development plan documents for an area pre-date Local Nature Recovery Strategy publication. It is for the decision-maker to determine what is a relevant material consideration based on the individual circumstances of the case.”  
(source: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))



© The Iford Biodiversity Project

## 2.9 How this LNRS was developed

The following steps, outlined in the statutory guidance were followed to create this strategy.

### Step 1



#### Baseline evidence was created

Data was compiled and analysed to inform a description of our key habitats and species, the pressures they face, and any ecological opportunities to improve or create them (see *Part 1 Section 4*). Data was also used to map where a prescribed list of our important areas for nature, such as designated sites, are found (*this map, formally called Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)*<sup>o</sup> can be found in *Part 2 Section 5*).

### Step 2



#### Local priorities were gathered and shortlisted

Over 150 published plans and strategies for our area were reviewed and priorities for nature collated (*for a full list see Part 4*). Everyone living and working in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove was invited to share their priorities for nature's recovery through surveys. These inputs informed a longlist of priorities which were then shortlisted using set criteria.

### Step 3



#### Potential measures were identified

Key organisations involved in nature and land management in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove helped us identify practical and achievable actions (called measures) that can be taken to deliver our shortlisted priorities. (*Read the habitat priorities and measures in Part 2 of our Statement of Biodiversity Priorities. Species priorities and measures are in Part 3*).

### Step 4



#### Measures were mapped

Where possible, maps have been created to show where individual measures would be best targeted and can feasibly be delivered. Mapped areas that fall outside of the APIB create Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)<sup>o</sup> (see *Part 2 Section 5*). Mapped measures show the optimal, but not only, opportunities for nature recovery in our LNRS area. Combined, the APIB, ACIB and Measures maps are referred to as the *Local Habitat Map*<sup>o</sup>.

### Step 5



#### Public consultation and publication

Information gathered through steps 1 to 4 has been drawn together with supporting detail about our approach and methodologies, into the four documents that comprise this LNRS. These along with an interactive Local Habitat Map are reviewed by the public before publication.

#### What happens next?

The strategies will be reviewed every 3-10 years to assess what actions for nature have been taken since the strategy was last published. All 48 strategies across England will be reviewed simultaneously, at a time to be announced by the Secretary of State.





## 2.10 Who has been involved in this LNRS?

### An LNRS must be evidence-based, locally led and collaborative.

In the production of this East Sussex and Brighton & Hove strategy, farmers and land managers, local community groups, organisations, residents and businesses were consulted and invited to participate via surveys, meetings, workshops and interactive tools on our website (for full details, see Part 4).

In addition, East Sussex County Council has been supported by:

- **West Sussex County Council.** Our sister council was appointed as the Responsible Authority for the West Sussex area. As many habitats, species and stakeholders are shared across the whole of Sussex, the two councils collaborated closely and developed aspects of their strategies together under the banner of '[Sussex Nature Recovery](#)'.
- The **Sussex Nature Partnership** (representing over 30 of the key enabling and delivery organisations for nature in Sussex);
- A **Supporting Authority Group** comprising all local planning authorities in our strategy area, including the [South Downs National Park Authority](#) and Natural England.
- A **Sussex LNRS Working Group** of key sectors including local and national nature, farming and land management organisations and bodies, such as [Sussex Wildlife Trust](#), the [National Farmers' Union](#) and Forestry Commission.

In addition, we have been supported by a Technical Review Panel, species experts and key delivery partners.

📷 Dr Kate Cole from East Sussex County Council talks to members of the Nature Friendly Farming Network about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. © D Alcroft



## 2.11 Some of the ways local people were engaged

**We are incredibly thankful to everyone who attended an event, completed a survey, visited the website, and shared their views, knowledge, creative expressions and pins – they have all helped to shape this LNRS!**

### Farmers and land managers

- 353 people attended or watched a recording of our webinar for the agricultural sector in November 2023.
- 63 people completed our dedicated survey.
- 200+ people attended our in-person presentations with farmer clusters, the Nature Friendly<sup>o</sup> Farming Network and other farmer-led initiatives.
- We also presented online and in person to golf courses, large estates and regional representatives from the National Farmers' Union, the Country Land and Business Association and Savills, had a presence at ploughing matches and produced dedicated case studies and other materials.

### Community groups, local experts and smaller environmental charities

- 307 people attended or watched the recording of our webinar for the sector in February 2024.
- We had 102 responses to our dedicated survey.
- 100s of people attended in-person presentations.
- c.100 pins plotting projects and ideas added to our interactive map.

### Key delivery and enabling organisations for nature in Sussex

- 50+ representatives attended three all-day workshops to input into detailed aspects of the strategy as it developed.

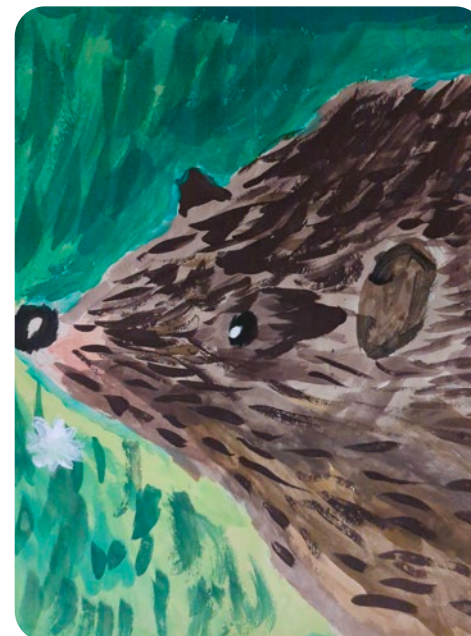
📷 Right: Experts from the key nature and land management organisations in Sussex review existing priorities in an LNRS workshop in April 2024.

© Ruth Anslow

📷 Below: An artwork by Abe, 12, Brighton & Hove – “Hedgehogs are my favourite species”.

📷 Below right: The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is presented at the Nature and Climate event at Seven Sisters Country Park.

© D Alcroft





## Residents

- 1,800 people completed our Sussex-wide public survey.
- 700+ people attended or watched recordings of our public webinars in June 2024 which shared updates on progress and interim survey results.
- 500 people signed up to receive our Sussex Nature Recovery newsletters.
- Over 12k views on our map plotting residents' 'favourite places to experience nature in Sussex' (see 3.1).

## Children and young people

- 68 drawings, photos and poems were submitted to our nature prize draw.
- 9 ambassadors attended our workshop with the West Sussex Youth Cabinet (who for our purposes represented the views of young people across Sussex).

## Local councillors and delegated authorities

- 290 councillors and clerks attended or watched our webinars in February 2023 and December 2024.

## Local species experts and biodiversity recorders

- 27 were convened and consulted to create longlists and shortlists of our important and rare species.

## Developers and local authority planners

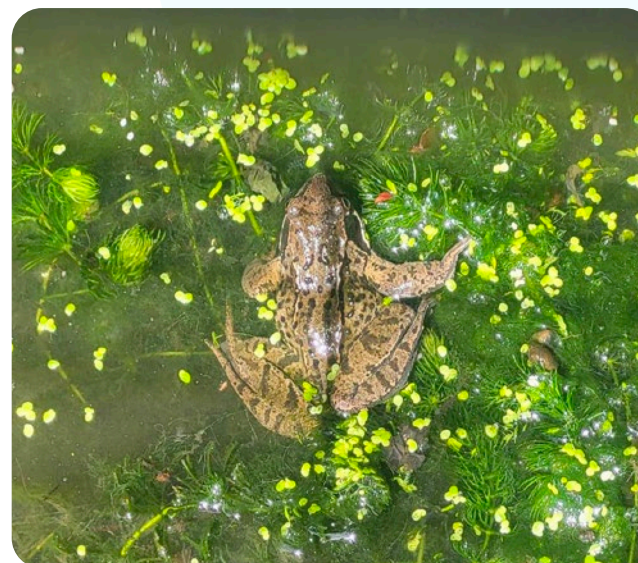
- 30+ developers and many planning officers were briefed at forums and via supporting authority teams.

## Health & Wellbeing sector

- 20 sector groups and organisations including NHS and Public Health Sussex attended a workshop and completed a survey.



📷 Above: Sussex Nature Recovery stand at the West Grinstead Ploughing Match.



📷 Left: A photo of a frog by Isla, 5, from Lewes.

## 2.12 Who can use this LNRS?

### Everyone in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove can take part in helping to recover nature.

Different organisations and groups of people will be able to use this strategy in different ways:

- **Farmers and land managers** can use this strategy to help make decisions about habitat creation and improvement on their land and to access a range of measures, case studies and further guidance about habitat creation and improvement.
- **Environmental organisations** can use this strategy to drive more coordinated and collaborative action for nature and to benchmark future trends and the effectiveness of actions.
- **Residents and community groups** can use this strategy to understand what the priorities for nature are in their local area and to find actions they could take forward.
- **Local authorities** can use this strategy to understand how development can fit within the context of local nature recovery and to inform and evidence local policies and plans, including those related to planning, minerals and waste, national parks and national landscapes.
- **Protected landscapes** can use this strategy to support and inspire their efforts to drive the recovery of nature within their boundaries, sitting alongside and informing the Management Plans for these areas.
- **Businesses** can use this strategy to inform their own corporate plans for their contribution to nature recovery and to create or enhance green space on their premises.
- **Developers** can use this strategy to create and sustain biodiversity rich developments that deliver multiple benefits for nature and people, and to refer to when planning habitat creation as part of development through Biodiversity Net Gain.
- **Institutions such as the NHS and schools** can use this strategy to inform how they create or enhance green space or gardens on their premises, such as a therapeutic or sensory gardens and to build and inspire nature-based educational or health programmes, such as green social prescribing programmes.
- **Government agencies** can use this strategy to view their sites within the strategic environmental context and identify how they can achieve 'bigger, better, more and joined-up' habitats and sites.

📷 Friends of Waterhall survey amphibians and reptiles at the Wilding Waterhall site, Brighton & Hove in May 2025.  
© Wilding Waterhall





## Section 3.

Page 39  
What does nature  
recovery mean  
to people in  
East Sussex  
and Brighton  
& Hove?

📷 South Downs Way  
© iStock.com/Jonathan Wilson



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)



## 3.1 Where do local people go to enjoy nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove?

To inform this strategy we canvassed the views of Sussex residents about nature, including their favourite places to experience it.

**1,834 people responded**

A [map](#) was created to plot the location of respondents' favourite places for nature. Each pin on the map represents a different place mentioned. Click on a pin to see the reasons given by respondents as to why their nominated place is special – the more comments, the more popular the place.

The South Downs National Park received the highest share of nominations (**10%**) by East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents who also love spending time at their favourite beach (collectively **8%** of nominations). Cuckmere Haven, Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve and Ashdown Forest also featured highly. **2%** of nominations were for residents' own garden or allotment, demonstrating how local people have made space for nature at home.

### What is it about these places that survey respondents enjoy?

- **19%** of free text comments provided by respondents refer to “wild”.
- **13%** refer to “bird/s” (with many other comments listing specific species).
- **12%** mentioned “view/s”.
- **18%** use one of the following words to describe their favourite place: “stunning”, “fantastic”, “beautiful”, “amazing”, “special” or “unique”.

Respondents' comments also highlight the inextricable link between our enjoyment of nature and our health and wellbeing.

- **10%** of answers use words like “peace”, “tranquillity” or “quiet”, suggesting that spending time in natural places is restful and a necessary escape.
- **19%** include the word “walk”, a reminder that being in nature is often important time spent taking exercise outdoors.

Finally, proximity is a key factor. **17%** of free text answers included the word “near”, “close”, “local” or “access” highlighting the importance of having nature nearby.

**Explore  
the map**

Over 12k views

📍 Map of respondents' favourite places for nature  
Map data © 2025 Google





## 3.2 The habitats East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents love

We asked people about the habitats they value locally and what they like about them. Below is a snapshot of their answers. Woodland was the most mentioned habitat by East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents.



### Woodland

“Feel and smell of the woods and earth”  
 “Beautiful in all seasons, birdsong, bluebells & primroses”  
 “An invaluable wildlife habitat and an intrinsic part of our local heritage”



### Coastal habitats

“Shingle specific species”  
 “Birds – oystercatchers, curlews, egrets, terns and cormorants”  
 “Dynamic. A sense of wonder at life’s adaptability”



### River systems

“My local river has kingfishers, herons, coots, ducks and an array of plant life along its banks”  
 “With my dad we enjoy this for fishing and quiet reflection”  
 “Bring life to the rest of the environment”



### Fields and hedgerows

“Farming’s important to our country’s way of life”  
 “Hedgerows – Great nature corridor. Love seeing the birds, mice and caterpillars”  
 “Habitat for so much important wildlife”



### Chalk habitats and grassland

“One of the country’s richest habitats floristically”  
 “Wonderful walking, and rich with wildlife in places”  
 “Rare habitat, wildlife, amazing views, peace”



### Urban

“Buildings – Habitat for swifts and house martins”  
 “Having tree-lined streets is a real joy, especially for those of us living in flats with no garden”  
 “Contributes to natural diversity and public mental health”



### Heathland

“For their Dartford warblers and redstarts and woodlarks”  
 “Ashdown Forest is a brilliant example of this unique habitat which is under threat”  
 “Rare birds, sense of space, something a bit different”



### Wetlands

“Great bird habitats”  
 “My favourite habitat and they are biodiverse and a useful tool in the climate crisis”  
 “Mixture of water and land, overflowing with endangered wildlife”

📷 **Top to bottom:** Woodland © D Acroft; Coastal habitat © D Acroft; Railway Land Lewes © iStock.com/Lemanieh; Castle Hill NNR & Kingston © Ben Rainbow

📷 **Top to bottom:** Chalk Grassland, Seaford to Birling Gap © Ben Rainbow; Preston Park, Brighton © iStock.com/TWPhotography; Heather, Ashdown Forest © iStock.com/HerbySussex; Flock of geese © Ian Cumming/unsplash.com

## 3.3 The species East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents love

Survey respondents also shared their favourite species found locally and why. Birds were by far the most popular answer (whether mentioned as a specific species e.g. 'skylarks' or generally as 'birds'). The popularity of birds may be due to how visible they are, including as visitors to our own gardens.

### Top 10 most mentioned bird species (Most popular one to ten)

#### 1 Skylarks



"Singing on the downs"

"Their songs and flight"

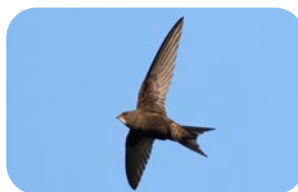
#### 2 Buzzards



"Exciting and majestic"

"To watch the flight, hover and descent for prey"

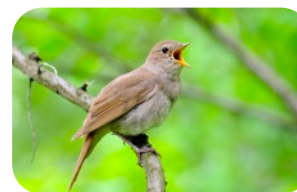
#### 3 Swifts



"Spend most of their lives on the wing"

"Magical birds that we're encouraging with boxes"

#### 4 Nightingales



"Song is such a privilege to hear"

"A few left in Barcombe"

#### 5 Kingfishers



"An iconic bird"

"A glimpse brings lasting joy"

#### 6 Owls



"Love to hear the hooting"

"See them hunting in the long grass"

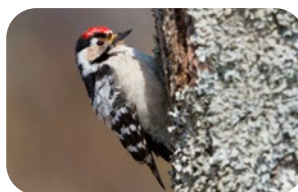
#### 7 Gulls



"The sound of Brighton"

"Super intelligent and cheeky!"

#### 8 Woodpeckers



"Echoing sound in the wood"

"Unusual to see but can always hear"

#### 9 Kites



"Brought back from extinction"

"Increased numbers since ban of DDT"

#### 10 Starlings



"Amazing murmuration"

"Beautifully dance by the Pier"

1: © iStock.com/MikeLane45; 2: Common buzzard © iStock.com/Carl mckie; 3: © iStock.com/Yuriy Balagula; 4: © iStock.com/VictorTyakht; 5: © Hans Veth/unsplash.com; 6: Barn owl © iStock.com/M-Reinhardt; 7: Herring gulls © iStock.com/Lemanieh; 8: Lesser spotted woodpecker © iStock.com/tuomovaa; 9: Red kite © iStock.com/Cathy Rose; 10: Gurjit Sandhu/unsplash.com





## Top 10 most mentioned species excluding birds (Most popular one to ten)

### 1 Butterflies



“Spotting the rare ones”  
“Emblematic of the downs”

### 2 Bees



“Pollinating our plants”  
“A priority to keep them alive”

### 3 Hedgehogs



“Very lucky to spot one”  
“Good for the garden”

### 4 Orchids



“Iconic plants of the Downs”  
“An indicator of wider biodiversity”

### 5 Foxes



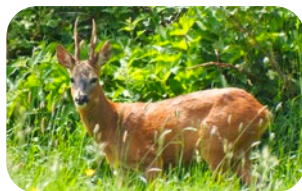
“Friendly visitors to my back yard”  
“To see foxes and cubs in the spring”

### 6 Bluebells



“Beautiful harbinger of spring”  
“Beautiful carpets of blue”

### 7 Deer



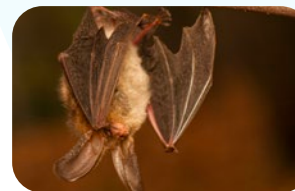
“Graceful animals”  
“Love to see them in their herd”

### 8 Badgers



“Large charismatic animals”  
“Much maligned”

### 9 Bats



“Love seeing them flit about”  
“Indicator of dark skies”

### 10 Seals



“Curious and playful”  
“Healthy marine environment”

1: Adonis blue © Paul Marten/Sussex Wildlife Trust; 2: Bumblebee © Anya Chernik/unsplash.com; 3: © Darin Smith/Sussex Wildlife Trust; 4: Fly orchid © Ben Rainbow; 5: © iStock.com/Clark Warren; 6: © Jez Timms/unsplash.com; 7: © Arthur, 12, Oldland Willmill, Hassocks; 8: © iStock.com/Ondrej Prosicky; 9: Brown long-eared bat © iStock.com/Gucio\_55; 10: Common seals © Hugh Clark FRPS/Sussex Wildlife Trust

## 3.4 What East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents have noticed

### Noticed a decline in habitats (% of mentions)

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33%	<b>Loss and fragmentation of habitats due to development</b>	"Habitats being isolated by developments" "Development on green spaces and AONB" "Too many new houses = too much concrete, too many sterile gardens"
25%	<b>Poor management (especially hedgerows)</b>	"The constant removal of wild plants in our neighbourhoods" "Hedges flailed too hard, too often" "Chalk grassland not being grazed properly" "Hedgerows turning to lines of trees"
21%	<b>Pollution including sewage</b>	"Increased light pollution resulting in less birds, bats and insects" "Sewage in rivers and seas is a disgrace" "Killing of streams and rivers due to sewage discharges and runoff"
12%	<b>Litter in habitats (especially verges)</b>	"Plastic litter pollution on verges" "Litter on roadsides dangerous to wildlife" "Fly tipping/littering is ruining habitats all over the city and country"
9%	<b>Loss of trees</b>	"Loss of trees and not enough re-planting" "Loss of woodland due to disease or water stress." "Loss of ash trees in woodland"

We asked East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents whether they had noticed any changes to habitats and species locally, whether positive or negative.

**73%** of respondents had noticed negative changes to habitats (e.g. damage, loss, poor management, pollution etc).

**23%** had noticed positive changes.

### Noticed an improvement to habitats (% mentions)

6%	<b>Areas managed for nature</b>	"Areas like chalk grassland and wetlands that are being managed and looked after" "The dew ponds look well looked after and it's important for animals up on the Downs"
4%	<b>Wildflowers planting and verges</b>	"Grass verges allowed to grow" "Wild flowers in Lewes church cemeteries" "I really liked the NO MOW initiative"
4%	<b>Large habitat creation initiatives</b>	"Creation of Rye Harbour NR has been fantastic" "Projects such as Cockshut Wetland" "Waterhall wilding project"
3%	<b>Individual or community action</b>	"Local groups litter picking and improving their parks" "Many local groups working hard to improve habitat" "Local farmer creating hedgerows, fields left for skylarks"



### Noticed a decrease in species (% of mentions)

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43%	<b>Insects (especially bees and butterflies)</b>	<p>"Huge losses of insects like bees, butterflies and other pollinators"</p> <p>"Car windscreen no longer plastered with dead insects" "So few butterflies and other insects."</p>
42%	<b>Birds (especially small/garden or farmland birds)</b>	<p>"Bird life has dramatically decreased"</p> <p>"Swallow and house martin populations decimated" "Decline in bird species e.g. greenfinch, sparrow" "Decline in swifts"</p>
13%	<b>Hedgehogs</b>	<p>"A lot less hedgehogs"</p> <p>"As a child we used to see hedgehogs all the time. I haven't seen one in years"</p> <p>"Disappearance of hedgehogs"</p>
7%	<b>Small mammals (e.g. hares, rodents, bats)</b>	<p>"Decrease in bats due to lights"</p> <p>"Decrease of protected mammal species such as dormice, water voles"</p> <p>"I miss seeing the hares"</p>
6%	<b>Larger mammals (e.g. badgers, foxes etc)</b>	<p>"I haven't seen an otter for 40 years"</p> <p>"Less ground animals such as badgers, foxes etc"</p> <p>"I never see badgers locally now"</p>

**67%** of respondents had noticed a decrease in the amount or distribution of wildlife/species.

**10%** had noticed an increase.

We then asked residents to provide more detail about what they have noticed. This is a snapshot of what they told us. [Read the full reports.](#)

### Noticed an increase in species (% mentions)

4%	<b>Birds of prey</b>	<p>"More birds of prey"</p> <p>"Now I see buzzards, peregrines, even white-tailed eagles"</p> <p>"Kestrels seem to be doing well"</p>
3%	<b>Species adapted to urban environments</b>	<p>"See more foxes in urban areas"</p> <p>"More seagulls and rats"</p> <p>"Increase in gulls, pigeons, magpies"</p>
2%	<b>Deer</b>	<p>"Deer are increasing with no effective control"</p> <p>"In the 18 years I've lived in Herstmonceux I've seen a decline in most species especially mammals (except deer)"</p>
2%	<b>Larger birds</b>	<p>"More jackdaws in garden and nesting locally"</p> <p>"Lots more corvids"</p>

## 3.5 What do residents want to see happen?

- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove survey respondents are worried by the loss of all types of habitats and/or their declining condition and the impact this has on species abundance and diversity<sup>9</sup>, as well as to human health and wellbeing.
- Development pressure was cited most frequently as a reason for the above. Climate change, pollution, disturbance, predation (by pets), poor management practices, diseases and non-native species were also mentioned.
- They want to see **more of all types of habitats** and **better care of those we have now**. Many respondents also cited the **need for more wildlife corridors such as hedgerows** that connect habitats and allow species to move safely across the landscape.
- Other actions respondents mentioned include the implementation of additional protections, reduced pesticide use, hedgerows and verges left to grow, the installation of nesting boxes and hedgehog highways, and more educational and awareness campaigns for the public.



📷 Hedgehog © Andy Willis / unsplash.com



### Key findings from the survey include

- **97% of respondents are concerned or very concerned about the state of nature in Sussex**
- **Species:** respondents are most concerned about birds, insects and hedgehogs
- **86% of respondents want to know that positive action for nature is taking place**
- **Habitats:** respondents are most concerned about woodland, coastal, riverine and hedgerows
- **83% of respondents want cleaner air or water as a result of functioning ecosystems**



## For habitats (sample of comments)

"Popular bluebell woods need urgent protection – too many people trample on them, cyclists ride over them"

"Woodlands need to be managed – not just left for brambles and invasive species to take over"

"Subsidise coppice management"

"Bigger woodland to replace the ancient forest"

"Marine habitats in general need increased full habitat protection HPMA's"

"Properly managed species-rich grasslands"

"We need more meadows"

"I want to see permanent pasture on downland and marshes. These areas should not be ploughed"

"Field margins and headlands restored"

"Recovery of hedgerows in particular as they are so important to wildlife"

"Chalk streams need cleaning up and protecting from pollution"

"More reed beds for wildlife and for flood prevention"

"Wildlife ponds – would love to see more!"

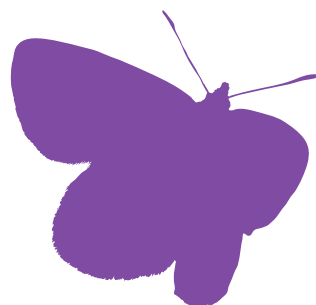
"Cut and collect system for wildlife verges, to break the nitrogen cycle"

"Urban tree cover is ever more important for moderating heat and pollution. More scrub cover for birds in pastures"

"Natural regeneration of scrubby woodland edges"

"More wildlife corridors linking existing natural habitats"

"Connectivity habitat (hedgerows/woodland) between local reserves and pockets of woodland"



## For species (sample of comments)

"More butterfly friendly vegetation on field edges and allow the backs of verges to also support this vegetation"

"For insects: less use of pesticides, herbicides and nitrogen"

"Dandelions and other 'weeds' provide insects with much food"

"Red listed birds such as swifts, house martins, house sparrows, starlings and others are desperately in need of nesting opportunities to halt their decline. We need far more large scale nesting bricks/cups/boxes installed"

"People need to be encouraged to do things on their own land and gardens, like leaving piles of leaves, feeding birds, creating wild ponds etc"

"House sparrows need hedges"

"Owls are heritage birds and need protecting"

"More habitats for bats"

"Bats especially rare Sussex bats e.g. Barbastelle, Bechstein and others need more protection"

"Species such as sea trout need fish bridges and cleaned up rivers"

"Recovery of native fish and seaweed"

"We need to be culling deer, especially the non-native species"

"Hazel dormice require agricultural land to be rewilded to protect them, which I would love to see (especially more woodland)"

"Would love to see the re-introduction of beavers"

"Folks need to create hedgehog highways by making gaps in their garden fencing at ground level... Hedgerow fruits/nuts should be left to grow to provide food for wild creatures"

The high number of responses received, and the level of feeling and concern expressed in the survey demonstrate how important nature is to the local community as well as to our tourist and visitor economy.



## Section 4.

# Nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove – description

In this section of our strategy, we take a more detailed look at the environmental and ecological features of our LNRS area and describe our geology, [National Character Areas](#)<sup>o</sup> and the extent and condition of our diverse habitats. We also look at the wider benefits that functioning ecosystems provide us with (our [natural capital](#)<sup>o</sup>) and the pressures facing nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

📷 Ancient woodland & wood anemone, Diplocks Wood, Polegate © Ben Rainbow





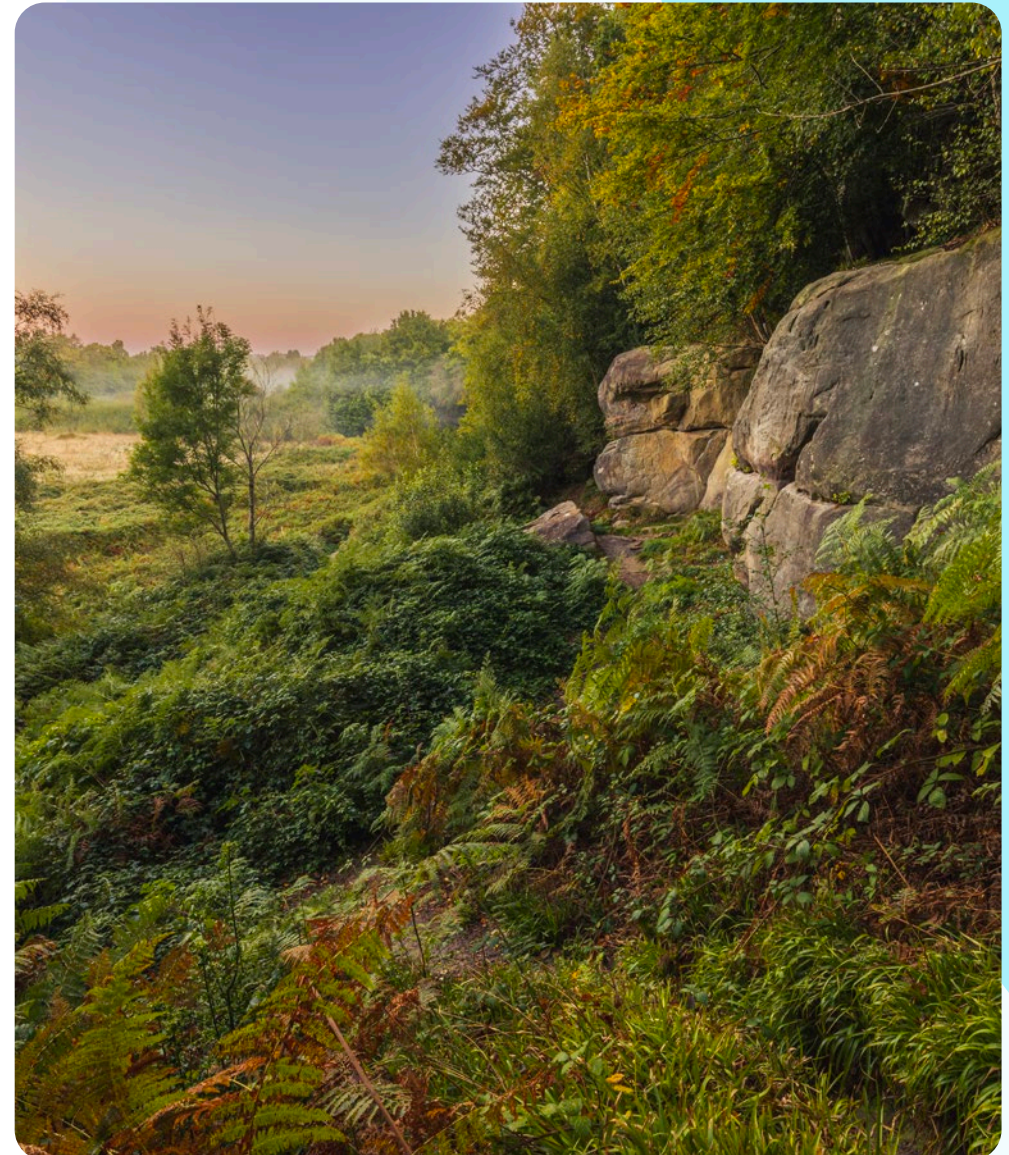
## 4.1 Underlying geology and soils

The distribution of habitats in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove depends largely on the underlying rocks and soils, as these provide the conditions for different types of vegetation to grow, and so ultimately provide the foundations for our natural environment.

The chalk of the South Downs is a soft sedimentary rock laid down in a warm shallow sea, between 100-70 million years ago. This chalk layer covered the older rocks that now outcrop in the High and Low Weald, so that what we see today are the remnants of a once continuous sheet. Plate movements in southern Europe folded the chalk and older rocks into a dome. Over time, the chalk forming the central and highest parts of the dome was eroded to expose the older rocks beneath; the sandstones and siltstones of the High Weald, the clays of the Low Weald and the Wealden greensands.

Further uplifting and folding along with rising and falling sea levels resulted in a variety of sands and clays being deposited on top of the chalk. There is a layer of clay-with-flints along the ridge of the South Downs, with relatively recent clays, sands and gravels to the south within the south coast plain. The east of the LNRS area is characterised by siltstones, mudstones and sandstones, with Weald clay in Pevensey Levels. Clays, silts and sands were brought down onto our floodplains by rivers, with some bogs depositing peat in the case of Pevensey Levels, and the shingle cusped foreland of Dungeness which continues into Rye. Behind the shingle ridges, siltation from these alluvial deposits filled the shallow bay between Dungeness and the ancient shoreline. Over time this was drained, giving rise to East Guldeford and Pett Levels.

The relationship between the geology, topography and soil type determines the dominant natural or semi-natural habitats found across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, and therefore the natural character of the landscape.



📷 Harrisons Rocks, High Weald, Eridge Rocks Nature Reserve © iStock.com/HerbySussex

## 4.2 National Character Areas

National Character Areas (NCAs) share similar landscape characteristics<sup>9</sup> and follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Identified and described by Natural England, they provide a framework for decision-making around land management and other activities to help strengthen landscape character and resilience<sup>9</sup> to pressures such as climate change. Six NCAs lie within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area: Low Weald (no. 121); High Weald (no. 122); Romney Marshes (no. 123); Pevensey Levels (no. 124); South Downs (no. 125); and South Coast Plain (no.126)<sup>2</sup>.

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<https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/>

📷 Little owls, Pevensey Levels © iStock.com/suerob

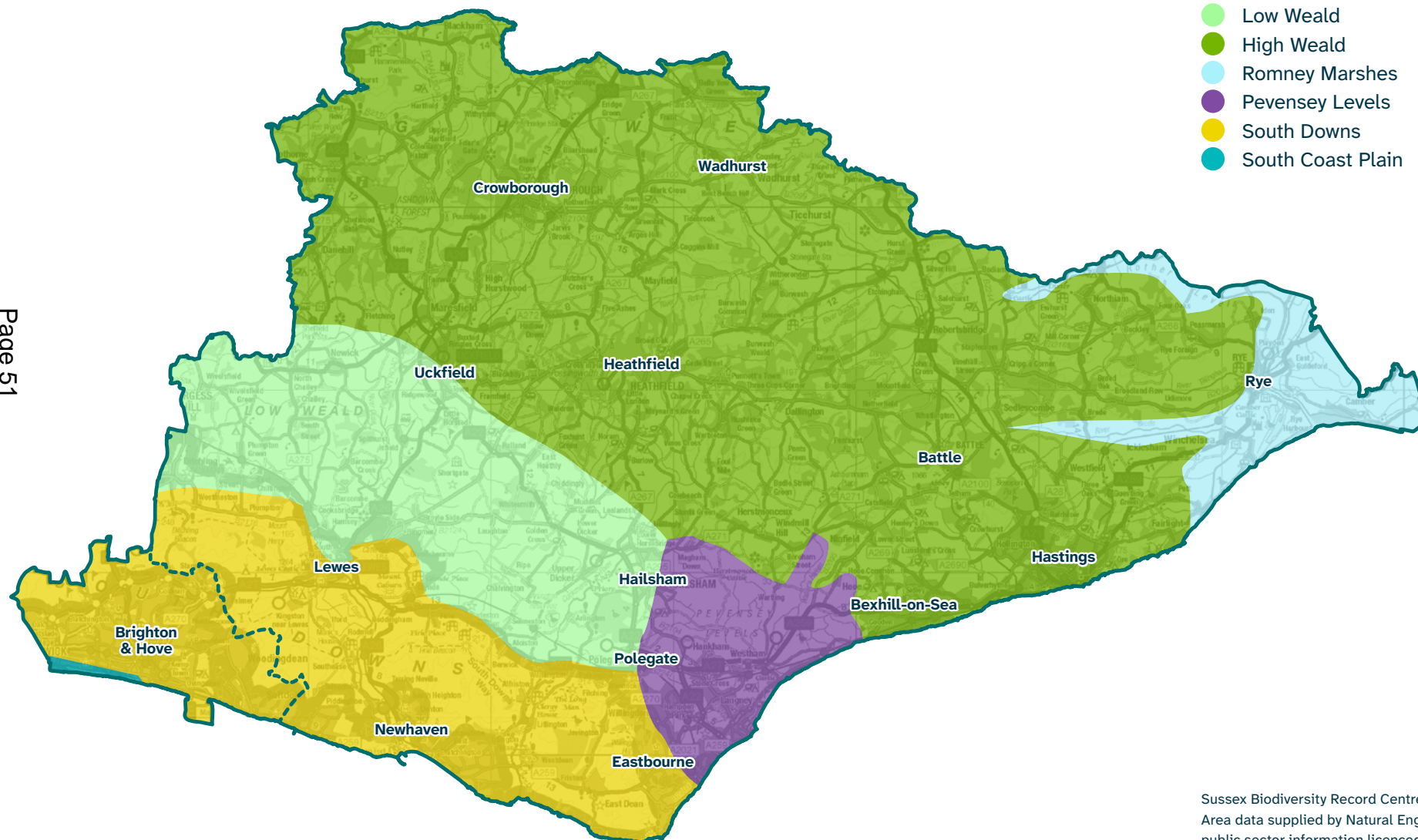




Map 2. Map of National Character Areas in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area

### Key

- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Boundary
- Low Weald
- High Weald
- Romney Marshes
- Pevensey Levels
- South Downs
- South Coast Plain

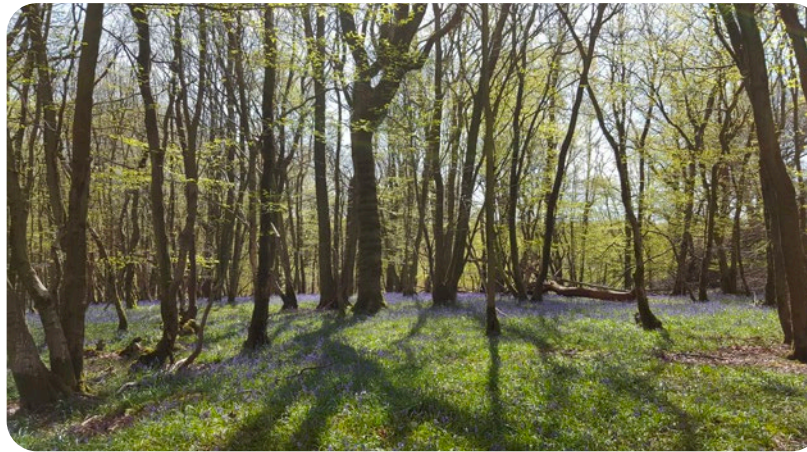


Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. National Character Area data supplied by Natural England. Contains public sector information licenced under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2024.

## ● Low Weald NCA

The Low Weald is a low-lying clay vale with localised outcrops of limestone and sandstone. The soil is mainly slowly permeable heavy clay which is seasonally wet and slightly acid. Dominant habitats are slightly acid but there is base rich pasture and deciduous woodland with some scrubby commons. The landscape is a gently undulating vale containing a patchwork of fields, tall hedgerows and woodland. There are many small streams and ponds, often surrounded by wet woodlands of willows and alder, with the valuable gill woodland being a particular feature. Grass grows well on clay soils, so livestock farming is common, with arable cropping on the higher, lighter soils<sup>3</sup>.

The Low Weald NCA is important for biodiversity, and is one of the most important NCAs in the country because of the number of bat species it supports, as well as lesser-spotted woodpeckers, a variety of rare lichens and several plants, including the nationally rare spiked rampion. It remains largely rural with small villages amongst woodland and many traditional farm buildings.



## ● High Weald NCA

The High Weald is a densely wooded area, with a high proportion of ancient woodland. The many small fields are surrounded by thick hedgerows, copses and woodland shaws. Wildflower meadows are now rare here, but the medieval patterns of small pastures are fundamental to the landscape character. The underlying geology is a mix of sands, sandstones and clays. As a result, the soil is poor in agricultural terms, so farming is predominantly livestock with some limited arable crops. A series of sandstone ridges run east to west and are deeply incised by streams running north to south, feeding the Ouse and Cuckmere rivers. These steep-sided valleys or gills are often well wooded with a very sheltered microclimate and rare species of lower plants. Similarly, sandstone outcrops support an array of bryophytes<sup>9</sup>, ferns and lichens. The Weald meets the sea at Fairlight, with the Hastings Cliffs internationally important for their actively eroding soft cliff faces. Ashdown Forest lies in the west and is one of the largest single blocks of lowland heath in England, and internationally important for its populations of Dartford warbler and nightjar.



📷 Above: Ancient woodland, Green Wood, Rother & Wealden © Ben Rainbow

📷 Left: Low Weald  
© iStock.com/Matthew J Thomas

3 Sussex Ornithological Society, 2014. *The Birds of Sussex*.





## Romney Marshes NCA

The Romney Marshes is an open landscape of reclaimed, low-lying marshland, bounded to the south and east by the English Channel and to the north and west by an ancient cliffline. At the coast, Dungeness and Rye Harbour comprise the largest cusped shingle foreland in Europe, one of a few such large examples in the world<sup>4</sup> and of international importance for its geomorphology, plants, invertebrates and birds. The western end of Dungeness (The Midrips and The Wicks) lies in East Sussex. Windblown sand has formed the dunes at Camber. Landward lie the marshes of Pett Level, Rye Harbour and East Guldeford Level. Here the soils are loamy and clayey with impeded draining, forming extensive marshes, dissected by an extensive network of ditches and watercourses, supporting a rich flora and fauna. Farming is a mix of livestock, arable and horticulture<sup>5</sup> with field patterns varying from irregular small and medium sized fields to a few larger, more rectangular fields that indicate more organised reclamation. The rivers Brede and Eastern Rother drain into the Channel at Rye Harbour.



## Pevensey Levels NCA

Pevensey Levels is the largest area of wetland in East Sussex and is a flat, low-lying landscape between Eastbourne and Bexhill, intersected with numerous reed-fringed ditches and isolated patches of raised land known as 'eyes'. Waller's Haven is the main river. The wetland is of national and international importance, with 37% of the NCA being a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsar site. The Levels are predominantly rural and mostly grazed pasture and consist of extensive drainage networks and flood plain. There is a small area of arable on slightly higher ground and where the fields are under-drained (drains beneath the soil). The underlying geology is siltstone, mudstone and sandstone, with small areas of Gault Clay, Lower Greensand and chalk towards the western boundary with the South Downs. There are also relatively recent superficial deposits of marine and estuarine silts, clays, gravels and sands. Shingle beaches stretch along the length of the area, punctuated by settlements, historic military buildings and sea defence structures<sup>6</sup>. The NCA includes the town of Eastbourne, with a population of over 100,000 and up to 5 million visitors every year.



📷 Above: Swans, Pevensey Levels © iStock.com/suerob

📷 Left: Romney Marsh © iStock.com/Petra Eujane

<sup>4</sup> Romney Marshes – National Character Area Profiles ([nationalcharacterareas.co.uk](http://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk))

<sup>5</sup> Sussex Ornithological Society, 2014. *The Birds of Sussex*.

<sup>6</sup> Pevensey Levels – National Character Area Profiles ([nationalcharacterareas.co.uk](http://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk))



📍 Castle Hill, South Downs, Woodingdean © iStock.com/HerbySussex

## ● South Downs NCA

The South Downs is a ‘whale-backed’ spine of chalk stretching from the Hampshire Downs in the west to the Beachy Head in the east. The complex landscape arises from local physical, historical and economic influences, with much formed and maintained by human activity, especially agriculture and forestry. Within the LNRS area, two main rivers – the Cuckmere and the Ouse – cut through the chalk ridge, separating it into blocks. The broad valley floors and low-lying floodplains of the Lewes Brooks and Cuckmere comprise wet grazing marsh that support a variety of wildlife. The soils on the Downs are thin and alkaline. Where there are areas of clay-with-flints, the soil is more acidic and can support areas of gorse. Much of the remaining species-rich chalk grassland lie on the steep north-facing scarp, with these slopes also supporting scrub providing an important habitat for breeding birds. The gentler dip slopes are predominantly arable farmland with very few hedges and little woodland. Along the coast there is vegetated shingle and chalk cliffs, the latter being scarce in the county, and providing nesting sites for fulmar, kittiwake and peregrine falcon. There is a Heritage Coast between Eastbourne and Seaford and the majority of the NCA is within the South Downs National Park. A relatively small area is urban and includes Brighton & Hove, with the chalk aquifer supplying water to the city and the surrounding areas.

## ● The South Coast Plain NCA

The South Coast Plain is a flat coastal landscape with an intricately indented shoreline between the dip slope of the South Downs and the English Channel, extending into the LNRS area to include parts of Brighton & Hove. The area is heavily defended against flooding and erosion at the coast.



## 4.3 Habitats

This East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS has identified eight broad categories as priorities for nature recovery:

- coastal habitats;
- farmed landscape and soils;
- species-rich grasslands;
- woodland, hedgerow and scrub;
- lowland heathland and sandstone outcrops;
- rivers, streams and aquifers;
- wetlands and standing water bodies;
- urban nature.

Each of these categories often include a variety of habitat types, many of which are among the country's most important and threatened. Just as important as these broad habitat types are the mosaics<sup>o</sup> they create together and the graduated boundaries or ecotones<sup>o</sup> that link one to another. To recognise these wildlife-rich areas, which often play a vital role in providing corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, we have also identified Nature Networks as a priority for our LNRS. A broad description of these habitats in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is provided below.



### Coastal Habitats

We have a predominantly south-facing coastline (although from Beachy Head the coast is southwest to northeast) with a variety of habitats including intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh, hard (chalk) and soft (sandstone and clay) cliffs, shingle, coastal lagoons and sand dunes. Map 1 (Appendix 1A) shows the distribution of coastal habitats in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Much of the coastline is developed and constrained by sea defences and many of our shingle beaches are actively managed and heavily modified. However, the chalk cliffs between Splash Point in Seaford and Holywell in Eastbourne are undefended and allowed to erode naturally. There are also no sea defences at the foot of the cliffs between Newhaven Western Arm and Peacehaven, or between Peacehaven and East Saltdean, except for a short stretch of defences at Portobello Works, Telscombe. This and the sandstone cliffs at Fairlight provide an important supply of sediment for the rest of the coast.



 Yellow horned poppy

© Hugh Clark FRPS/Sussex Wildlife Trust



## Intertidal Mudflats and Saltmarsh

As rivers reach the sea and flow out over coastal plains, their flow decreases and the muddy sediment they transport is deposited. This sediment has a high organic content and is exposed and covered with each tidal cycle, making it nutrient-rich. Saltmarshes are the upper, vegetated portions of intertidal mudflats, lying between mean high water neap and mean high water spring tides.

These habitats are exceptionally rich in biodiversity, supporting large numbers of invertebrates, and providing feeding, roosting and breeding areas for birds throughout the year. They also provide sheltered nursery sites for several species of flatfish. Vegetation is limited to salt-tolerant species that can cope with regular immersion by the sea, and natural systems show clear zonation depending on how frequently they are inundated by the tide. A high proportion of our saltmarsh comprises *Spartina* or other pioneer plants, more so than in the rest of the country. It plays a significant role in coastal flood defences, acting as a natural wave break, reducing the risks of overtopping and protecting defence structures. Priority species supported by these habitats include slender hare's-ear, saltmarsh goosefoot and sea aster bee.

We have 1254ha (hectares<sup>o</sup>) of **intertidal mudflat**, the majority of which (82%) is designated for its nature conservation interest. Rye Harbour is our key site, but there are also small amounts at Newhaven and Cuckmere Haven. Similarly, **saltmarsh** is a rare habitat in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, covering only 1% of our coastline, extending to just over 68ha, with nearly 93% lying within designated sites. Most is found at Rye Harbour and along the tidal reaches of the River Cuckmere, with some small areas at Newhaven and Pevensey. The saltmarsh at Rye is in good condition and extension of areas has taken place through projects such as managed flooding. In general, our intertidal



mudflats and saltmarshes are small and isolated, making them vulnerable to change. Coastal realignment offers opportunities for the restoration of intertidal mudflats, as does the reconnection of rivers with their floodplains within estuaries.

📍 Sea kale and Mary Stanford lifeboat house at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

© Sussex Wildlife Trust

## Coastal Vegetated Shingle

Shingle closest to the sea is often mobile due to wave action, but as conditions stabilise further from the shore, mixed communities of flowering plants, grasses, mosses and lichens develop, some being specific to shingle. This **coastal vegetated shingle** is an internationally rare habitat occurring mainly in northern Europe, Japan and New Zealand. Whilst shingle beaches are widely distributed around the UK coast, structures sufficiently stable to support vegetation are rare, with around 5800ha of vegetated shingle nationally. Our vegetated shingle is therefore of very high significance and supports highly specialised plants that are very restricted in their distribution. Most of the shingle beaches along our coast are made up of flint eroded out of the chalk cliffs.

Classic pioneer species on the seaward edge include sea kale, sea pea, Babington's orache and sea campion, all of which can withstand salt spray and some degree of burial or erosion. Further from the shore, vegetation can develop into mature grassland, lowland heath, moss and lichen communities, or even scrub. Shingle structures can support breeding birds including little tern and ringed plover, and diverse invertebrate communities, with species including the rare toadflax brocade moth.

We have 181ha of coastal vegetated shingle, according to best available data, with c. 94% lying within designated sites. However, large areas are in poor condition, primarily as a result of recreational pressure. Measures to reduce such impacts mean that some areas are recovering, but where there is coastal squeeze (where the natural retreat of the coastline is prevented by development), the condition

is declining. Our most extensive areas are at Rye Harbour, and otherwise it is found in relatively small, isolated strips and pockets at Pevensey, Normans Bay and Sovereign Park (remnants of the former Crumbles cusplate foreland), Cuckmere, Newhaven (Tide Mills) and Brighton & Hove.

## Saline Lagoons

**Saline lagoons** are natural or artificial bodies of water that are partially separated from the sea by some sort of barrier. They can be brackish<sup>o</sup> (partially saline), fully saline or hyper-saline. They are rare and highly transient habitats. Many are shallow and will naturally succeed to fen, carr or reed swamp. Under natural conditions, losses would be compensated for by lagoon formation in other areas. They often support filamentous green and brown algae, charophytes and tasselweeds, as well as invertebrates rarely found elsewhere, and provide important feeding and roosting habitat for many birds. They cover just 5% of Europe's coastline and 13% of coastlines globally.

We have 137ha of saline lagoons in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, all of which are within designated sites. This includes lagoons at Rye Harbour and Pett which were created as compensation for sea defence works by the Environment Agency. Important lagoon species in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove include spiral and beaked tasselweeds and birds such as avocet.

## Sand Dune

**Coastal sand dunes** develop where sand is blown landward and trapped by specialised dune-building grasses, the key species in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove being marram grass and lyme grass. Vegetation forms zones relating to the time over which sand has been deposited, how stable it is and local hydrology. Mobile dunes occur on the seaward side and support few plants other than marram. Semi-fixed dunes occur inland and additional plants such as sand sedge and dune fescue are found.



📷 Salt marsh, Rye Harbour © Sussex Wildlife Trust



Fixed dune grasslands occur on the landward side where the surface is stabilised with some soil formation occurring. They provide an important flood defence for the village of Camber and are a refuge for many lowland species lost due to agricultural improvement<sup>7</sup>. They support locally and nationally important plant and animal communities, and are particularly notable for moths, wintering birds including short-eared owl and beetles. Some of our important species found on dunes include margined colletes, silvery leafcutter bee, henbane and the sand running-spider.

Our dunes are restricted to Camber Sands at the mouth of the River Rother, and cover just over 53ha with 98% designated, lying almost wholly within the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest, with Camber Sands Local Wildlife Site covering most of the dunes which fall outside. The dunes formed within the last 350 years and are now restricted by urban development, with the natural process of retreating inland prevented. The dunes are accreting (growing), but as they cannot move inland, they are getting higher. The dunes are in 'unfavourable declining' condition due to the coverage of invasive species including sea buckthorn, hottentot-fig, Japanese rose and Canadian fleabane. Trampling and erosion from the huge number of visitors is also damaging the dunes.

Sand dunes are listed as the habitat most at risk in Europe and since 1900 the UK's sand dunes have declined by a third<sup>8</sup>. Major dune systems are widely distributed within the UK, but scarce on the English Channel Coast. The limited extent of this habitat type in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove makes it of high conservation significance<sup>9</sup>. Scrub invasion and invasive species can be an issue in our dunes.



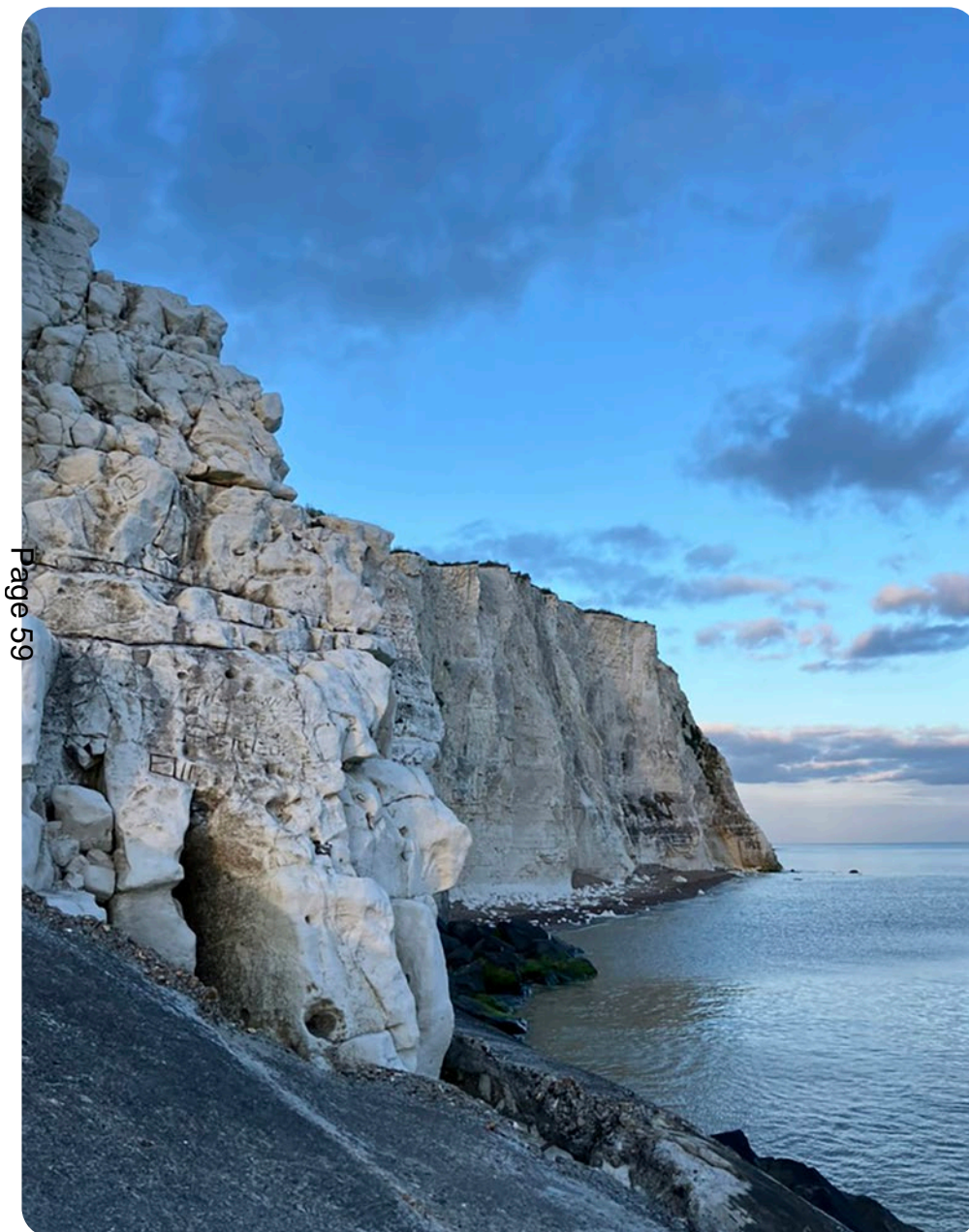
📷 Sand dunes, Camber Sands © iStock.com/BethAmber

<sup>7</sup> [Understanding sand dunes | UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology \(ceh.ac.uk\)](https://www.ceh.ac.uk/understanding-sand-dunes)

<sup>8</sup> [Stats and facts – Dynamic Dunescapes](https://www.dunescapes.org.uk/stats-and-facts)

<sup>9</sup> Gillespie, F.M. undated (c. 2008). *Sand dune sites in the Beaches At Risk Area and their major management issues*. University of Sussex. [BAR Report 1 \(sussex.ac.uk\)](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/bar-report-1)





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📷 Chalk cliffs © D Alcroft



## Maritime Cliff and Slope

We have both hard chalk cliffs and soft sandstone cliffs, with chalk cliffs between Brighton and Eastbourne eroding to a vertical profile, and softer sandstone cliffs between Bexhill and Hastings forming less steep slopes and being prone to frequent slumps and landslips. Hard cliffs support few plants other than on ledges and in crevices, but soft cliffs are particularly interesting for plant species and invertebrates due to the soft slumps. Cliffs are found in association with other important habitats, for example cliff-top chalk grassland influenced by salt spray, and shingle beaches and wave-cut chalk platforms at the bottom.

We have nearly 109ha of cliffs extending to just over 50km, the vast majority of which (104ha/c. 96%) are designated for their biological and/or geological interest. We have chalk cliffs between Black Rock in Brighton and Castle Hill in Newhaven, and from Seaford to Beachy Head, with the Seven Sisters making up more than 14% of the European chalk exposure. Some rare and uncommon plants grow both on the cliff face and in the narrow strip of cliff-top chalk grassland, and the northern slope of Castle Hill Local Nature Reserve is dominated by hawthorn, blackthorn and gorse scrub with sunny glades. The chalk cliffs support a diverse community of beetles and Splash Point in Seaford supports the largest breeding kittiwake colony in the South East, as well as fulmar, gulls, sparrowhawk, flycatchers and finches. They are also sometimes home to one of the new natural house martin colonies in Britain. Our key sites for soft cliffs are at Fairlight Cove, largely undefended apart from a 250m rock revetment and characterised by rapidly eroding soft cliffs. Fairlight Glen is of international environmental, geological and ornithological importance with high landscape value and no significant cliff top developments.



## Farmed Landscape & Soils

A combination of soil type and topography strongly influences farming practices, and in turn the wildlife that is found there. Our varied geology is reflected in our soils, which can be free-draining or waterlogged, acid or alkaline, rich loams, or thin, sandy and nutrient poor.

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is not generally an agriculturally intensive landscape, especially by the standards of the South East, but rather a farmed landscape with rich pockets of wildlife. The countryside is ‘ancient’ – a patchwork of small enclosures with old hedges, shaws and lanes that are still markedly intact in the High Weald. Of the 150,710ha of agricultural land (Grades 1-5) in the LNRS area<sup>10</sup>, 109,055ha (72%) is farmed with 1,646 land holdings. The majority of our agriculture is grazing livestock, cereals and general cropping. The average farm size is 66ha, lower than the South East (87ha) and England (85ha) averages. The distribution of farms by size is fairly even, with 57% sized between 5 and 20ha. Map 2 ([Appendix 1A](#)) shows the distribution of agricultural land (Grades 1-3) and arable land cover in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Whilst our farmed landscape includes mostly grazing and agriculture created grassland habitats, it is essentially a mosaic of a range of different habitat types including grassland, woodland, hedges, heathland and freshwater. Grasslands vary, depending on the soil with marshy grasslands also occurring on damper soils. Improved grasslands are areas that have been ploughed, reseeded or heavily fertilised.

Arable field margins are strips or blocks around arable fields that are managed specifically to provide benefits for wildlife. They are usually on the outer 2-12m margin of the arable field, although blocks occasionally extend further into the field centre<sup>11</sup>. They include cultivated, low-input margins which may be sown to provide seed for wild birds, with wildflowers or agricultural legumes (peas or beans that fix nitrogen in the soil) and managed to provide pollen and nectar resources for invertebrates, or managed as grass strips with mixtures of tussocky and fine-leaved grasses<sup>12</sup>.



📷 Mob grazing © High Weald National Landscape Partnership

<sup>10</sup> Defra, 2024. [Structure of the agricultural industry in England and the UK at June](#).

<sup>11</sup> JNCC, 2016. [UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions. Arable Field Margins](#).

<sup>12</sup> Natural England, 2020. Climate Change Adaptation Manual. Arable Field Margins.





Nationally, more than 120 species of threatened, rare and scarce wildflowers grow in arable habitats and together they are the fastest declining suite of plants in the UK<sup>13</sup>. Annual knawel and shepherd's needle are closely associated with farming but have become scarce. Similarly, populations of some farmland birds such as grey partridge and corn bunting have declined significantly<sup>14</sup>. Targeted habitat support for farmland birds, arable plants and other farmland biodiversity through initiatives such as Environmental Stewardship has encouraged farmers and landowners to create arable field margins on their land. 22,189ha of farmland in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are currently under Environmental Stewardship (c. 20% of farmed land)<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Managing Arable Farm Land – Plantlife

<sup>14</sup> Sussex Wildlife Trust, 1995. *Vision for the Wildlife of Sussex*.

<sup>15</sup> Defra, 2024. [Structure of the agricultural industry in England and the UK at June](#).

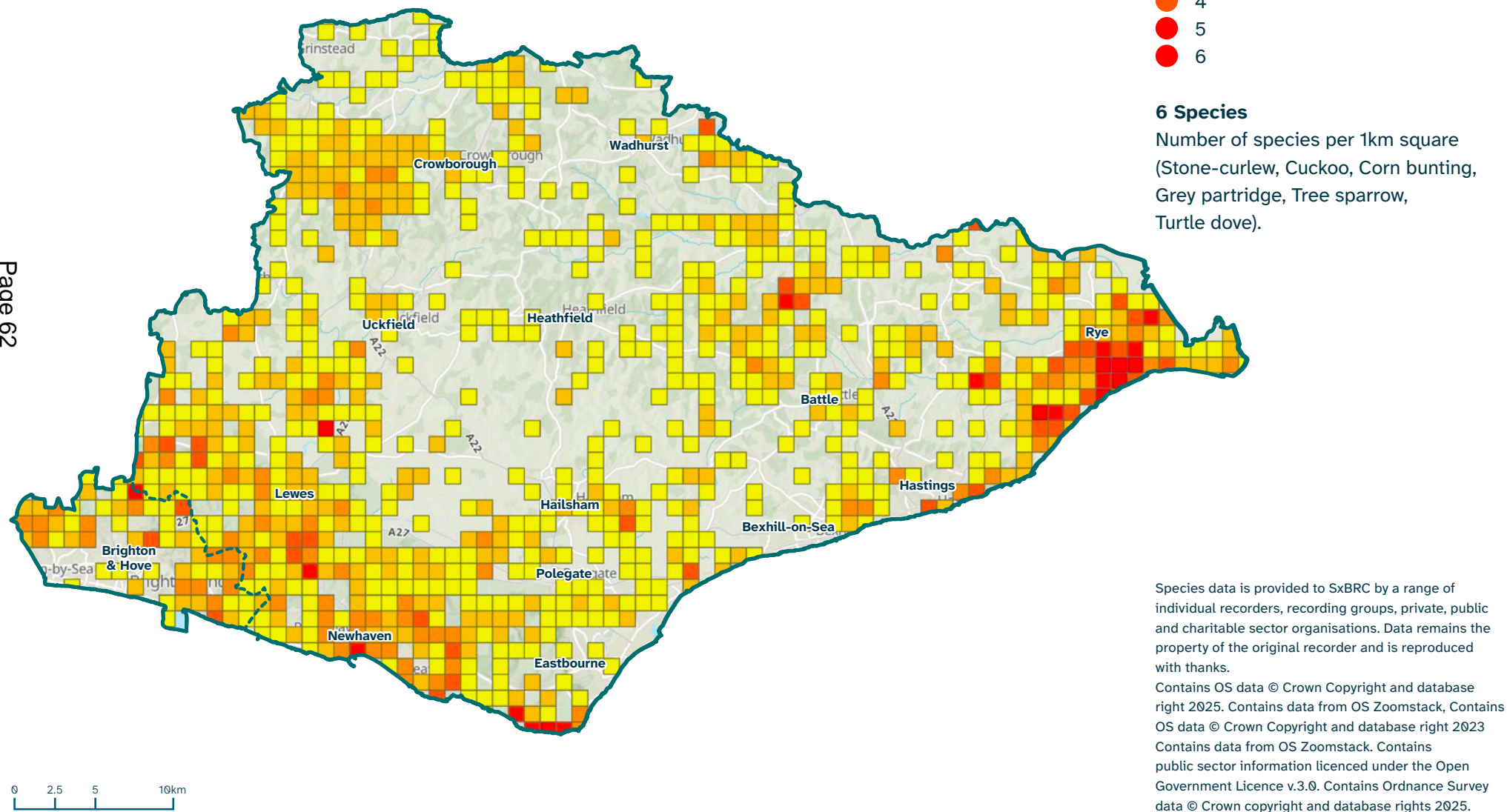


📷 Farmland & South Downs, Castle Hill NNR & Kingston © Ben Rainbow



### Map 3: Heat map showing the number of farmland bird assemblage species

(for more detail, see Part 3: Species Priorities and Measures) per 1km square across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. The darker the colour, the greater number of species present.



# Species-rich Grassland

Our species-rich grasslands include **lowland calcareous grassland** (chalk grassland), **species-rich meadows** (including lowland meadows) and pastures, **waxcap grasslands**, and **neutral grasslands**. We also have acid grassland but as that is most commonly found in association with heathland habitats, it is covered in that section of the description. Similarly, wet grassland and grazing marsh are covered in the wetland section. Map 3 (Appendix 1A) shows the distribution of chalk grassland and lowland meadows in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

These grasslands are rich in wildlife and provide important ecosystem services but they depend on continuity of appropriate and sympathetic management to maintain their ecological value. Ongoing agricultural “improvement” of semi-natural grassland (through re-seeding, use of fertiliser and herbicides to increase productivity), neglect, land use change and urban development are key threats that continue to reduce and fragment the remaining areas of ecologically important grassland both across the UK and in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Unimproved chalk grassland occurs along the length of the South Downs, and unimproved hay meadows and pastures are concentrated on more traditionally managed farms in the High Weald. Waxcap grasslands can be found in cemeteries and churchyards in towns and villages across the county as well as within unimproved grassland on undisturbed soils with a range of pH values. Diverse, semi-natural grassland is usually associated with the farmed landscapes and nature reserves but also occurs in mosaics with other habitats, such as scrub (in transitional<sup>9</sup> vegetation), on woodland rides, in wetlands, on road verges and sometimes in urban greenspaces. The extent of the different species-rich grasslands found in our LNRS area is shown on the right.



Grassland Type	Extent (ha)	% LNRS area
Lowland calcareous grassland	2400	1.3
Lowland meadows	622	0.3
Waxcap grasslands	835	0.5
Unimproved neutral grassland	480	0.3
TOTAL	4337	2.4

📷 Common rock-rose and salad burnett are among the many species of native wildflower which will benefit from the project.  
© Wilding Waterhall



The priority habitat categories encompasses the best of the wildlife-rich grassland in Sussex, but the line between ‘priority’ and ‘non-priority’ but species-rich grassland is sometimes indistinct. Grassland of all types lies on a continuum that is influenced by different factors such as the underlying geology and soils, drainage, degree of waterlogging and management history. Some species-rich grassland does not meet the quite rigid botanical threshold to qualify as priority habitat but can nevertheless be very important for other species groups and function as vital connective tissue for landscape scale ecological function. Grassland that supports an abundance of flowering plants can buffer the most important species-rich grassland sites and link other priority habitats<sup>16</sup>. The mapping of non-priority habitat species-rich grassland on [MAGIC](#)<sup>17</sup> underlines its importance for biodiversity.

### Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Nationally, this grassland type has declined sharply over the last 50 years. The South Downs represents one of the major areas of this habitat type in the UK, but due to historic losses, it is estimated that it now covers only around 3% of the South Downs where it is largely confined to steeper north facing slopes. It supports a very rich flora, one of the highest species densities of any habitat in north-west Europe.

Species include many nationally rare and scarce species such as burnt orchid (the colony at Lewes Downs Special Area of Conservation is one of the largest in the UK), early-spider orchid and round-headed rampion – the ‘Pride of Sussex’. The invertebrate fauna is also diverse and includes scarce species such as the Adonis blue, silver-spotted skipper and the wart-biter cricket, and

south facing grasslands are important for snails including the rare Carthusian snail. It is an important pollen and nectar resource and bare ground provides nesting habitat for ground nesting bees, wasps and ants.

### Lowland Meadows

Of particular interest are the increasingly rare species-rich old meadows and pastures that have a long history of traditional management by hay cutting and/or grazing. Hay meadows are especially important for the range of often uncommon plant species they support, which in turn support large numbers of invertebrate and bird species<sup>16</sup>. The High Weald supports nearly 20% of the entire resource of lowland meadow in England, with nowhere else in the country having such a concentration<sup>17</sup>. Lowland meadows are fragile and vulnerable to changes or cessation of management practices, but are important fragments of a once more extensive habitat.



📷 Round-headed Rampion © iStock.com/phalder

<sup>16</sup> Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, February 2010. Lowland Meadows Habitat Action Plan.

<sup>17</sup> High Weald National Landscape website: [Wildlife – High Weald](#), accessed 22/02/24.



## Waxcap Grassland

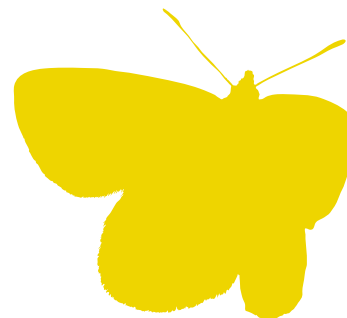
Waxcaps are indicators of undisturbed, nutrient-poor grasslands like ancient pasture and other land that has never been ploughed or fertilised, and often thrive in short, moss-rich, sometimes highly grazed swards, which may be of low interest for flowering plants. Waxcap grasslands are seriously threatened throughout the UK and Europe and local experience shows us that these sites are vulnerable to changes in land use and encroachment from development. Our LNRS area supports several areas known to be mycologically rich, with over 853ha of waxcap grasslands recorded. Recent surveys of an Uckfield cemetery recording a species diversity of Special Scientific Interest quality. Despite the crucial role fungi plays in our habitats, their ecology and overall diversity is poorly understood.

## Neutral Grassland

Neutral grassland is a feature of soils with a pH between 5 and 6.5 and which are neither very wet nor very dry. These grasslands can be very variable in appearance and plant communities due to differences in their underlying geology, but are essentially species-rich grasslands and meadows. Crested dog's-tail and black knapweed are constants in this habitat in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, and our sites support a number of nationally rare or scarce plant species including green-winged orchid and meadow thistle as well as significant vertebrate and mammal fauna. Most of our sites are smaller than 5ha and tend to be evenly distributed along a broad swathe from Ditchling in the north-west to Hastings in the east, with notable concentrations around Crowborough. There is an additional and uncalculated contribution to the overall resource on roadside verges, in churchyards, along arable field edges, paths, woodland rides and river banks which may contain relic grassland communities.



Blackening waxcap © iStock.com/suerob





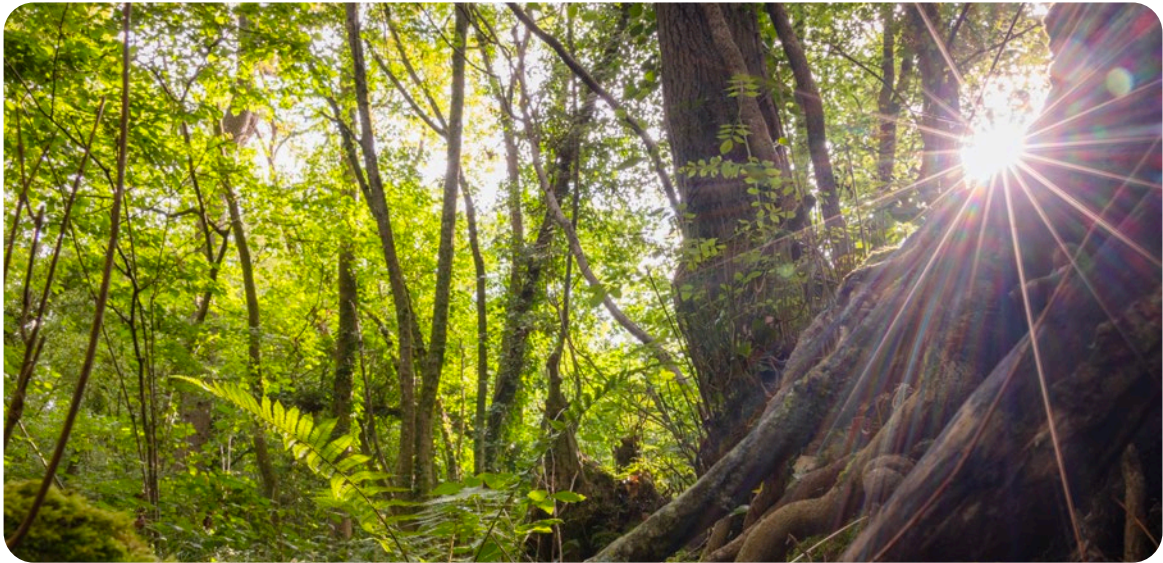
# Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub

## Woodland

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is one of the most wooded areas in lowland Britain, with the High Weald having the greatest woodland cover in Britain. Map 4 ([Appendix 1A](#) ) shows the distribution of woodland in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Most of our woodland is under 2ha in area and most is **deciduous** where at least 80% of the canopy is made up of native species, but there are some large forestry estates which are planted with species including Scots pine, Corsican pine, Norway spruce and Douglas fir.

We have several distinct types of woodland. The species composition of the canopy and the ground layers varies greatly, and edges and rides may grade into grassland and scrub. Where soils are poorly drained or seasonally wet, such as on floodplains, along wet flushes, as successional habitat on fens, mires and bogs, and in peaty hollows, wet woodland occurs, usually with alder, birch and willows being dominant. Many of our woodlands are **ancient**, i.e. have been continuously wooded since at least 1600 AD. Some of these semi-natural, consisting primarily of native and not obviously planted species, and some plantations on ancient woodland sites, which have been planted, often with non-native species.

**NB** Some of these woodland types overlap, so the total extent is not a direct sum.



Woodland Type	Extent (ha)	% LNRS area
Ancient woodland	20,998	11.6
Deciduous woodland	25,264	14.0
Gill woodland	6552	3.6
Traditional orchards	148	0.01
Wet woodland (deciduous woodland within Flood Zone 3)	459	0.3
Wood pasture and parkland	4231	2.4

📷 Woodland in the Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project.  
© James Ratchford/WTML

Of particular importance are our **gill woodlands**, found in steep-sided, narrow stream valleys, which are not found anywhere else in eastern or central Britain. They have a humid microclimate and lush growth of ferns, mosses and liverworts, some characteristic of the warmer, moister conditions that existed during the Atlantic period. **Wet woodland** is scattered on our floodplains, more often found higher up river catchments. Stands are often small, forming strips alongside streams, but can be extensive. A key species of such woodland is the native black-poplar *Populus nigra* ssp. *betulifolia* which is probably our rarest tree; there are currently 45 known mature trees scattered throughout Sussex, all around 100-150 years old. In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove these are found from Lewes in the west to Hastings in the east.

**Wood pasture and parkland** represents a vegetation structure rather than a particular plant community, managed by a long-established tradition of grazing allowing survival of multiple generations of trees, characteristically with at least some ancient or veteran trees or shrubs. These woodland communities often form a mosaic with other habitats including grassland, heath and scrub. This habitat type can be of outstanding interest for bats and birds, and they are frequently of national historic, cultural and landscape importance. Important sites include Eridge Park, noted for its epiphytic<sup>18</sup> flora, and urban parks in Brighton retain some of the largest remaining Sussex elms, providing important bat roosting and feeding habitats. Brighton & Hove is the custodian of the National Elm Collection, with over 17,000 trees including 125 different varieties – more than any other city in the world<sup>19</sup>. The remaining ‘Preston Twin’ in Preston Park is considered to be the largest and

oldest (400 years old) surviving English elm in Europe and is home to the elm-dependent white-letter hairstreak butterfly, a species that has been in decline as a result of Dutch Elm Disease.

Habitat structure is also the defining feature of **traditional orchards**, with planting density and management being the main distinguishing features<sup>19</sup>. Traditional orchards comprise large trees planted in rows at a low density (150 per ha) with a grass sward underneath and are often grazed by livestock. They are valuable for the local landscape and community enjoyment as well as for wildlife<sup>20</sup>. The Brighton City Downland Estate includes 11 planted orchards, the most notable being at Racehill and Stanmer, the latter hosting the National Collection of Sussex Apples<sup>21</sup>.

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. Sweet chestnut is particularly abundant in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, and is one of the few woodland types still under active coppice management.

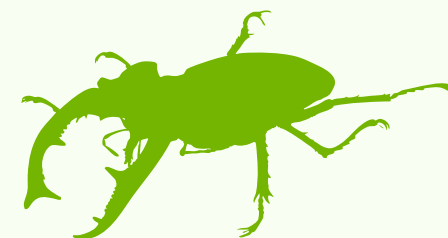
Many species of conservation concern rely on woodland, including hazel dormouse, the six-spotted longhorn beetle and pearl-bordered fritillary. Sandstone outcrops are occasionally found in woodlands in the High Weald. These rare features hold water, creating damp, humid conditions that are ideal for rare communities of ferns, mosses and liverworts such as Dumortier’s liverwort.

<sup>18</sup> An introduction to Brighton and Hove’s elm trees — Urban Tree Festival

<sup>19</sup> Traditional orchards (UK BAP Priority Habitat description) ([jncc.gov.uk](http://jncc.gov.uk))

<sup>20</sup> Orchards ([highweald.org](http://highweald.org))

<sup>21</sup> City Downland Estate Plan, 2023.





## Hedgerows

A hedgerow is any continuous boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide at the base. It includes ‘classic’ shrubby hedgerows, lines of trees, hedgerows with trees and very gappy hedgerows (where the gaps are less than 20m). All hedgerows consisting predominantly (80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species are priority habitats<sup>22</sup>.

As well as their biodiversity importance, hedgerows have farming, landscape, cultural and archaeological interest. In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, they were historically important to the iron industry with a strong correlation between hedges with slow, hot-burning hornbeam and areas where iron ore was melted down.

We have about 4,700km of hedgerows in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove comprising 30 woody species. A significant proportion of our hedgerows, particularly in the north, are likely to be both ancient and species-rich<sup>23</sup>, a result of scrub and woodland converted to arable use. Smaller fields in the High Weald lead to a greater density of hedgerows, and the mosaic of interconnecting hedgerows, shaws and woodlands provide the visual structure of the High Weald landscape. Historically, mature trees have been grown in hedgerows, mainly ash and pedunculate oak, the latter grown for timber for shipbuilding. Mature trees greatly enhance the wildlife benefits of a hedgerow.

Hedgerows are particularly important for butterflies and moths, farmland birds, dormice and bats, the latter using them for commuting from roosts to foraging areas. They are similar to woodland edges, and are an essential component in maintaining

wildlife corridors between areas of woodland which are becoming increasingly fragmented. Other species that depend on hedgerows include the brown hairstreak butterfly and linnet, both of which are in national decline. Our characteristic hedgerow species include hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, hazel, hornbeam and pedunculate oak.

Modern management practice, including flailing, severely limits the opportunities for mature tree regeneration, and failure to replace lost or damaged trees will alter the landscape and greatly reduce biodiversity. It is estimated that about 45% of hedgerows were lost in England and Wales between 1945 and the mid 1980s. It is also estimated that 42% of hedgerows in Sussex are unmanaged; many are very gappy and reverting to tree-lines, thus providing a different habitat and ceasing to be protected under the Hedgerow Regulations. Removal of hedgerows can also lead to soil erosion.



Blackthorn hedgerow © Sussex Wildlife Trust

<sup>22</sup> Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, 2010. Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan.

<sup>23</sup> Wealden GI Study, 2017.

## Scrub

Scrub is hugely valuable for wildlife, providing food, shelter, breeding and roosting sites. It may be scattered bushes or closed canopy vegetation, occasionally with a few scattered trees. Good scrub has a diverse structure with different heights, but is usually less than 5m tall<sup>24</sup>. Many scrub plants are pioneers, which grow fast and can colonise open habitats quite rapidly.

Most scrub in Britain is seral, forming a stage in the transition from open vegetation to woodland, and it can grow in a range of environments including coastal wetlands, grasslands and heathlands, forming a mosaic<sup>25</sup>. For example, mixed scrub and chalk grassland are often adjacent to each other and have a symbiotic relationship. As a common and dynamic habitat, we do not know exactly how much we have in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, but best estimates are that there is 500-600km<sup>2</sup> of scrub in England<sup>26</sup>.

Small herbs at the scrub edge are vital to many grassland invertebrates that need nectar-rich shrubs to complete their lifecycles. Hawthorn, blackthorn, bramble and herbs provide early pollen and nectar and foraging habitat for herbivorous and predatory invertebrates in their adult and larval stages. Reptiles use south facing scrub for basking and hibernation, for example heathland gorse scrub edges are perfect for basking adders, and scrub provides a corridor for linking wetland habitats for amphibians.

Scrub is hugely important for birds and the fruit and seeds provide autumn and winter food for resident and migrant birds<sup>9</sup> and mammals. Yellowhammer and linnet nest in low, dense scrub edges, and nightingale and turtle dove need thickets of dense scrub with a margin of rough grass. Other key species dependant on scrub in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove include black hairstreak, juniper, marsh fern, fly orchid, round-leaved dog rose and eared willow.



Black hairstreak © iStock.com/Tomasz Klejdysz

<sup>24</sup> Defra farming blog: create scrub and scrub mosaics.

<sup>25</sup> Defra farming blog: create scrub and scrub mosaics.

<sup>26</sup> Mortimer, S.R. et al, 2000. *The nature conservation value of scrub in Britain*. JNCC Report No. 308.





## Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops

Map 5 ([Appendix 1A](#)) shows the distribution of lowland heathland and sandstone outcrops in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

### Heathland (including dry acid grassland)

A heathland is an open landscape dominated by low-growing plants, mainly heather and gorse as well as bracken, grasses, herbs and mosses. These are interspersed with areas of bare ground and scattered trees, providing important habitat for a diverse range of invertebrates, birds and reptiles. Wetter heath areas and acidic ponds provide important habitat for dragonflies and damselflies. Soils are acidic and free-draining with very low nutrient levels.

Ashdown Forest contains the largest area of **lowland heathland** remaining in south-east England and is considered one of the best areas in the UK for **wet heath**, supporting several species of bog mosses, bog asphodel, deergrass, common cotton-grass, marsh gentian and marsh clubmoss. The Forest supports internationally important populations of nightjar, Dartford warbler and the Eurasian hobby, with other notable birds including woodlark, hen harrier and great grey shrike. The site also supports important assemblages<sup>27</sup> of beetles, dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies, including the nationally rare silver-studded blue, important lichen assemblages and the most inland remaining population of hairy greenweed<sup>27</sup>.

Other key sites include Chailey Common, and within the High Weald, there are pockets of heathland found within the remnants of other large medieval forests, including Bedgebury, Broadwater, St Leonard's and Worth<sup>28</sup>.

The South Downs retain areas of **chalk heath**, a rare habitat that develops on acidic deposits overlying chalk on which an interesting mix of chalk grassland and heathland plants are found. For example, there is a very small area (c. 0.8ha) of chalk heath on the south-western boundary of the Eastbourne Downland Estate<sup>29</sup>.

In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, **acid grassland** is characterised by low growing wildflowers and grasses, heather and gorse, with communities differing depending on local and regional variation in soil and moisture, but always including specialised species. They often have a high cover of bryophytes and lichens



**Heather** © Wim van 't Einde/unsplash.com

<sup>27</sup> Lewes Biodiversity Study.

<sup>28</sup> HWOANB Unit, undated. [Heathland in the High Weald Landscape](#).

<sup>29</sup> Eastbourne Downland Estate.





and support a number of specialist invertebrates that are not found in other types of grassland. Acid grasslands are uncommon in lowland Britain and often form a mosaic with heathland. All sites in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are relatively small – all below eight hectares and most less than five. Ditchling Common contains a range of grassland types resulting from the wide variation in drainage conditions and past management, but acidic heath grassland dominates, with ungrazed areas consisting of bracken, scrub and woodland. The flora includes a number of locally uncommon plants. Butterfly and moth populations are of importance and the site is locally valuable for breeding birds<sup>30</sup>.

In total, we have 1,465ha of heathland and acid grassland in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, of which 1,206ha (c. 82%) lies within designated sites. The total extent has decreased by approximately 70% in the past 100 years and the average size of heathland patches has declined from 11.1ha to 2.4ha, indicating significant habitat fragmentation. Despite this, our resource across Sussex represents about 5% of the national area. These areas are important for reptiles, amphibians and birds and are important for invertebrates, many of which depend on warm, sheltered positions, with areas of bare earth and a good source of nectar or prey. Key species include tree pipit, redpoll, heath potter wasp, small red damselfly, keeled skimmer, black darter, heath lobelia, upright chickweed and sundews.

## Sandstone Outcrops

The High Weald is one of Europe's most important sandstone landscapes and one of only three in England<sup>31</sup>. The physical shape and configuration of outcrops, including vertical walls, ledges,

crevices, caves, cracks and gullies, means that they support a wide variety of microhabitats<sup>o</sup> which in turn support specialised species, most notably liverworts and mosses. These microclimates allow species that are normally found in the damp west of the UK to survive in the relatively dry south-east; the High Weald is a stronghold for species such as Dumortier's liverwort, a species normally found in the west of England and the Atlantic coast of Ireland. As such, they are of considerable importance for biodiversity, as well as being of significant geological and often cultural interest. Sandstone outcrops show greater species diversity than other exposed rocks, such as abandoned quarries.

Most of our sites are small and fragmented and total 34ha, of which 29ha (c. 87%) lies within designated sites. These include Hastings Cliffs which are of national importance for their bryophyte flora. Key species include slender thread-moss and ribbonwort.



📍 Eridge Rocks Nature Reserve © Sam Roberts/Sussex Wildlife Trust

<sup>30</sup> Lewes Biodiversity Study.

<sup>31</sup> HWAONB Unit, November 2012. [The High Weald Sandstone Project](#).



## Rivers, Streams & Aquifers

Our wetlands are a major wildlife resource covering a huge portion of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. There are many different types, each with its own particular environmental characteristics, vegetation and suite of species adapted to using it. Freshwater habitats include rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, grazing marsh and wet grassland, reedbed, fen, aquifers and springs and bogs. Map 6 (Appendix 1A) shows the distribution of wetland habitats in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

### Rivers & River Systems

Our **river** systems include our main rivers – the Ouse, Cuckmere, Brede and Eastern Rother – and their network of tributaries, streams and channels. We have 3608km of rivers of which 775km (nearly 22%) receive some degree of protection from designation. They change greatly in character from their source, ranging from fast-flowing headwater streams to slow-flowing meandering rivers in our broad valleys and floodplains. Our major catchments drain to low-lying coastal plains at Pevensey and Pett Levels with smaller rivers, locally known as Havens and Rifes, draining through them.

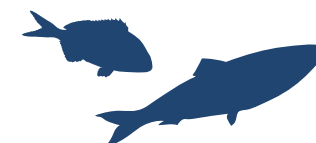
Most of our main river floodplains are isolated from the rivers which support them and so do not function naturally. Man-made flood embankments separate the majority of our estuaries and main rivers from their floodplains which results in there being very limited natural estuarine habitat. Large parts of our coastal plains are already below sea level, and are protected by man-made sea defences and pump drainage which contributes to the lowering of land levels in the face of rising sea levels. Some rivers and streams have been entirely destroyed, drained or filled in. The majority have suffered less detectable changes through centuries of management,



exploitation, dredging and development, and through the cumulative effects that the changing land use around them has caused in flow, sediment, erosion and pollution levels. During the last 100 years, there has been a substantial loss of good quality river channel and riparian habitat due to the straightening, diversion, over-deepening, widening, obstruction, pollution, and reduction in water flows due to abstraction and continual dredging and management of the majority of the County's rivers and streams. It is unlikely that there is any truly untouched stream or river in Sussex.

At least 80% of the rivers in the South East are failing the Water Framework Directive's 'Good Ecological Status', so it can be extrapolated that over 2,800km of rivers and streams in East Sussex are in need of ecological rehabilitation or restoration. Of all the river estuaries, Cuckmere Haven is the least developed, but is still almost entirely engineered and managed.

**Damselflies**  
© Clément Falize/unsplash.com



Gravel riffles and pool sequences along with large woody debris structures, natural rock formations and gullies along our rivers support plants such as water crowfoot as well as freshwater invertebrates including mayflies, willow flies, freshwater shrimps, and pea mussels as well as some rare water beetles. Key river species include water vole, sea trout, European eel and white-clawed crayfish.

## Chalk Streams

**Chalk rivers or streams** flow across or are influenced by chalk bedrock. They are usually fed by underground or seasonal springs and often have winterborne stretches which dry in late summer. Chalk geology is rare worldwide and England has most of the chalk rivers in Europe. There are only about 35 chalk rivers in the whole of the UK, with one in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove – the Lewes Winterborne – making our chalk rivers and streams of global importance.

South Downs chalk streams are set apart from others in that they have their source high in the hills, making the gradient steeper. They are small, steep and fast flowing channels, which often run through small wooded valleys. Being fed by groundwater, they are clean and clear and have a relatively stable temperature. These unique conditions support an unusual diversity of wildlife including important fish populations and many specialist insects. They harbour some of the most specialised communities of plants, insects and other wildlife in the LNRS area, including rare mosses and lichens<sup>32</sup>.

There are nearly 31km of chalk streams in East Sussex, of which only 2km (7%) are designated. Across Sussex, there remains at

least 100km of potential chalk streams which could be added to this resource if surveyed. Less than 20% of our chalk streams are deemed near natural. Many are heavily impacted by surface water run-off from surrounding land use, sedimentation, obstructions such as weirs, invasive species, water abstraction and climate change.

## Aquifers

Water that permeates into the ground and is stored within the rock is referred to as an **aquifer**. The chalk aquifer of the South Downs is one of the major aquifers in the UK supplying groundwater to the urban areas of Brighton & Hove and Eastbourne in East Sussex, as well as Worthing and Chichester in West Sussex and Portsmouth in Hampshire. It is susceptible to pollution from a variety of sources including leachate migration<sup>9</sup> from landfill sites, diffuse pollution from agriculture, and point source pollution from urban environments. The restoration and expansion of priority habitats such as chalk grassland will help protect our aquifer<sup>33</sup>.



📷 Mallard and brown trout in chalk stream © iStock.com/Paul Colley

<sup>32</sup> Southgate, F, 2012. [The Wetland Potential of Sussex](#). Sussex Wildlife Trust.

<sup>33</sup> Jones, H.K. and N.S. Robins (Eds), 1999. [The Chalk Aquifer of the South Downs](#). British Geological Society.





## Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies

### Wetlands

Our rivers and river systems support the hydrological function of our wetlands. These are many and varied and include reedbeds, floodplain grazing marsh and wet grassland, peatland habitats including bogs, mires and fens, as well as standing water bodies ranging from reservoirs and lakes to ponds and ditches.

**Peatlands** receive water and nutrients from the soil, rock and groundwater as well as from rainfall. They can be groundwater fed (basin and floodplain fens) or rain and run-off fed (valley mires, springs and flushes). There are 34ha of fen in East Sussex, of which nearly 84% are within designated sites. However, there is little accurate survey information and small, fragmented sites are often found alongside other types of wetland habitat. Whilst it is likely that all the major areas of true fen in our LNRS area have been mapped, there may be other valuable fragments surviving, so the true distribution and location is not known. The majority is found within Combe Haven with smaller areas at Pett Level. Across Sussex there are only 18 fen sites recorded with an area of over 1ha, and only seven have an area of over 2ha. These peatlands support a diversity of animal and plant communities including higher plants, such as oblong and round-leaved sundew, fen bedstraw and marsh fragrant-orchid, dragonflies and other insects such as variable damselfly, and a range of aquatic beetles including the king diving beetle and *Hydrochus ignicollis*.

**Reedbeds** are 'single species' wetlands dominated by over 60% cover of common reed – a perennial, flood tolerant grass that grows to over 2m high. In the UK, the majority are found in river floodplains and low-lying coastal areas. Drainage, development and pollution has led to the loss of huge areas of reedbed, and most of the reedbeds in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are small and fragmented. Many occur around the silty margins of ponds and lakes, with their size fluctuating depending on water levels and pond management.



📷 Bearded tit, Pett Level © iStock.com/suerob



The total area of reedbed in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is 120ha, 93% of which lies within designated sites. Our largest reedbed, at just over 15ha, is at Filsham with other large areas in the Pannel Valley and Rye Harbour, the biggest stand being over 11ha. Reedbeds naturally filter and clean water and trap sediments, and are fantastic habitats for wildlife, especially birds. Some of our key reedbed species include marsh harrier, bearded tit and bittern.

**Grazing marsh** is pasture or meadow that is occasionally flooded, with a network of drainage ditches with fresh or brackish standing water. The **ditches** are usually manmade, originally installed to drain marshland and low-lying fields for farming. Sites may contain seasonal water-filled hollows and permanent ponds with emergent swamp communities. Grazing marshes are particularly important for breeding waders such as snipe, lapwing and curlew and some of ours support internationally important populations of wintering Bewick swans. The ditch network tends to support the majority of its biodiversity, with these and other more natural wetland features supporting a wide variety of emergent and submerged plants, and often important for invertebrates including dragonflies and water beetles.

We have about 9,810ha of grazing marsh of which nearly two thirds lies within designated areas. Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in the south-east. The Levels support the largest known population of little whirlpool ram's-horn snail in the UK as well as an outstanding assemblage of rare, vulnerable and endangered species including the fen raft spider. It is one of the best sites in Great Britain for freshwater molluscs, one of the five best sites for aquatic beetles



📷 Dyke, Brede Valley, Winchelsea © iStock.com/asmithers

and supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies. It also supports 68% of the 160 aquatic vascular plant species in Great Britain. Eastbourne Levels support some uncommon species tolerant of brackish conditions which also reflect a saltmarsh heritage in the southern marshlands. The recent construction of shallow lakes and ponds has added to this and as a result, Eastbourne marshes not only have the rich biodiversity typical of Pevensey Levels, but they also have much additional assemblages making them important within the South East<sup>34</sup>. Despite this, it is estimated that only 20% of our grazing marsh is of high enough quality for wildlife<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> The Biodiversity of the Eastbourne Grazing Marshes.

<sup>35</sup> Floodplain meadow and washland | Sussex Wildlife Trust



## Standing Waterbodies

**Ponds** are small waterbodies between 1m<sup>2</sup> and 2ha which usually hold water for at least four months of the year<sup>36</sup>. Even very small waterbodies can have high conservation value, as can semi-seasonal and temporary ponds which may dry up in the summer, as these can support both specialised and ecologically valuable communities. We estimate that we have more than 10,500 ponds in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. They are an important open water resource, as well as [refuge habitats](#)<sup>9</sup> for amphibians and reptiles, dragonflies and damselflies, aquatic plants, mammals and birds. We are a stronghold for great crested newts, and other important species include the pondweed leafhopper which nationally is only found in six ponds in south-east England, variable damselfly, orange foxtail and water violet.

**Lakes** are waterbodies greater than 2ha which hold water permanently. They are usually ancient ecosystems formed by geomorphological processes, while **reservoirs** are relatively young environments constructed to meet human needs<sup>37</sup>. They are highly productive because plant nutrients are plentiful and are characterised by having dense, long-term populations of algae in mid-summer, often making the water green. Their beds are often covered by dark anaerobic<sup>9</sup> mud, rich in organic matter. Bottom dwelling invertebrates are abundant, and the plentiful supply of food can support large populations of wildfowl. We have no data on the extent of our lakes but we have five water storage reservoirs: Bewl Water, located near Lamberhurst on the East Sussex/Kent border; Weir Wood Reservoir, East Grinstead; Darwell Reservoir, Battle; Powdermill Reservoir, Battle; and Arlington Reservoir, Polegate.

Bewl Water is the largest stretch of open water in the South East<sup>38</sup> and is important for large numbers of waders and wildfowl during the winter and as a stopping point during migration. A total of 171 species have been recorded including rare visitors such as great northern diver, smew and black-winged stilt and high wintering numbers of great crested grebe, little grebe, wigeon and teal. The reservoir also provides habitat for dragonflies with 20 species regularly recorded<sup>39</sup>. Weir Wood Reservoir is also important for dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies<sup>40</sup> as well as for birds including kingfisher and osprey, and during the summer, grey heron regularly breed there. Darwell Reservoir supports pike, perch and eels, with occasional brown and rainbow trout. Powdermill Reservoir is used by numerous bird species<sup>41</sup> and Arlington Reservoir provides a sanctuary for thousands of over-wintering birds including wigeon, shoveler, great crested grebe, Canada geese and barn owl.



Great crested newt © iStock.com/MikeLane45

<sup>36</sup> Pond Conservation Group, 1993. *A Future for British Ponds. An agenda for action*. Pond Conservation Group.

<sup>37</sup> [Freshwater Research News: reservoirs as biodiversity hotspots](#).

<sup>38</sup> Bewl Water – Southern Water

<sup>39</sup> Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, 2009. [Bewl Water Biodiversity Opportunity Area](#).

<sup>40</sup> [Weir Wood Reservoir Local Nature Reserve | East Sussex County Council](#)

<sup>41</sup> Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, 2009. [Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area](#).





## Urban Nature

Over 820,000 people live in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, with about 80% of the population in urban areas, currently estimated to cover about 7% of our LNRS area. Urban nature is important for a number of reasons: lots of our wildlife is now dependent on urban areas, e.g. house sparrows and hedgehog; being in or close to nature is important for our health and wellbeing; and urban nature provides a vital link between our towns and cities and the countryside. Peregrine falcons nest on buildings in Brighton & Hove while the piers, and now Brighton Marina, are renowned for their starling murmurations and winter roosts. Towns and cities are also a stronghold for breeding swifts.

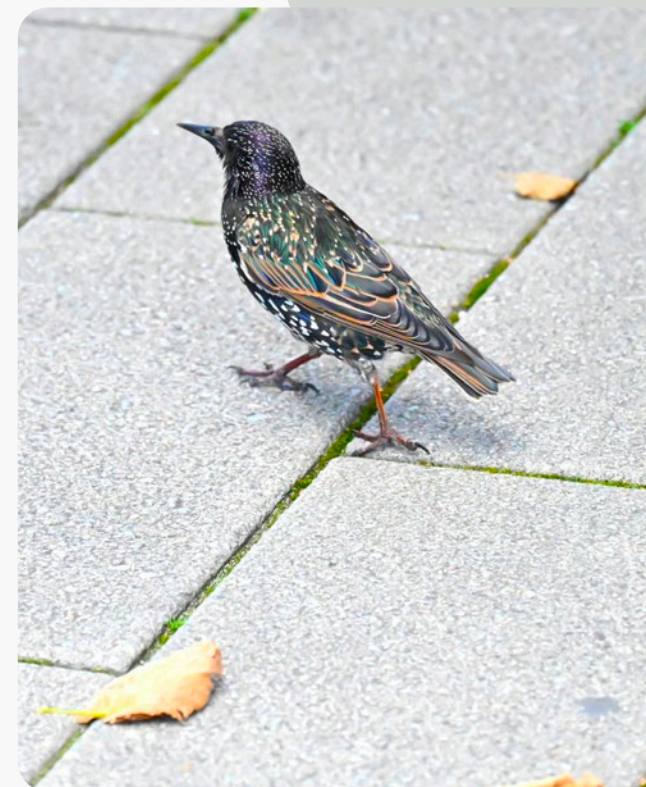
Urban greenspace can include green roofs, street trees, verges, urban parks and gardens. Landscape around buildings can be designed to include green infrastructure<sup>9</sup> such as tree planters, ponds, grass and lawn areas, green roofs and sustainable urban green drainage systems (SuDS). Private gardens can also offer a significant resource for urban wildlife. These greenspaces offer multiple benefits like providing shade, reducing urban run-off and pollution, and regulating temperatures, but they also provide important wildlife corridors and stepping stones to help species move across the landscape.

Urban greenspaces in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove include:

- Allotments and community gardens;
- Amenity greenspace (e.g. areas used for informal recreation and village greens);
- Cemeteries and religious grounds;
- Civic space and market squares;
- Green and blue corridors and cycleways;
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace;
- Parks and gardens;
- Outdoor sports grounds (e.g. playing fields and golf courses);
- Provision for children and young people.

Our best estimate is that about 57% of our urban areas is green space, although not necessarily all of this will be good for biodiversity. There may also be as much as 7,000ha of private gardens in the City of Brighton & Hove alone<sup>42</sup>. The Living Coast (Brighton to Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere Reserve<sup>9</sup>) is one of only a handful of such reserves worldwide that includes a major urban area, and one of its fundamental aims is to pioneer ways to balance the daily needs of people and nature.

Starling © Gurjit Sandhu/unsplash.com



<sup>42</sup> The Brighton & Hove Habitat Audit 2007-2009 (unpublished report).

## 4.4 Species

The East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area is rich in biodiversity, with 14,382 species recorded in the last 20 years, including everything from diatoms (single celled algae) to mammals. 20% of these are of conservation concern, meaning they are rare, threatened or declining, and 3.5% are legally protected. Our most diverse groups are fungi, flowering plants, beetles, moths and flies, with the number of species recorded in each of these groups close to or exceeding 1500. We have 15 of the 18 native species of bats, and nearly 42% of our birds are either Red or Amber Birds of Conservation Concern. Whilst only 0.8% of the species recorded are invasive non-natives, the fact that we have 118 of these species within the LNRS area highlights the need for targeted action.

The species longlist for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, made up of species of national conservation concern, included nearly 900 species, ranging across all the major species groups. Shortlisting in line with LNRS guidance resulted in 160 species being identified as priorities for nature recovery, of which 125 were grouped into 19

assemblages (groups of plants and animals that would benefit from similar management measures). Priority species include some of our rarest species, some that are considered iconic of the area, and some that are relatively widespread but that resonated strongly with the local community. For the full list of Priority Species and associated measures, see Part 3.

**Spiked rampion** is one of our rarest plants, found at only eight sites across the whole of the UK, with 85% of the UK population at just one site. The Species Recovery Trust leads an ongoing partnership project for the species, including East Sussex County Council, Kew at Wakehurst, Forestry Commission and the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. With such a small and localised distribution, it is essential that the LNRS supports the continuation of this work.

**Grayling** is notable as the single population in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is the only one in the UK found on chalk. That population is in imminent risk of extinction, but early signs from a collaborative project between Butterfly Conservation and the South



📷 Bumblebee on spiked rampion

© iStock.com/Tanja Nik



📷 Grayling

© Derek Middleton/Sussex Wildlife Trust



📷 Round-headed rampion

© Ben Rainbow



📷 Glow-worm

© Don Baker



Downs National Park Authority to expand its range are promising, so the LNRS is keen to support the continuation of this partnership. Arguably, the species most iconic of the LNRS area is **round-headed rampion** – a chalk grassland plant that is found on Downs in Wiltshire, Hampshire and Surrey, but nowhere so frequent as it is here, so much so that it is known as the ‘Pride of Sussex’.

Other priority species which are not so restricted in their distribution are the hedgehog and the glow worm. **Hedgehog** populations have undergone a significant decline in recent decades, and are now largely restricted to our urban areas, where they are becoming strongly dependent on networks of private gardens. Hedgehogs were the third most popular species from our public surveys, with 14% of our respondents mentioning them, and are considered to be a champion species for urban habitats. The **glow-worm** is another iconic species which, although well distributed and relatively common in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, is declining and has been lost from some sites, and therefore has been prioritised.

Species that have not been shortlisted but that will be supported by habitat measures include the barn owl, marsh gentian and adder. East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is important for all of these species, but they will benefit from our measures to enhance, expand and recreate their core habitats. Also amongst this list is the great silver water beetle, the UK’s largest insect. Although nationally scarce and restricted to grazing marshes in the south and east, it has been frequently recorded in ditches and ponds in a number of wetland sites in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and it will benefit from nature recovery action in these areas.

Another species that has not been shortlisted is the native black-poplar. This is a rare and declining species in the UK, and is most frequent in parts of East Anglia and some central areas but very scarce in the South East. Despite that, about 45 mature trees are known across Sussex, and a hugely successful restoration programme has seen about 8000 saplings planted across both counties. In addition to our priority species, the LNRS will support at least 326 species of conservation concern.



📷 Female hedgehog with hoglets  
© iStock.com/slowmotiongli



📷 Adder  
© iStock.com/MikeLane45



📷 Barn owl  
© Oliver Walters



📷 Black-poplar  
© Kate Ryland



## 4.5 Nature Networks & Wildlife-rich Habitats

The above habitat descriptions relate to specific habitat types. In reality, these habitats rarely exist in isolation, but more often occur together to form a mosaic. Natural succession means that many habitats will develop into others over time – grassland will become scrub, scrub will become woodland. Part of nature conservation is to manage these changes, but often our most valuable areas are those transitions or ecotones where one type of habitat grades into another. It is also seldom the case that nature recovery projects will concentrate on creating a single habitat. Indeed, lots of the positive actions already being taken for nature recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, such as Rewilding Waterhall, restoration of mineral sites or the creation of habitat banks for biodiversity net gain, are aimed at creating a range of different habitat types.

Many of our priority species are not restricted to one habitat type, but rather need a mosaic of different habitats in close proximity to flourish. A good example is the turtle dove which needs dense scrub for nesting, seed rich arable margins with patches of bare ground and a nearby source of water. Similarly, grey long-eared bats often roost in farm buildings, but they rely on grassland meadows and woodland edge for foraging. As many of our habitats are fragmented by development, farming and infrastructure, nature recovery must consider how and where we can better connect our semi-natural habitats. Providing green or blue corridors, like hedgerows or ditches, or improving and expanding existing habitats, helps wildlife to move through the landscape, building resilience and expanding into new areas.

Because of this, some of our priorities relate to the creation and strengthening of nature networks and wildlife-rich areas. Such projects are absolutely fundamental to nature recovery at scale, and are firmly embedded in our guiding principles around habitats needing to be bigger, better, more and joined-up for wildlife.



📷 Turtle dove © Neale Ambrose/Sussex Wildlife Trust

## 4.6 Protected Sites

### Designations

The value of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove for wildlife and beauty is recognised by the areas designated for their nature conservation interest. Some are protected under international agreements or national legislation and some under local policies. The following table shows the extent of these **protected sites** in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

SSSIs support habitats and/or species of national importance, and represent our best sites for wildlife and geology. Within these nationally important areas, some are additionally designated as NNRs – these recognise some of our most important habitats, species and geology and are considered to be the ‘jewel in the crown’ of our SSSIs. SACs are internationally important sites for habitats and species, SPAs are internationally important sites for birds, and Ramsar sites<sup>o</sup> are internationally important wetlands. All of these sites are protected by law.

Designation	No. of Sites	Extent (ha)	% of LNRS Area
Ramsar wetlands	2	6,442	3.7
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) <sup>o</sup>	6	7,624	4.2
Special Protection Areas (SPA) <sup>o</sup>	2	5,546	3.2
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) <sup>o</sup>	65	15,519	8.5
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	4	342	0.2
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	28	2,029	1.1
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) <sup>o</sup>	368	10,408	5.7
<b>Total extent of national &amp; international designations*</b>		<b>15,547</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>Total extent of all designations*</b>		<b>26,004</b>	<b>14.4</b>

\*NB designations can overlap so total extents are not a direct sum.



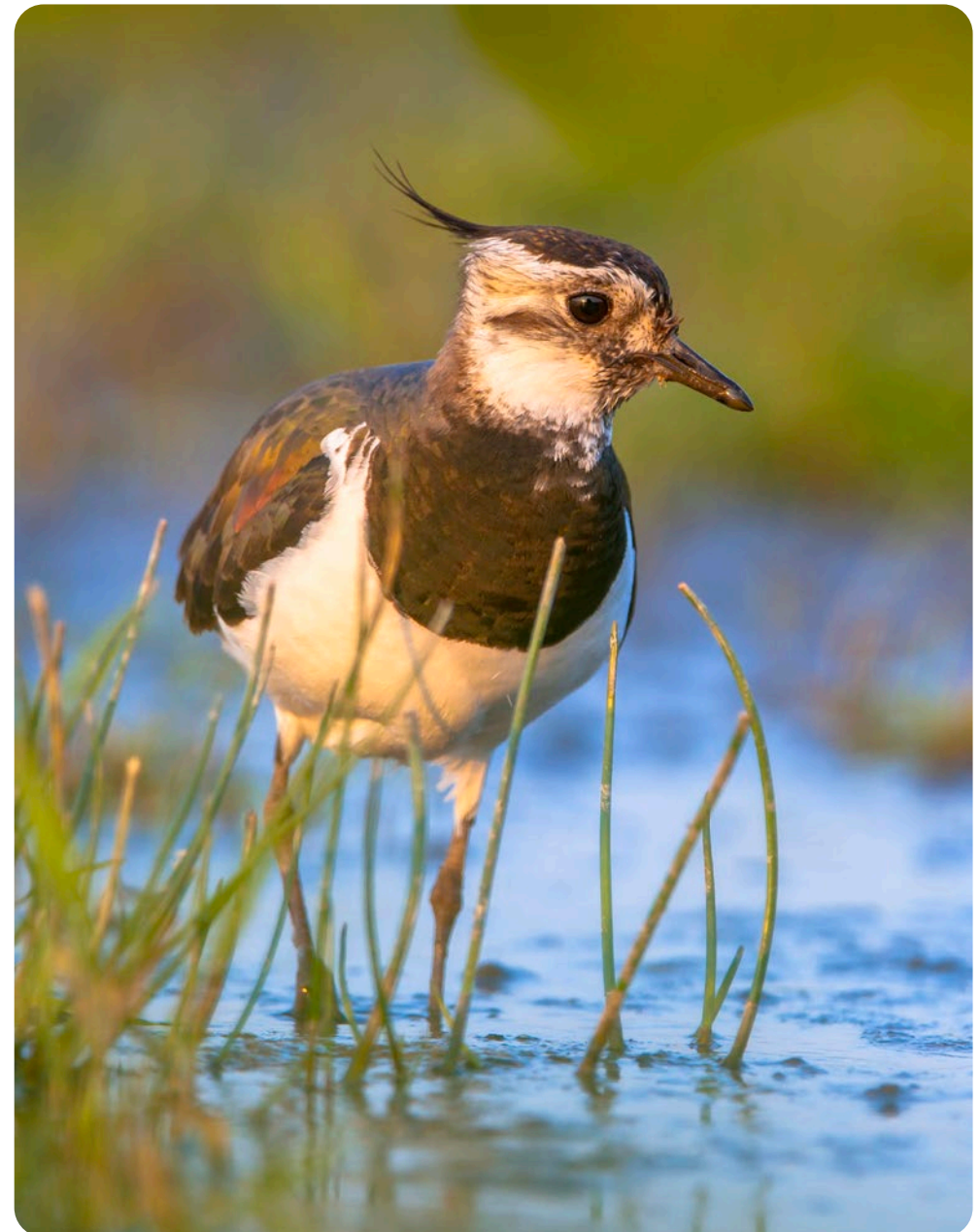
Pevensey Levels © Kai Hilton/Sussex Wildlife Trust



Locally important sites can also be designated and protected through policy. LNRs are locally important for wildlife, geology, education and enjoyment, and LWSs contain features of substantive wildlife value, and are meant to provide more comprehensive coverage of important areas for wildlife than SSSIs.

Some sites can have multiple designations due to their importance for a range of wildlife. For example, Ashdown Forest is one of the largest single continuous blocks of lowland heath, semi-natural woodland and valley bog in the South East. It is a SSSI for its habitats, uncommon plants, rich invertebrate fauna and important populations of heath and woodland birds, an SAC for its wet and dry heaths and its population of great crested newts, and an SPA for its internationally important populations of nightjar and Dartford warbler. Part of the site (Old Lodge) is also a LNR managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Revensey Levels is one of the largest and least fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in the South East. It is a SSSI for its nationally rare and nationally scarce aquatic plants, nationally rare invertebrates and nationally important populations of wintering lapwings, an SAC for its population of little ram's-horn whirlpool snail and a Ramsar site for its wetland invertebrate and plant assemblages. It also contains a NNR.



📷 Lapwing © iStock.com/CreativeNature\_nl



# State of Nature

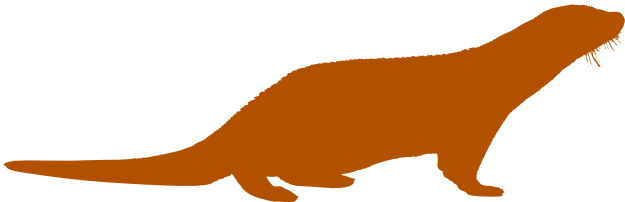
There is no comprehensive view of the State of Nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove due to a lack of resources and investment. We therefore have to use the condition of our protected sites as a proxy measurement for the state of our most important wildlife sites.

Designation of sites for nature conservation does not necessarily always mean that these sites are in good condition. The condition of SSSIs is assessed by Natural England, and East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council both regularly report to Defra<sup>o</sup> on the condition of our LWS in positive management. In both cases, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove exceeds the national average, with about 90% of our SSSIs in either favourable or recovering condition. The condition of our LWS is less certain as these values have been calculated based on our best available information, such as whether or not LWS are under environmental stewardship or have management plans for biodiversity rather than on-the-ground assessments. However, more than 40% of our LWS are being managed positively for biodiversity.



📷 Castle Hill in the City Downland Estate SSSI.  
© The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere

Protected site	Condition	% England	% of LNRS Area
SSSI	Favourable	33.56	36.48
	Unfavourable – recovering	45.15	53.99
	Unfavourable – no change	8.74	1.25
	Unfavourable – declining	12.44	8.14
LWS	Site in positive management	39	40.76
	Site not in positive management	-	3.53
	Site has insufficient evidence	-	55.71



# 4.7 Irreplaceable Habitats

Some of our habitats would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity<sup>43</sup> – these are collectively called **irreplaceable habitats**<sup>44</sup>. Within East Sussex and Brighton & Hove they include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees<sup>44</sup>, coastal sand dunes, saltmarsh (spartina saltmarsh swards and mediterranean saltmarsh scrub) and lowland fens<sup>44</sup>. Ancient woodland includes ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), ancient wood pasture and parkland (AWPP) and infilled ancient wood pasture and parkland (IAWPP).

The exact extent of irreplaceable habitat within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area is not known, as our habitat mapping is not refined enough to distinguish between the different types of saltmarsh, not all of which are classed as irreplaceable. Similarly, the extent of ancient wood parkland and pasture is not known, nor is the or area covered by ancient and veteran trees, and there are many of these trees which are as yet unrecorded.

Within East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, we consider that chalk streams and sandstone outcrops would meet the definition of being irreplaceable, although they are not formally recognised as such.



Yew Tree, Wilmington © iStock.com/Matthew J Thomas

Irreplaceable Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LNRS area
Ancient woodland (ASNW + PAWS)	20,998.1	11.6
Ancient woodland (AWPP + IAWPP)	Unknown	Unknown
Ancient & veteran trees	Unknown	Unknown
Lowland fens	33.8	0.02
Coastal sand dunes	53.5	0.03
Spartina saltmarsh swards	Unknown	Unknown
Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub	Unknown	Unknown

43 National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023.  
44 The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024.

## 4.8 What nature does for us

### The 'natural capital' of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

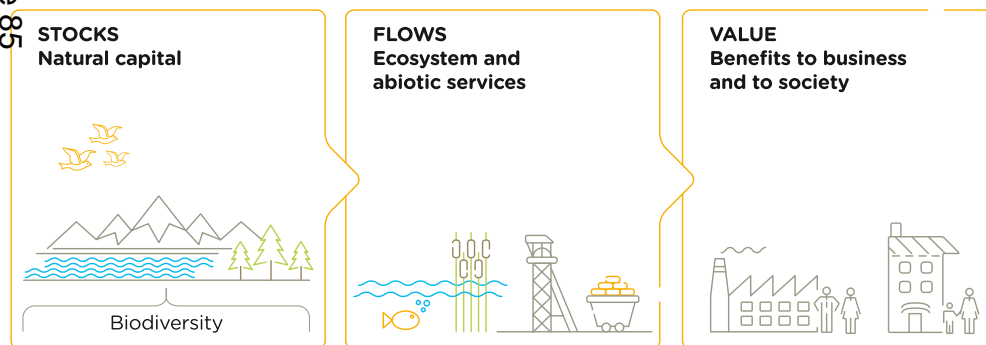
#### What is natural capital?

Our ecosystems, habitats, species and soils deliver a range of 'ecosystem services' that are essential for human life. These include food, fuel, clean air, clean water, pollination, carbon storage and sequestration<sup>o</sup>, nutrient cycling<sup>o</sup>, and opportunities for recreation which in turn supports our health and wellbeing. Nature acting in this way can be thought of as 'natural capital', with each element (habitats, species, soils etc) acting as a natural capital **asset**.

#### Figure 2. Natural Capital flow diagram

(Adapted from Natural England, 2021. 2nd edition.

How to start using your natural capital atlas).



For nature to deliver the benefits we depend on, three factors are important:

- How **much** we have (quantity/area of habitats, soils etc);
- How **healthy** it is (habitats, soils etc. must be in good ecological condition and able to function in a way that can provide services and benefits);
- **Where** it is (is it located where we need it to be in order to deliver specific services?).

#### Natural Capital and Local Nature Recovery Strategies

When developing an LNRS, it is important to understand *how* nature can help to deliver vital benefits and services and *where*. This helps to direct action and investment to where it will support wildlife but also deliver additional benefits that are of value to our local society and economy. Two approaches are particularly important:

- Creating more effective 'nature networks' of bigger, better, more and joined-up habitats, supported by healthy soils and more natural processes<sup>o</sup> in our landscape. By doing this we will bring our natural capital into better health, and as a result deliver more benefits and services for people.
- Using nature in very specific ways to deliver benefits where we need them most, for example planting trees or grassland buffers along our



rivers to support water quality or reduce flood risk. These sorts of approaches are known as ‘nature-based solutions’.

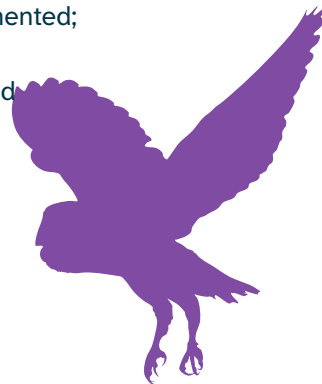
## Benefits and services provided by natural capital assets in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

Table 1 gives an indication of the likely benefits/services that each habitat type (or asset) provides, as actual levels will depend on their quality, quantity and location. However, it is a useful checklist to have in mind when creating or enhancing habitats with a view to delivering benefits for nature and people.

Across Sussex, the pressure on some of our natural capital is such that we risk losing not just the habitats, but also the benefits they provide.

In 2019, the Sussex Nature Partnership identified our ‘*natural capital at risk*’, habitats that are:

- Not adequately protected under existing mechanisms;
- Fragile or vulnerable and/or already highly fragmented;
- Of particular significance in a Sussex context;
- Irreplaceable or not easily re-created if destroyed (either on-site or elsewhere).



The habitat types included in this list are:

- Lowland heathland
- Mudflats and saltmarsh
- Coastal vegetated shingle
- Reedbed, fen and grazing marsh
- Floodplain woodlands
- Species-rich grassland

These habitats have been prioritised within this LNRS for enhancement and expansion, as a means to support wildlife and increase the resilience of these ‘at risk’ natural capital assets.



📷 Wildflower meadow, South Downs © iStock.com/Lemanieh

Table 1. Ecosystem services and benefits provided by natural capital in East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove

	Food/Fibre	Water Supply	Climate Regulation	Clean Water	Pollination	Wild Species Diversity	Hazard Regulation (flooding and erosion)	Cultural
<b>Coastal Habitats</b>	✓ Grazing (saltmarsh)	✗	✓ Carbon storage & sequestration	✓ Water purification & detoxification (saltmarsh)	✓ Pollinator habitat (saltmarsh and sand dunes)	✓ Wildlife habitat, feeding and roosting, nursery grounds for fish	✓ Coastal flood & erosion mitigation	✓ Aesthetic value, sense of place and accessible nature
<b>Farmland</b>	✓ Food production; timber; fibre (wool)	+/- Depends on management Management of land and habitat creation can assist with flow regulation (storage and recharge) However, impact may be negative when poor soil management increases run off	+/- Depends on management Negative impacts come from emissions of GHG and depletion of soil carbon This can be improved or reversed through farming system and soil management	+/- Depends on management and location Negative impacts come from run-off from farmland which is a common source of diffuse pollution and sedimentation This can be improved through farming system, soil management and creation of vegetation buffers along water courses	+/- Depends on management Habitats created on farmland can provide vital habitats for pollinators However, negative impacts on pollinators come from the use of pesticides and loss of habitats	+/- Depends on management Semi-natural habitats on farmed land provide important habitats for wildlife; farmland may be particularly important for specialist species Farmland may offer few opportunities for wildlife if areas of habitat are small or not managed for nature	+/- Depends on management Farmland can provide positive benefits for surface and fluvial flood mitigation However, it may also be a contributor to soil erosion and increase in potential for downstream flooding	✓ Aesthetic value, sense of place and accessible nature (where available via footpaths, access land etc)
<b>Species-rich Grassland</b>	✓ Meat (grazing, hay)	✗ Water quantity	✓ Carbon storage and sequestration	✓ Detoxification and purification	✓ Supports pollinators	✓ High value wildlife habitat	✓ Surface and fluvial flood mitigation	✓ Aesthetic/ sense of place; accessible nature

Table 1. Ecosystem services and benefits provided by natural capital in East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove

	Food/Fibre	Water Supply	Climate Regulation	Clean Water	Pollination	Wild Species Diversity	Hazard Regulation (flooding and erosion)	Cultural
<b>Woodland &amp; Hedgerows</b>	✓ Timber	✓ Water quantity and flow regulation – especially from floodplain woodland	✓ Carbon storage and sequestration	✓ Detoxification and purification	✓ Supports pollinators	✓ High value habitat (value varies with woodland type and condition)	✓ Surface and fluvial flood mitigation (especially floodplain woodland)	✓ Aesthetic/ sense of place; accessible nature
<b>Lowland Heath</b>	✓ Timber: woodland on heathland sites	✗	✓ Carbon storage and sequestration	✓ Detoxification and purification	✓ Supports pollinator species	✓ High value wildlife habitat	✓ Surface and fluvial flood mitigation (particularly headwaters)	✓ Aesthetic/ sense of place; accessible nature
<b>Rivers, Streams &amp; Aquifers</b>	✓ Fish (non-commercial)	✓ Water quantity and flow regulation	✓ Temperature regulation	✓ Detoxification and purification of water	✗	✓ High value wildlife habitat	✓ Surface and fluvial flood mitigation	✓ Accessible nature; aesthetic/ sense of place
<b>Wetland &amp; Standing Water Bodies</b>	✗	✓ Flow regulation and recharge	✓ Carbon storage and sequestration	✓ Detoxification and purification of water	✗	✓ Support biodiversity; bird breeding, wintering and feeding grounds	✓ Surface and fluvial flood mitigation	✓ Accessible nature; aesthetic/ sense of place
<b>Urban Habitats</b>	✓ With the exception of allotments and some private gardens	✓ SuDS and other habitats: provide flow regulation and recharge especially on aquifer	✓ Carbon storage and sequestration – although small area may make this negligible	✓ Detoxification and purification of water	✓ Important sources of pollinator habitat in urban areas	✓ Wildlife habitat: important refuges of habitat in urban areas	✓ SuDS and other habitats: Surface and fluvial flood mitigation	✓ Accessible nature; aesthetic/ sense of place; health and wellbeing





## 4.9 Pressures on nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

Nature across the UK is in trouble, with more than 50% of species in decline. Some causes of this are historic, some are current and ongoing while others are emerging and have impacts that are hard to predict. Changing the trajectory from decline to 'nature's recovery' requires action to reduce these pressures but also to ensure habitats and species are more resilient in the face of change.

Many of the pressures on nature are complex 'system' problems that can only be tackled through collaboration across sectors, from government, policymakers and conservation organisations to community groups, farmers and land managers. Examples include climate change, air pollution, water pollution, loss of wildlife habitat and urbanisation. Despite their obvious impact on nature, tackling these is beyond the scope of a LNRS.

The strategies **can**, however, help to identify where and how habitats and species can be supported to become more resilient to the changes which come from these pressures. They can also identify where 'nature-based solutions' can be used as part of the toolkit for minimising impacts on the wider environment.

### Long-term trends

Decline in biodiversity in the UK is related to a number of specific trends that have been ongoing for many decades:

- Loss of wildlife-rich habitat;
- Reduction in the size of areas of habitat, so that in many cases they are too small to support species or function ecologically;
- Greater fragmentation of wildlife-rich habitats – sites are separated across a landscape and not well connected, which provides barriers for species which need to move between areas of habitat for survival;
- Reduction in the quality, species composition and/or structure of habitats – making it less wildlife-rich and less resilient to further change;
- Direct loss of species and/or reduction in their abundance or distribution, via pests, disease, pollution, climate change, changes to habitats etc;
- Reduction in environmental quality (e.g. poor air, water or soil quality) which has knock-on effects on both habitats and species;
- Loss of natural processes and functions, which means that the potential of nature to deliver the range of wider benefits and services we rely on is reduced.



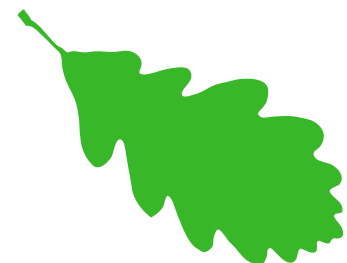
📷 Rural flooding © iStock.com/bunsview

The principles, priorities and measures set out in Parts 2 and 3 of this Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, directly respond to these sorts of impacts on nature and build on the actions and experiences of landowners, conservation organisations and other practitioners in addressing these trends in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove over many years.

The trends above are a result of pressures which can be thought of as either 'direct' or 'indirect'. Indirect pressures (such as our growing disconnection from nature and decrease in the value and importance of nature within society and key decision-making processes) are not dealt with here but must be part of a wider cross-sectoral approach to achieving nature's recovery.

The direct pressures on nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove fall broadly into eight categories, many of which are inter-related<sup>45</sup>.

**Figure 3. Direct pressures on nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove**



<sup>45</sup> These categories are taken from State of Nature Report for the UK (2019).



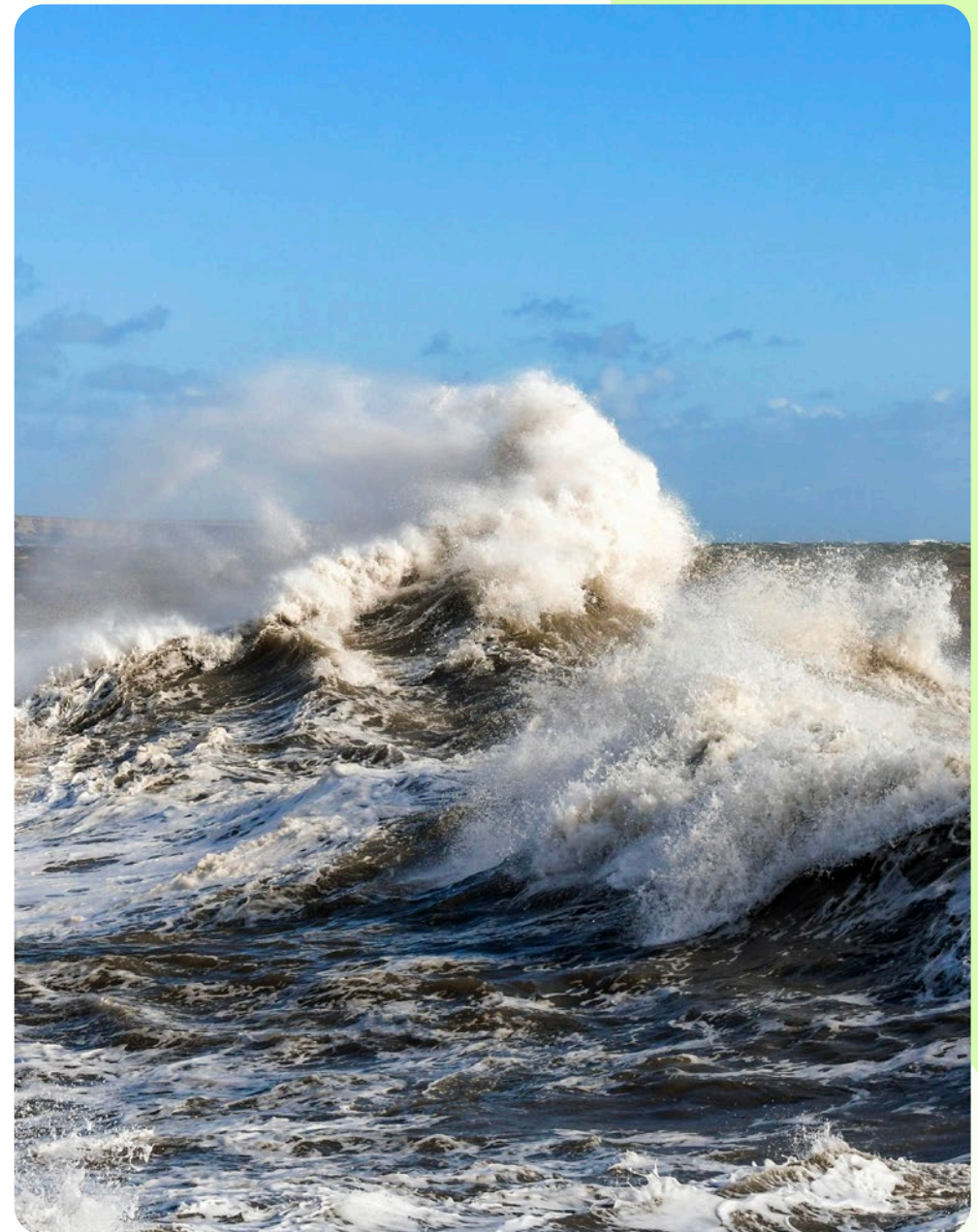
## Climate change

Human-driven climate change has had a significant impact on nature in the UK over the last 40 years and this is projected to continue for decades or even centuries to come.

The key climatic changes affecting nature now and into the future in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are **increasing temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and sea level rise**. The south-east of England is expected to see the greatest rise in summer temperatures in the UK. At the same time, summer rainfall is projected to decrease while winter rainfall is expected to increase, characterised by a higher frequency and intensity of storms. This will create an increased risk of both drought and flooding events.

Sea levels are predicted to rise along with changes to tides and waves, and again this rise is expected to be greatest in the south of England.

These changes are already having a direct effect on species, affecting their abundance (populations decrease or increase depending on whether they can cope with the conditions) and distribution (species may be forced to move to more favourable conditions if they can). They also affect the timing of important seasonal events (for example, when birds lay eggs or plants flower) which can have a critical impact on populations of species and the complex inter-relationships between them that are vital for their survival.



Stormy seas © iStock.com/Ceri Breeze



## Our habitats face a range of challenges from a changing climate

*Specific impacts are related to habitat types and how resilient these are to factors such as precipitation and temperature.*

For example, drier summers will result in significant reductions in water levels in our **rivers, chalk streams, wetlands, ponds and aquifers**. This will be compounded by abstraction of water for human use (existing and in the future), in our already ‘water stressed’ region. The result is greater risk of these habitats drying out with clear impacts for species and the range of other environmental benefits we receive from our freshwater environment (most notably our water supply). Higher temperatures across the year will drive increases in water temperature, reducing oxygen levels in these habitats and leading to greater concentrations of nutrients and pollutants and exacerbating poor water quality where this is already an issue.

**Lowland heathland and species-rich grasslands** will also be affected by changes in rainfall and temperature, with increased risk of wildfire and a change in species composition. Heathland, like wetland, will also be more likely to dry out in summer months.

**Woodlands** will be more likely to experience stress due to drought, with some tree species such as beech likely to be more vulnerable than others. Higher temperatures and drier summer conditions will mean that the choice of species for new woodland may have to change to ensure that new woodland can survive in more challenging conditions. More intense winter storms with higher winds are likely to cause increased damage to trees and woodlands in winter months. The changing climate is also increasing the risk to our woodland from pests and diseases, with ash dieback a current example of a pest which is radically impacting the species composition of our woodlands.



Sea defence work © iStock.com/FitchyImages

Along the coastline of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, sea level rise and increased frequency and intensity of storms is already leading to significant losses of **coastal habitats**. For these habitats to survive, they need to be able to expand inland, out of reach of the rising seas and coastal erosion. However, the coastline of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is characterised by extensive areas of hard infrastructure located very close to the shoreline (hard flood defences, roads, railways and urban areas). This results in ‘**coastal squeeze**’ leaving these coastal habitats with nowhere to go.

Managing and defending our coastline for the benefit of coastal habitats and wildlife as well as people will therefore be a significant challenge in the future. Where they are possible and feasible, some approaches to coastal defences such as ‘**managed realignment**’ can offer both – the space for the creation of more coastal habitats which themselves can help to buffer areas inland from storms and sea level rise. Harbours and tidal reaches of rivers will also remain of vital importance as key areas for expansion of threatened coastal habitats.

## Intensive agricultural management

Around two thirds of land in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is farmed. Our most iconic and valued habitats, such as ancient woodland and species-rich grasslands, were shaped by ‘traditional’ agricultural management practices over centuries (typically low intensity stocking levels, rotational cropping patterns and low/no inputs of agricultural chemicals). Specialist farmland species such as arable weeds and farmland birds also co-evolved with these traditional practices and habitats and came to rely on them for their survival.

## Farmed landscape losses since WWII

During the last century, changes in agricultural policy incentivised a drive towards greater productivity from the farming sector, which in turn led to more intensive practices and the over-use of chemicals. The result was less space for nature across our farmed land as hedgerows and field margins were removed (to increase field sizes) and wetlands were drained (to make way for grazing). Habitat loss was coupled with degradation of habitat condition as traditional practices such as hay making, hedge laying and low-intensity grazing practices were replaced by modern and more intensive farming methods. The over-use of pesticides led to a degradation in soil health and reduction of pollinator and insect populations while excess use of fertiliser dramatically increased the impact of agricultural run-off on our water courses and aquatic habitats.

The result was a dramatic loss of habitats and species from the farmed landscape across the UK. Most dramatic was the decline in farmland bird species – those dependent on the more traditional habitats and practices on farmland and unable to adapt as these habitats have been lost. These species, which include corn bunting, grey partridge, turtle dove and tree sparrow experienced declines of more than 80% between the 1970s and 2010s. In contrast, some of our more ‘generalist’ species such as jackdaw and woodpigeon proved to be more resistant to agricultural change and numbers have remained healthy.

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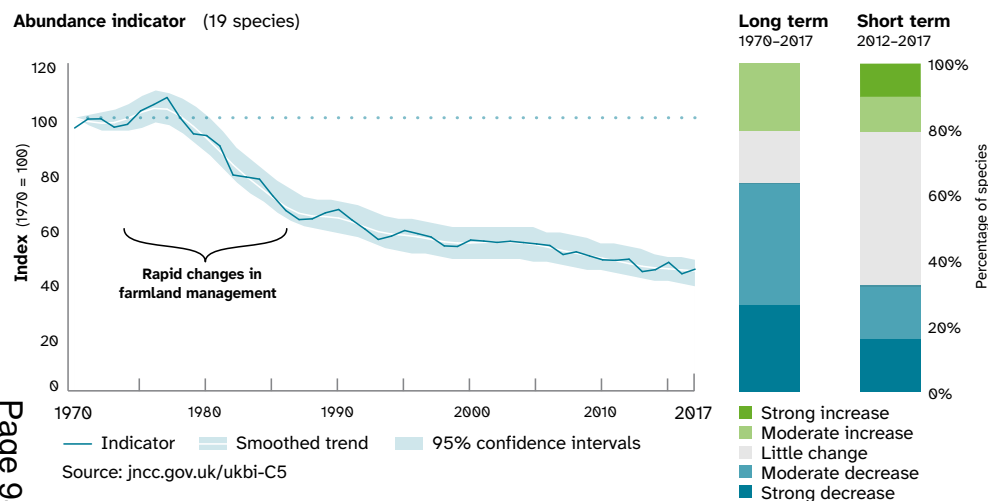


Farmland, Bodium © D Alcroft



## Figure 4. UK Biodiversity Indicator: Trends in breeding farmland birds in the UK, 1970 to 2017

(source: State of Nature 2019, p20)



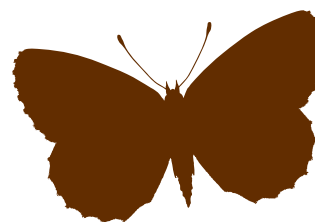
## Looking ahead: a more nature-positive future

This historic impact of agriculture has been widely acknowledged as significant and mostly negative. However, over recent decades, agricultural policy has moved towards a much more sustainable and nature-positive approach. Specific funds for agri-environment schemes<sup>o</sup> and a strong commitment from farmers and landowners to create or improve wildlife habitats has led to positive change. Policies and practices on reduced use of agri-chemicals have been adopted by the sector and approaches such as ‘regenerative farming’ have started to become more commonplace. Within protected landscapes in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, specific funding and resources have helped to support farmers adopt nature-friendly methods and many farmers within the LNRS area are working individually and together through ‘farmer clusters’ to create habitats and support species across the farmed landscape.

## Support for our farmers and land managers

Progress, however, remains very dependent on government policy and funding and the wider economic pressures on farm businesses. Funding for environmental actions by farmers remains limited and uncertain, as government environmental land management schemes<sup>o</sup> continue to change. Creating and managing habitats can be costly and although funding from schemes may help, a loss of local abattoirs and small local markets for products such as wood and venison make it more difficult for farmers to derive financial benefits from conservation management.

There also remains a need for well-coordinated advice and support that makes financial sense for farmers, to help them deliver the types of nature positive actions they want to. Meanwhile, issues such as diffuse agricultural pollution and run-off from farmed land continue to cause significant impacts on nature, and new forms of land use change (such as conversion of grasslands to vineyards and horse paddocks) may have impacts on wildlife that are not yet fully understood.





## Changes to the freshwater environment

Population growth and development increases the demand for water. In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove most of our water comes from groundwater and is abstracted from chalk aquifers. These aquifers also supply our springs, streams, wetlands and rivers. We are reliant on their ability to recharge in periods of rainfall, yet this function is impacted by development and inappropriate land use above the aquifer.

Water is also directly abstracted from some of our rivers. Many of the rivers and streams in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are experiencing pressures due to low flows and these are likely to become more severe as drier, hotter summers exacerbate the impacts of abstraction. Some of the most acute problems of low flows have occurred in our chalk rivers and streams and fragile wetlands systems.

Water quality, in our rivers and streams but also in our groundwater, is also under increasing pressure in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. The greatest threat to the water quality of our rivers and streams comes from wastewater (discharge of waste from sewage, agriculture or trade) and diffuse pollution from the land (nutrients, pesticides and herbicides finding their way into water courses through soil and water run-off from fields). Ground water quality is most at threat from poor nutrient management of rural and agricultural land. (See also 'pollution'.)

Freshwater habitats have also been directly impacted by land use and agricultural change in recent decades. Wetlands have been drained to support grazing and there has been a significant loss of ponds across Sussex, through neglect or direct human intervention.

Those freshwater habitats that remain face increasing pressure due to agricultural land drainage, pollution, isolation and urban development.

Finally, many of our rivers and streams have been physically changed to enable the water environment to be used for a variety of purposes. These have introduced structures such as weirs, culverts and flood banks and have straightened meanders and altered the width of river channels. The result has been a reduction in the ability of our river systems to function naturally, both hydrologically and ecologically. However, innovative river restoration schemes are emerging in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove as an approach to tackling this issue where landowners, flood risk authorities and local residents are supportive.

📷 The Cockshut Stream Restoration Project realigned the Cockshut chalk stream into a new channel flowing through 6.8ha of wetland habitat, boosting biodiversity and climate resilience of the Lewes Brooks habitats and beyond.

© D Alcroft



## Urbanisation

The demand for new housing and infrastructure has led to increasing urbanisation across the UK, particularly around existing centres of population. Urbanisation directly affects wildlife by changing land use and causing habitat loss. New settlements, roads and infrastructure also increase fragmentation of the landscape, creating barriers between habitats and species populations.

In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, urbanisation has typically led to the loss of habitats such as grassland, arable farmland, hedgerows, woodland and trees and caused notable fragmentation of valued priority habitats such as lowland heath and chalk grassland. In coastal areas it has also resulted in the loss or fragmentation of already pressured coastal habitats such as coastal vegetated shingle and saltmarsh<sup>46</sup>. While the impacts on habitats are most obvious from large development or infrastructure projects, the cumulative habitat losses and fragmentation from small developments must not be underestimated and can gradually diminish and fragment important areas of habitat over time.

Within urban areas, increased light pollution, air and noise pollution and predation by domestic animals has a significant impact on wildlife. Other impacts include the creation of impermeable surfaces which cause damage to soil function and promote run-off. The result is increased surface water flooding and diffuse pollution of

water courses and groundwater. Water quality is also compromised by increased levels of wastewater from septic tanks and sewage discharges. A greater demand for water from a growing population will place greater strain on our water supply and thus on the water flows within our aquifers and rivers.

### However, urbanisation need not always lead to biodiversity loss.

Changes in legislation now mean that many types of development must create 'biodiversity net gain' (BNG) – ensuring that they result in at least 10% more biodiversity than was present before the development. Schemes like District Licensing for great crested newts also create habitat for this protected species, paid for through development. Greenspaces, verges and gardens within urban areas provide important urban habitats for biodiversity but are often designed for human use rather than for wildlife. However, with a shift in emphasis they all hold potential for improvement for wildlife and can host habitat creation projects which will deliver multiple benefits for nature and people at the local scale.

It is worth noting that in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove a large proportion of our LNRS area sits within our Protected Landscapes (South Downs National Park, High Weald National Landscape). These areas have tighter controls on development which has the result of squeezing most new development into the areas beyond their boundaries. This is creating a distinct area of the LNRS that is expected to absorb the greatest impacts of urbanisation. This will have impacts on nature and the wider environment, making the role of the LNRS and BNG in driving nature's recovery in this area even more important.

<sup>46</sup> In 2019, Sussex Nature Partnership identified those habitats most at risk from further losses to development (natural capital at risk). See the Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Sussex for more information.



## Invasive non-native species and pathogens

Invasive non-native species (INNS)<sup>o</sup> are plants or animals that have established and spread outside their natural range. Whether introduced deliberately or by accident, they are often free from the selection pressures of their natural enemies and establish and spread rapidly. They outcompete our native flora and fauna for space, light, food and pollinators and can alter the composition and function of habitats and entire ecosystems. They may predate on native species and spread disease. In some cases, they play a direct role in the local extinction of species. Thus, they are one of the greatest threats to global biodiversity.

Over 3200 non-native species have been recorded in Great Britain and of these, approximately 2000 are established and reproducing in the wild. More than two hundred of these have had a documented negative ecological or human impact. In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, invasive non-native species are found across all our ecosystem types. Rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands and transitional waters are particularly affected, both by species which establish in the water or on the banks. Grassland, heathland and woodland are also affected. The species that pose the most risk are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Invasive non-native species that pose the greatest risk in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove**

Invasive Species	Main habitat/species impacted
Grey squirrel	Red squirrel
Rhododendron ( <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> )	Woodland
Cherry laurel	
Oak processionary moth	
Himalayan balsam	Rivers and streams
American skunk cabbage	
Giant hogweed	
Floating pennywort	
Parrot's feather	
Water fern	
New Zealand pygmyweed	
Curly waterweed	
Canadian and Nuttall's waterweed	
Asian clam	
Signal crayfish	White-clawed crayfish
Chinese mitten crab	White-clawed crayfish, salmon, trout
American mink	Water vole
Cotoneaster	Grassland



Once established, INNS are very difficult to eradicate although it is possible to reduce their impact. In most cases, **control of their impact** is therefore the strategy adopted for dealing with INNS. Preventing the establishment in the first place is also vital and relies on good biosecurity<sup>9</sup> and awareness raising. In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, eradication is an ambition limited to American mink, a species that was released into the countryside from fur farms in the 1950s and which has decimated Sussex water vole populations. Eradication is a feasible aim for this species and has already been achieved in areas of [eastern England](#).

Pathogens and diseases can also affect our native flora and fauna, with significant impacts on the organisms affected and to the wider ecosystems of which they are a part. High profile examples that have affected the woodlands of East Sussex include [Dutch elm disease](#) (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) and [ash dieback](#) (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). Dutch elm disease, a fungus spread by elm bark beetles, has had a particularly significant impact on elms in and around our coastal towns including Brighton & Hove which holds the National Elm Collection.

Ash dieback, another fungus, is devastating the population of European ash across the UK. Carried on the wind, this pathogen has had the greatest impact in the south-east of England. Killing trees from the inside, it creates safety issues for all local authorities as affected ash must be felled along roads and paths at significant cost. Other pathogens that are emerging in the woodlands of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove include [oak processionary moth](#) and the [spruce bark beetle](#). These are being monitored carefully to provide more information on their spread, impact and implications for woodland owners.



📷 Himalayan Balsam © iStock.com/Jonathan Repp

## Pollution

Pollutants threaten our biodiversity and have an impact on all habitats. They come in a diverse range of forms including but not limited to: plastic waste; chemicals in water, soil and air; noise and light from cities and transport; and nutrient enrichment of sensitive habitats.

### Poor water quality

Poor water quality places significant pressure on the habitats and species within our freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and is being driven primarily by pollution. Pollution from agriculture, land use and development (including sewage discharges) is causing increased levels of sediment, nutrients (phosphates/nitrates) and other chemical pollutants (such as pesticides and veterinary chemicals) in our water courses, standing water bodies and aquifers. Climate change is also a significant part of this problem, with high intensity rainfall events in the winter months contributing to greater levels of run-off from the land reaching our water courses, and bringing with it larger volumes of sediment and pollutants. Decreased rainfall patterns in spring and summer months lead to lower water levels in rivers, streams and other water bodies, concentrating levels of pollutants.

High levels of nutrients in ponds, lakes, estuaries and harbours (nutrient enrichment) combine with higher water temperatures to encourage the growth of algae. This changes the chemical and oxygen composition of these environments (a process called eutrophication<sup>9</sup>) and further decreases water quality. Many of our most fragile freshwater, coastal and marine habitats and sites are at significant risk from eutrophication. More generally, most of the surface water, ground water and coastal parts of our catchments (called 'water bodies' under the Water Framework Directive) fail against indicators for water quality and none are in 'good ecological condition'.

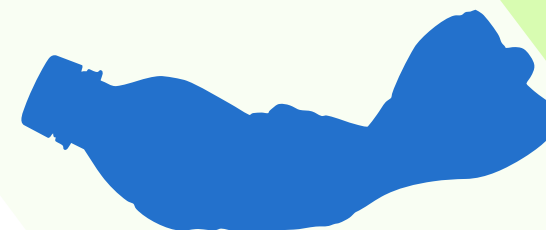
## Light, noise and air pollution

Caused by development and infrastructure, light pollution impacts moths, bats and other nocturnal species, affecting breeding and feeding patterns. It is thought to be having a particularly detrimental impact on the population of glow worms found in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove where very few breeding sites of these rare insects remain. Noise pollution on land and at sea affects the survival of birds and animals by reducing their ability to navigate, find food, mate, and avoid predators.

Air pollution from vehicle emissions can lead to soil acidification<sup>9</sup> and eutrophication; nitrogen deposition is a particular issue for the important heathland found in Ashdown Forest and is creating a reduction in species diversity found within this internationally important lowland heath ecosystem.

## Plastics

Plastic pollution is found in all types of ecosystems and includes microplastics and microbeads which are too small to be filtered out by water treatment works. Plastic pollution in an area causes habitats to degrade, disrupting their natural balance and function. It can also cause starvation, injury and death to wildlife who ingest it or get trapped or tangled in it. This is a particular concern in our coastal and marine habitats.



## Woodland management

Nature within woodlands throughout the UK is under pressure from a lack of management, overgrazing by deer, increasing levels of recreational disturbance, and nitrogen pollution. The prevalence of tree disease is also of increasing concern (See Invasive Non-Native Species and Pathogens above).

Ancient woodland, which makes up only 2.4% of total land cover in the UK is of great importance for biodiversity, supporting a range of specialist species. Despite its classification as an ‘irreplaceable habitat’<sup>47</sup>, it is at particular risk from these pressures and faces ongoing risk of loss to development and infrastructure. Due to the poor ecological condition of much of this woodland, specialist woodland bird and butterfly species are also in decline across the country, despite an overall increase in woodland cover. This signals the need to prioritise the quality of these ancient woodlands as part of any nature-recovery effort. East Sussex and Brighton & Hove contain high areas of ancient woodland relative to other counties in England and therefore tackling these pressures and bringing this habitat type back into healthy ecological condition is noted as a particular priority for woodland within this LNRS area.



Deer  
© iStock.com/JMrocek

### Deer pressure

The presence of very large numbers of deer in East Sussex is having a significant impact on the health of our habitats and is one of the most pressing and significant impacts on our woodlands. Fallow deer have been in the UK for many centuries and are now considered ‘naturalised’ but they have increased to unsustainable levels across the south-east of England. A more recent introduction, the muntjac deer, is also expanding in numbers at an alarming rate. These deer overgraze woodland, removing plant life growing beneath the canopy and preventing woods from naturally regenerating. As they destroy new plants, they also have a significant impact on new woodlands or hedgerows, making their establishment almost impossible in some areas. If deer numbers are not tackled, they will have a very detrimental impact on our woodlands’ future health and resilience, with knock on impacts on the specialist woodland species already in decline. Grey squirrels also impact on the ability of woodland to thrive and regenerate and their management is a specific priority in some parts of the LNRS for this reason.

<sup>47</sup> Irreplaceable habitat is a habitat that is very difficult (or takes a long time) to restore, create or replace once it has been destroyed. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/irreplaceable-habitats#what-irreplaceable-habitat-is>



## The decline of traditional woodland management practices

Traditionally, woodland in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove would have been managed through coppicing, grazing and systematic rotation of cutting and felling. However, these practices have declined significantly as demand for wood for fuel, crafts, and other traditional woodland products has waned. As a result, many woodlands have been left unmanaged for many years or have been managed for timber. This has led to structural changes within our woods, a lack of trees at different stages of growth, over-shading and a general lack of opportunities for wildlife to thrive<sup>48</sup>. Sensitively managed woodland supports much more biodiversity than unmanaged woodland. The diversity of height, structure and open spaces that management creates provide a mosaic of habitats capable of supporting both light and shade tolerant species<sup>49</sup>.

Traditional orchards, more often associated with Kent are also found across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove but particularly in areas of the High Weald. Countrywide, there has been significant loss of the more biodiversity-rich traditional orchards since the 1950s (90%) due to lack of management and a change in demand for their products<sup>50</sup>.



📷 Coppiced woodland  
© iStock.com/Chris Page

**“The State of Nature Report 2018 highlights mixed, but predominantly negative, long-term trends in woodland including: that 53% of woodland species have declined and 47% have increased; a 24% long-term decline in the index of change in the abundance and occupancy of woodland species; a 20% decline in the UK woodland bird indicator since 1970; and that 11% of woodland species are threatened with extinction from Great Britain”**

(Woodland Trust, 2018<sup>51</sup>).

48 <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/woodland>

49 <https://highweald.org/document-library/guidance/woodland-1/high-weald-land-management-guidance-woodlands/?layout=default>

50 <https://highweald.org/document-library/guidance/orchards/high-weald-land-management-guidance-orchards/?layout=default>

51 <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1704/current-state-of-ancient-woodland-restoration.pdf>

## Disturbance

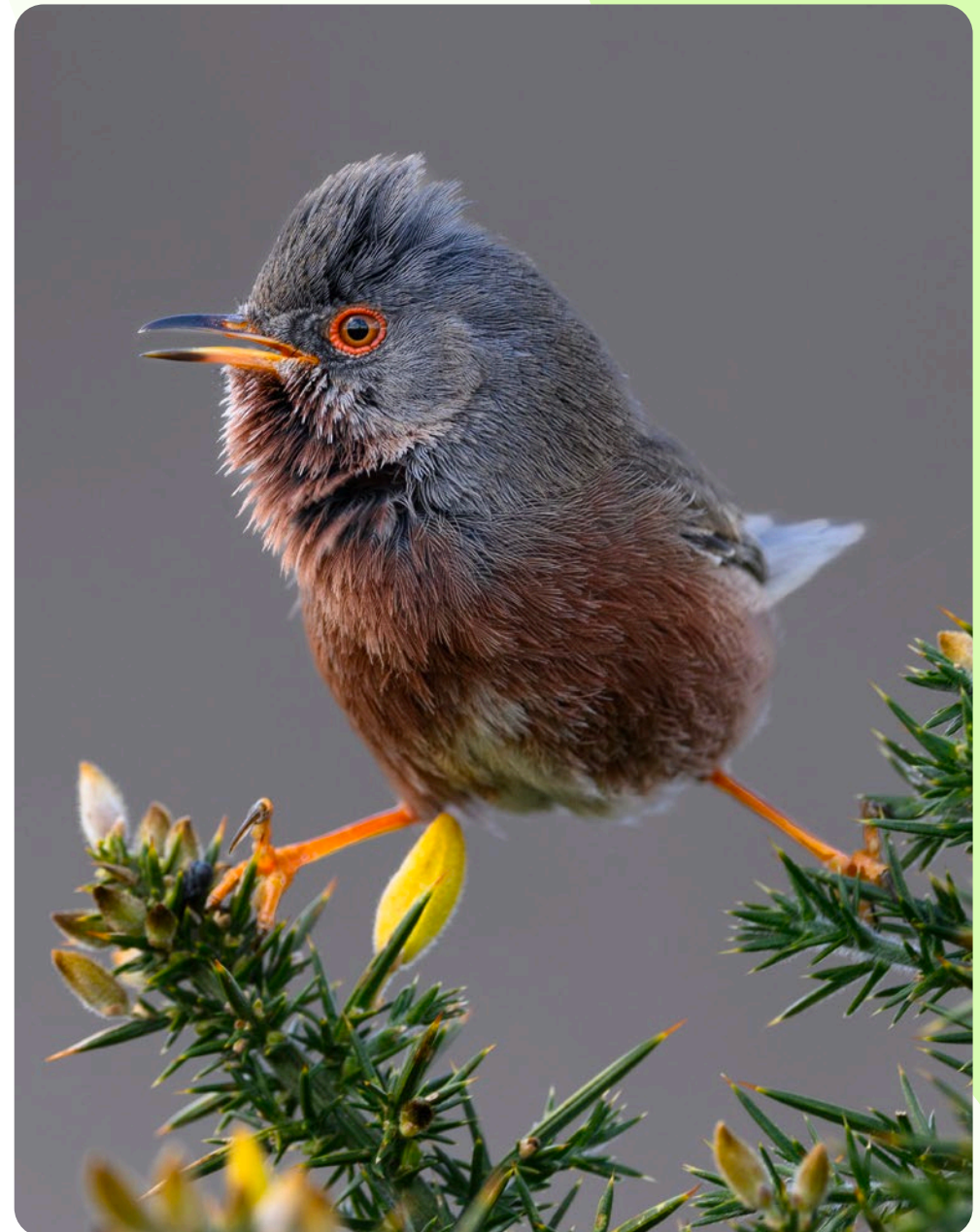
Our natural sites are visited by huge numbers of residents and tourists each year. However, in some places, recreational access is having a detrimental impact on nature. Types of disturbance include trampling, erosion, litter, noise and dogs off leads (which have a particularly negative impact on ground-nesting birds). Sites at the edges of urban areas and those with bigger tourist numbers face particularly high levels of disturbance.

Disturbance is a key pressure on internationally important sites in our LNRS area including coastal sites which support breeding and nesting coastal birds, the Ashdown Forest (where 1.5 million visitors per year are having an impact on rare bird species the Dartford warbler and nightjar) and at Camber Sands SSSI, where more than 15,000 visitors per day in peak season are damaging rare vegetation and the dune system itself\*.

While the impact of disturbance depends on how vulnerable the habitats and species are at a particular site, it can be reduced through actions to manage access and by increasing visitor awareness and understanding.

More information on all of these pressures and how they impact habitats and species nationally across the UK can be found in the UK State of Nature Reports for [2019](#) and [2023](#).

📷 Ground nesting birds like Dartford warblers are easily disturbed by dogs off leads.  
© iStock.com/Ian Newell





## Section 5.

What is  
happening  
already?

📷 Planting new hedgerows  
© CPRE Sussex



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)





## 5.1 Landscape-scale initiatives for nature

Though there are many pressures facing our natural world, there is much to be hopeful about in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

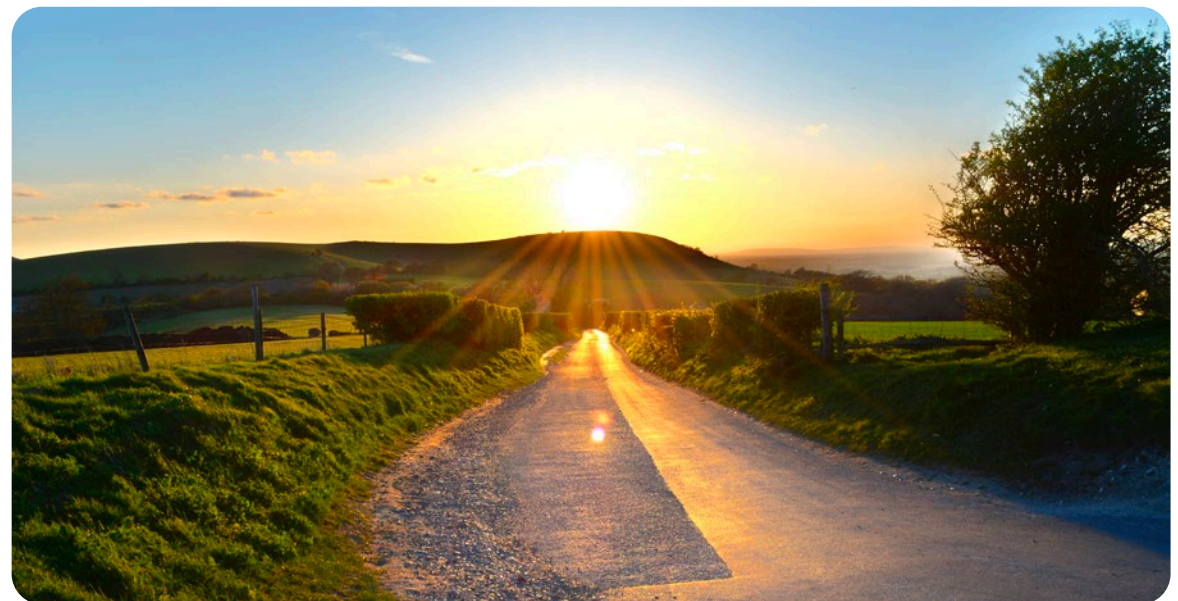
Delivering nature's recovery at scale is a **long-term and complex undertaking, requiring** collaboration and shared goals to mobilise landowners, policy makers, environmental experts and community groups to work together. Fortunately, several established and emerging initiatives are enabling just that in our LNRS area, and crucially they already have momentum, projects and resources in place.

The following are a few examples of the many projects and partnerships in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

As Protected Landscapes, the [South Downs National Park](#) and [High Weald National Landscape](#) are home to some of our most iconic habitats and species. They are also where over 200,000 people live and work. To achieve their ambitious environmental targets (the South Downs National Park for example, aims to increase land managed for nature from 25% to 33% by 2030), they provide leadership, coordinate large scale habitat improvement projects, offer support, advice and funding to landowners, and educate and engage local people.

📷 Volunteers moving brash as part of the Wilder Ouse initiative. Wilder Ouse is a partnership between Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Environment Agency, with funding from Lewes District Council.

© Roz Bassford/Sussex Wildlife Trust



📷 A view of Wolstonbury Hill in the South Downs National Park. © iStock.com/Inner\_Vision

Two exciting recent initiatives include [Weald to Waves](#), whose vision of establishing a 100-mile nature recovery corridor across Sussex is galvanising farmers, organisations and residents to pledge their land, and [Sussex Bay](#), which aims to unlock funding for marine and coastal recovery through 'radical collaboration'.

Other initiatives are focused on specific habitats within our LNRS area and encouraging local participation in their recovery. [Changing Chalk](#)'s mission is to restore the biodiversity of our precious chalk grassland, and inspire connection between the nature, people and heritage of the Downs. The [Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs](#) project seeks to restore, expand and reconnect forgotten ancient forests and bring together local people to help care for them.

Working to improve our water environments are the [Adur and Ouse Catchment Partnership](#) and [Cuckmere & Pevensey Levels Partnership](#) which bring a wide range of stakeholders together to improve biodiversity, reduce flood risk and increase river health. Meanwhile, [Wilder Ouse](#), a partnership hosted by Sussex Wildlife Trust, provides free advice and support to landowners and communities with the aim of creating a Nature Recovery Network across the Ouse Catchment.

Innovative collaboration in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove also takes the form of farmer clusters such as [Pevensey Farmers](#) and other farmer-led initiatives, that see land managers working together to achieve broader environmental aims over their collectively larger areas. These can include improving soil health or supporting the return of farmland birds like grey partridge and turtle doves. The City Downland Estate Plan (CDEP) covers over 5000ha of rural downland owned by Brighton and Hove City Council, with the vision of a carbon negative and climate resilient biodiverse landscape. The estate aims to be a leader in sustainable farming, where local food production flourishes.



📷 An event for the Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project. © James Ratchford/WTML



📷 Discussing the Sussex Bay vision of a thriving seascape in Jan 2025 - Kelly Smith, Black Tri Tribe, Councillor Andrew Harvey, Paul Brewer, Adur & Worthing Councils and Dean Spears, Sussex Bay.  
© Sussex Bay



Pioneering land management at large estates such as [Montague Farm](#), [Iford](#), [Wilderlands](#) and [Wadhurst Park](#) has made these demonstrator sites for how to restore lost habitats, revive traditional practices and advocate for a more sustainable and biodiverse future.

Larger landowners in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove additionally include conservation charities (such as Sussex Wildlife Trust, The Woodland Trust, RSPB and National Trust) who manage nearly 3,000ha for nature between them, including some of our most loved nature reserves. Local Authorities also collectively own and manage land including our parks and other green spaces, and are working to improve these areas for wildlife and people. Brighton & Hove City Council's [Wilding Waterhall](#) project has transformed a 90ha golf course into a rich mosaic of downland habitats including chalk grassland, biodiverse native scrub, woodland, and dew ponds. The [Cockshut Stream Restoration Project](#) supported by Lewes District Council, the [Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust](#) and others has turned a degraded chalk stream into a thriving wetland, improving flood resilience, and revitalising a muchloved SSSI. Recognised regionally and nationally, it is a shining example of **local partnership delivering hands-on nature recovery**.

The [Sussex Nature Partnership](#) provides strategic leadership to the sector including a lead role in the production of this LNRS, and convenes over 30 organisations in service of its aim to 'protect and expand our natural capital and everything it gives us'.

Finally, a significant part of our LNRS area is covered by the designated UNESCO [Living Coast Biosphere Reserve](#). Recognising that our coast and downs are also home to thriving urban hubs, this partnership supports education and awareness-raising around the role of nature in our local economy, connecting conservation and sustainable development.

Achieving our nature recovery ambitions requires **more than aspiration** – it demands collaboration, momentum, **well-designed projects** and **adequate resources**. Without these, our nature recovery efforts risk being fragmented, short-lived, or misaligned with local and national priorities. Our **existing landscape-scale initiatives** offer the most effective foundation for delivering future nature recovery objectives because they already operate at the right scale, have strong partnerships, align with national strategy, and command local trust. Using them means we can move faster, go further, and do better – for nature and for people.



📷 Friends of Waterhall ready for action! © Wilding Waterhall



## 5.2 Our building blocks for large-scale nature recovery

### Protected landscapes

Iconic havens for wildlife, *South Downs National Park* and *High Weald National Landscape* have legal frameworks for conservation and restoration, delivered via projects and partnerships, and contribute to national climate and biodiversity targets.

### Catchment partnerships

*Adur & Ouse Catchment Partnership* and *Cuckmere & Pevensy Levels Partnership* work to improve water quality and quantity, enhance biodiversity and reduce flood risk in our river catchments.

### Estates and farmer led initiatives

Whether on their own or collaboratively in clusters, farmers, landowners and land managers across the region are working to restore and create habitat, support species and improve soil health and water quality.

### Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere

The *Living Coast* is a designated UNESCO Biosphere Region, working in partnership from Worthing to Seaford, connecting people and nature from the South Downs to the sea. It promotes conservation, sustainable development and environmental awareness.

### Habitat creation and improvement projects

*Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs*, and *Changing Chalk* seek to bring back and enlarge key habitats and restore connectivity.

### Nature-based solution focused initiatives for land and water

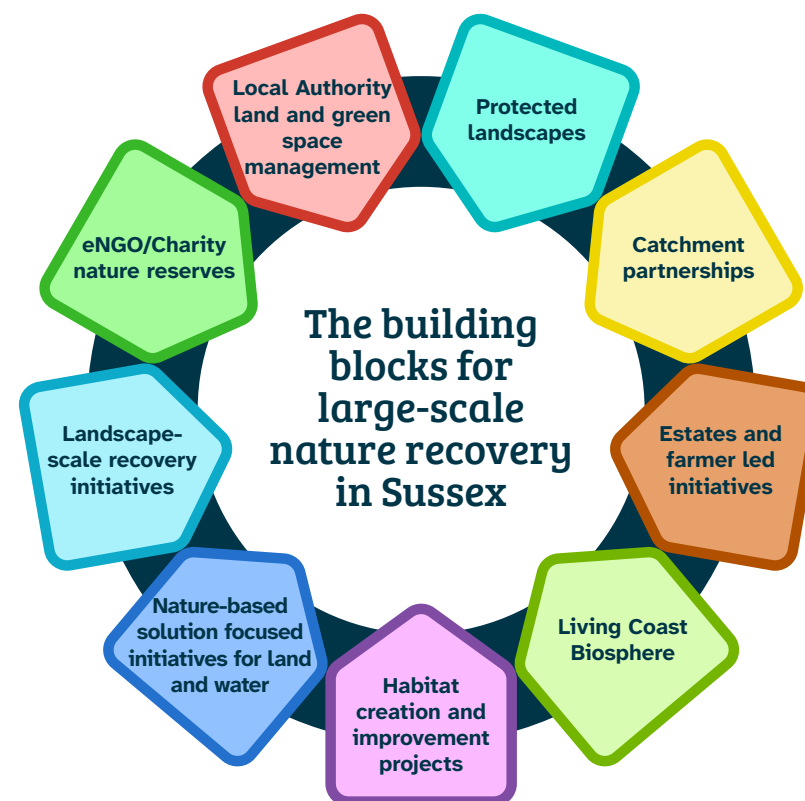
*Sussex Bay* is raising funds, ambitions and hopes for marine and coastal recovery. *The Aquifer Project (TAP)* is dedicated to protecting the chalk aquifer and improving groundwater quality and quantity.

### Landscape-scale recovery initiatives

*Weald to Waves* aims to establish a 100-mile nature recovery corridor across Sussex with pledges from farmers, community groups, schools, organisations and residents. *Big Chalk* enables its vision of creating thriving chalk and limestone landscapes across southern England by connecting, funding and supporting local activities. Meanwhile, *Wilder Ouse* works on the ground with landowners to restore ecological networks and systems across the whole Ouse catchment.

### eNGO/Charity nature reserves

*Sussex Wildlife Trust*, *Woodland Trust*, *RSPB*, *National Trust* and others, actively manage our nature reserves to enhance biodiversity and ecological health.



### Local Authority land and green space management

Collectively managing thousands of hectares of land including parks, public rights of way and coastal areas our Local Authorities at all levels can help to boost biodiversity and create green networks.

## 5.3 Community action

**At the local level, hundreds of community groups, volunteers and smaller organisations are undertaking vital work to improve and enrich our natural environment.**

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove has a vibrant conservation community with a myriad of different groups focused on protecting and conserving local wildlife and habitats.

‘Friends of’ groups maintain our parks and other green spaces while species-specific groups monitor and campaign for species such as bats or swifts. Area-based community groups of all sizes maintain ponds, plant wildflower strips, undertake ecological surveys or organise beach cleans.

Coordinating these smaller groups are networks of highly active and organised hubs, [Transition Towns](#)<sup>o</sup> and alliances who support a diverse programme of activities from conservation and education to sustainability fairs and climate cafes. Parish and town councils can also be key enablers of grassroots action, delivering local biodiversity projects and designating areas for nature in their neighbourhood plans.

In February 2025, following a sustained campaign by Love Our Ouse, Lewes District Council agreed to recognise the Rights of the River Ouse, including ‘the right to be free from pollution... and a right to native biodiversity’ – a pioneering and historic first. Wealden Council followed suit in July 2025, agreeing to support the idea of giving rivers a set of basic rights under the law and to support community action for the Cuckmere, Medway, Ouse and Uck.

In 2020, through work by passionate individuals, groups and organisations, Brighton & Hove City Council introduced planning rules requiring new builds to include bee blocks and swift boxes. Lewes was formally declared ‘Swift Friendly’ after action from Lewes Swift Supporters in 2023.

Trees for Seaford has planted over 3,000 **native trees and hedgerows** in public spaces, farms, and schools. The [Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre](#) supports local citizen scientists and has collected thousands of biological records, informing local **planning and conservation efforts** including this Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Multiple ‘Wild About’ groups, meanwhile, have helped host the High Weald National Landscape’s [Wild About Darker Skies festival](#).

These examples and those overleaf, illustrate how hyper-local action in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove has delivered **tangible gains for wildlife, restored habitats, engaged thousands of residents, and shaped local policy**. This work shows that **grassroots action is central to nature’s recovery** especially when supported by councils, landowners, and partnerships.

📷 Lewes Town Council formally agrees to Lewes Swift Supporters’ proposals to declare the town as swift-friendly. Audrey Jarvis of Lewes Swift Supporters seen here with the Mayor of Lewes, Councillor Imogen Makepeace. © Nick Jarvis



## And residents?

Outside of volunteering, many East Sussex and Brighton & Hove residents are finding new ways to engage with our natural environment. In recent years, the number of sea swimming groups has exploded and these are now present in all our coastal towns, often becoming champions for the marine environment in the process and acting as eyes on the ground for pollution events.

Walking and hiking have also increased in popularity, especially with young people, with recognition of their health and wellbeing benefits and of our world-class landscapes. Rewilding courses, forest bathing, mindfulness retreats and forest schools are offered at many of our nature-rich places. Meanwhile nature-friendly gardening and practices such as No Mow May<sup>o</sup> have been embraced by local people, part of a wider cultural shift toward supporting nature in everyday life.

Whilst there is a lot we need to do in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove to restore nature, we can be confident that we are not starting from a blank canvas.



📷 Wilding Waterhall ranger, Paul Gorringer shows moths to visiting school children.  
© Friends of Waterhall





## 5.4 Local achievements

A few of the fantastic local nature projects delivered by community groups and councils across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Read about many more in [our community group survey results](#).

**Bexhill Friends of the Down** – working with Trees for Cities, the group planted 1,500 native tree whips in January 2023 on what was previously mown grass. The land is now a young woodland.

**Woodingdean Wilderness Group** – in partnership with South Downs National Park Authority, 65 volunteers planted a hedgerow and enhanced a wildlife area with 1,000 mixed native species and 40 films to help boost pollinators, wildflowers, lizards and birds.



📷 Woodingdean Wilderness Group planting 950 trees to create a wildlife hedge

**Growing Hollingdean** – planted and care for the Hollingdean Park Orchard, to create a community space and provide community food, as well as wildlife habitat. They added a pond in 2024.

**Lewes Swift Supporters** – successfully campaigned for Lewes – where an estimated 10% of Sussex swifts nest – to be declared a swift-friendly town to raise awareness of the species and encourage actions to help them flourish.

**Love Our Ouse** – successfully coordinated the development of the Charter of Rights for the River Ouse by convening experts and stakeholders and engaging catchment communities to promote a culture of care for the river. This pioneering approach has inspired many other rivers across the UK to progress charters.

**Seaford Action for Nature CIO** – worked with the council to change the management of verges at numerous sites so they were left to grow ensuring a safer environment for wildlife. 65 species of flowering plant, including bee orchids, have since been found at one site, Pump Field.

**Plastic Free Seaford** – every month volunteers pick up litter and debris from Seaford beach permanently removing it from the habitat and ensuring a safer environment for wildlife.



📷 River Ecology 101 training day © Love our Ouse

**Telescombe Town Council** – planted 700+ trees (a mix of 30 UK species) in Chatsworth Park with the help of volunteers, school children and the Forest School to encourage birds and other wildlife to the area. Once matured, residents can enjoy the glade.

**Peacehaven Town Council** – protected a historic orchard by deeds in Trust.

**Combe Valley Countryside Park** – removed an invasive species – carp – where it was practical from ponds to improve numbers of dragonfly and damselfly, other pond creatures and water birds.



**Crowborough Wildlife Group** – worked with Wealden District Council to undertake conservation management of the Triangle Field within Walshes Park SANGS and secured an end to regular mowing. A huge increase in scarcer species has been seen since, including devil's-bit scabious, sneezewort, angelica, orchids and butterflies such as brown argus, dingy skipper and marbled white.

**Chailey Commons Society** – introduced and support an Exmoor Pony herd on Red House Common to improve the condition of the heathland, mire and acid grassland site and stop gorse taking over.

**Friends of Combe Valley** – transformed an unloved, uniform grassy area into the Bulverhythe Community Garden by creating a wildflower meadow, planting trees and hedgerows, and installing raised beds. Wildflowers have since established (including bee orchids and Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon), and insects including the wasp spider.

**CPRE Sussex** – worked with residents, groups and Brighton and Hove City Council to facilitate the planting of more city street trees as part of their 'Plant Your Postcode' project.



📷 Lewes Urban Arboretum Project: planting trees in Houndean © Duncan Armstrong



## Section 6.

### Opportunities for nature's recovery in this LNRS

📷 Black darter  
© Ben Rainbow





Over the past few years, various organisations have produced statements, plans and strategies that between them have identified a range of **opportunities** for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. These include:

- National Character Area statements (Natural England);
- Management Plans for protected landscapes (South Downs National Park and High Weald National Landscape);
- Local Plans and their supporting documents (such as Green Infrastructure Strategies);
- In addition a suite of [BOAs](#) (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas<sup>9</sup>) exist to identify where specific habitats could be expanded or enhanced.

**These opportunities play an important role in linking key actions to specific places where they are most needed or will make the biggest difference.** They reflect a general consensus on high-level spatial priorities for nature's recovery for the LNRS area and are important context for the mapping of measures within the LNRS (Part 2 Section 5).



## Key nature recovery opportunities within the LNRS area

(as set out in National Character Area statements and other existing plans and strategies)

### Low Weald

#### ● Natural Flood Management

Deliver natural flood management<sup>o</sup> techniques in focus areas upstream of settlements, particularly Lewes, Uckfield, Eastbourne and Hailsham.

#### ● Woodland habitats

Significantly enhance the network of ancient woodland, gill woodland, haws, hedgerows and trees – through woodland management and small-scale woodland creation. New woodland creation can help to link the National Park to the High Weald and provide a setting for recreation.

#### ● River systems and wetlands

Enhance the quality, state and structure of all Wealden rivers, streams, standing water bodies, wetlands and floodplains. Key river catchments: Ouse, Cuckmere, Brede, Rother & Medway.

#### ● Farmed Landscape

Expand and connect semi-natural habitats across farmland. Expand and enhance areas of unimproved grassland and meadows and restore degraded neutral grassland.

### South Downs

#### ● Farmed landscape

Create additional habitat to support farmland birds and arable plants; expand and connect semi-natural habitats on farmed land; manage farmed land and its habitats to support the function of the aquifer below.

#### ● Chalk grassland

Restore, expand and re-link chalk grassland habitats along the length of the chalk spine, scarp and dip slopes and dry valleys.

#### ● Coastal habitats and tidal reaches of Ouse and Cuckmere

Create and enhance coastal habitats and retain natural coastal processes where possible. Take opportunities to reconnect rivers to their floodplains and improve natural river function.

#### ● Seven Sisters and Lullington Heath

A specific focus on habitat creation and enhancement in this area will support biodiversity and the function of the aquifer.

### Pevensey Levels

#### ● Wetland habitats

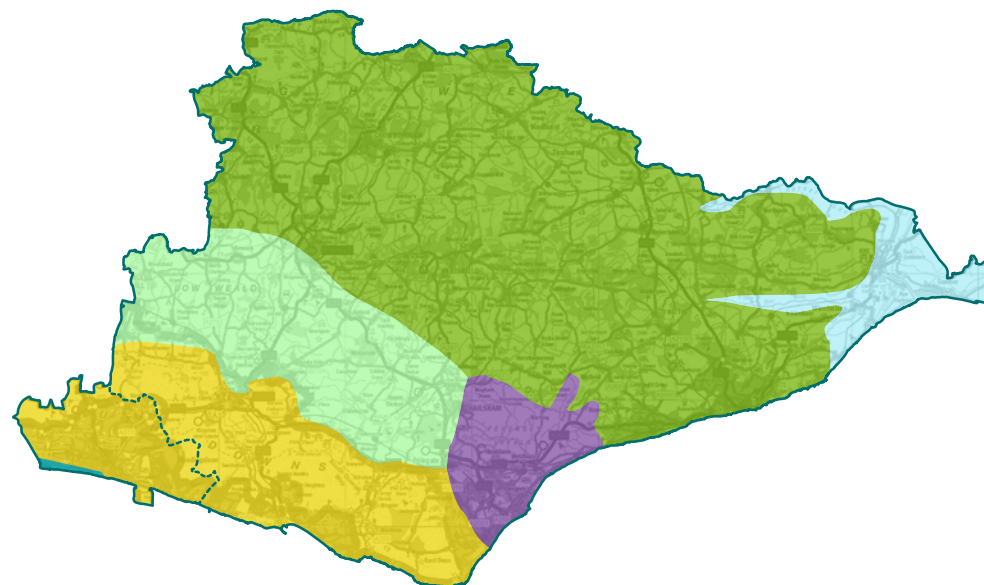
Enhance the network of wetland habitats on the Levels, planning for change and resilience to climate change.

#### ● Coastal habitats

Create and enhance coastal vegetated shingle habitats.

### Key

- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Boundary
- Low Weald
- High Weald
- Romney Marshes
- Pevensey Levels
- South Downs
- South Coast Plain



## High Weald

**Woodlands and Grasslands**  
Restore and enhance ancient woodland, gill woodland and species-rich grasslands, expanding and connecting these where this supports the historic field pattern of the area.

**Lowland heath**  
Restore and enhance the ecological function of lowland heathland as part of the complex matrix of High Weald habitats. Key site: Ashdown Forest.

**Sandstone outcrops**  
Protect and maintain sandstone outcrops and the rare plant communities they support.

**Routeways and road verges**  
Protect and enhance the ecological function of these historical linear corridors.

**River systems and wetlands**  
Enhance the quality, state and structure of all Wealden rivers, streams, standing water bodies, wetlands and floodplains. Key river catchments: Ouse, Cuckmere, Brede, Rother and Medway.

## Romney Marshes








**Rother and Brede river corridors**  
Enhance ditches, wetlands and natural floodplain function of these river corridors.

**Romney & Walland Marshes**  
Enhance coastal floodplain grazing marsh and wetland habitats of this area.

**Camber**  
Manage and enhance sand dune habitats.

**Rye Harbour and Dungeness complex**  
Maintain and enhance the coastal environment, shingle habitats and dynamic nature of this area of the coastline.

### Key

-  East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Boundary
-  Low Weald
-  High Weald
-  Romney Marshes
-  Pevensey Levels
-  South Downs
-  South Coast Plain

## Urban areas

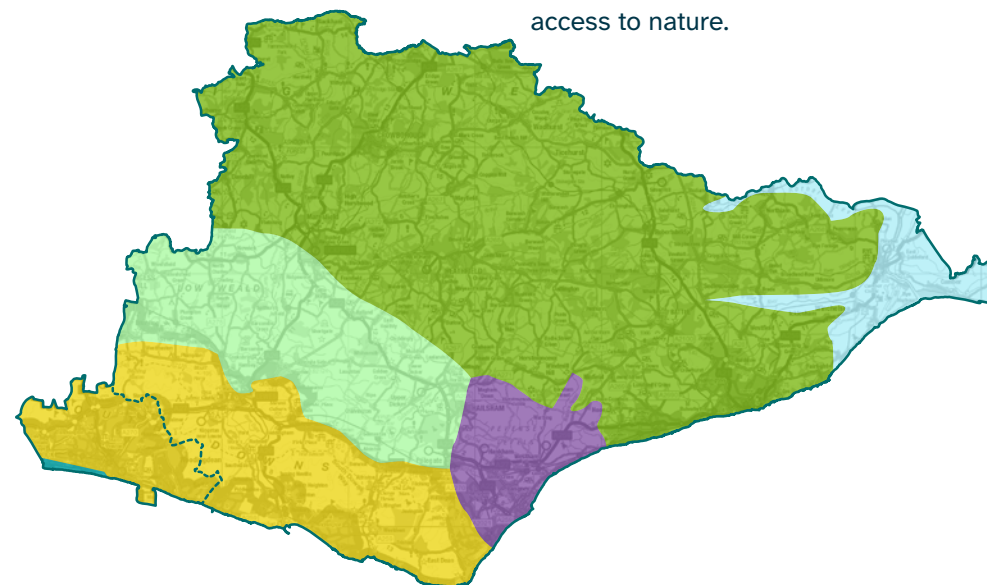
**Urban greenspaces across the LNRS area**  
Opportunities exist across all urban areas in East Sussex to enhance existing greenspaces for nature and to create new opportunities for access to nature. Action should be focused in areas of low current provision of greenspace and guided by Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards. Existing public parks, greenspaces and private gardens can all play a role in supporting more urban nature.

### Brighton & Hove – Nature Improvement Area

Create a network of accessible natural greenspaces and corridors throughout the city; create and enhance green and accessible corridors to the South Downs beyond. Support the national Elm collection in the city.

**Eastbourne – green spaces**  
Enhance provision of accessible natural greenspace and support the urban Elm population. Reconnect Eastbourne Levels via ecological networks.

**Hastings**  
Create a green network of open spaces and green corridors throughout the town, supporting biodiversity and access to nature.





## Section 7.

Looking ahead  
to Parts 2 and 3  
of this Strategy

📷 Small blue butterfly  
© Ben Rainbow



# East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Parts 2 and 3

This document provides a description of the geology and habitats in our LNRS area, the pressures impacting nature, a snapshot of local concerns and some of the organisations and groups already working for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. It therefore serves as context to the recommendations made later in this strategy.

Please see Part 2 of this Statement of Biodiversity Priorities to read the principles guiding our approach, our priorities for nature's recovery and the measures (actions) that can bring them about. Maps contained in this section show where habitat measures are best located across the LNRS area and how, when combined together provide a view of the **Areas that Could become of Importance to Biodiversity**. Part 2 also provides guidance on how to use this strategy if you are a community group, resident, environmental organisation, local authority or business. Part 3 lists our Priority Species and the measures needed to support their recovery.



# LNRS Glossary

## Abundance and diversity (of species)

In simple terms, species abundance refers to the number of individuals of a species in a given area. Species diversity refers to the number of different species found in an area. For example, a field of only one type of flower may have high abundance but low diversity, whereas a forest with many different kinds of plants and animals showcases both high abundance and high diversity.

## Agri-environment schemes

A general term for government programmes set up to help farmers manage their land to support biodiversity, enhance landscape and improve the wider environment (e.g. quality of air, water and soil). The current framework in the UK is provided by **Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)** which include Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT), Landscape Recovery, plus various funding sources for capital items. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) is an additional scheme open to farmers and land managers within national parks and national landscapes. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers>

## Anaerobic

Living, active, occurring or existing in the absence of free oxygen.

## Ancient and veteran trees

An **ancient** tree is one that has passed beyond maturity and is old, or aged, in comparison with other trees of the same species. The exact age at which a tree is considered ancient depends on the species. **Veteran** trees can be any age but show ancient characteristics such as wounds or decay. These may be a result of natural damage, management or the tree's environment. Ancient trees are all veterans but not all veterans are ancient. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1836/what-are-ancient-trees.pdf>

## Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)

These are areas where the responsible authority and local partners propose that effort should be concentrated to restore habitat, to achieve the most for biodiversity and the wider environment. They are areas which would have the greatest impact on achieving priorities and which would achieve greater connectivity of similar biodiverse habitats across the landscape. Some measures could feasibly be done in many locations, but the ACIB maps those that would benefit biodiversity or the environment the most.

## Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)

These are tightly defined in the statutory guidance as all national conservation sites and local nature reserves, all existing local wildlife sites and areas of irreplaceable habitat.

## Assemblage (of species)

A group of species that would benefit from the same recovery measures.

## Biodiversity (short for biological diversity)

The variety of natural life and habitats on earth. It includes all plants, animals and fungi, and the places and spaces in which they live.

## Biodiversity Duty

A legal obligation imposed on public bodies in England to consider and integrate biodiversity conservation and enhancement into their activities, policies and decision-making processes.

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

A way of creating and improving natural habitats to make sure development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity compared to what was there before development. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>





**Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs)**

Landscape scale areas where conservation action is likely to have the most benefit for biodiversity based on existing biodiversity interest and physical opportunities for enhancement. They are referred to within many local plans in Sussex. BOAs were identified in Sussex in 2009 as part of a wider regional process across the South East. Their boundaries and description can be found on the Sussex Nature Partnership website. [BOAs – Sussex Local Nature Partnership](#)

**Biosphere Reserve (or biosphere region)**

An area designated by UNESCO to inspire a positive future for people and nature, by considering everything that's needed to make life sustainable. Biospheres exist to help us learn how best to balance biodiversity and sustainable development. The Living Coast is an urban Biosphere Reserve in Sussex which includes the stretch of the South Downs and Sussex coast between the River Adur at Shoreham-by-Sea and the River Ouse at Newhaven. <https://thelivingcoast.org.uk/>

**Biosecurity**

A set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms, such as insects, and disease-causing organisms (called pathogens) such as some bacteria and fungi.

**Brackish water and habitats**

Areas that are influenced by both saline and freshwater. Brackish water is saltier than freshwater but not as salty as seawater. Brackish water habitats are found in estuaries, coastal lagoons, river mouths and tidal reaches of rivers. They support a range of specialised species that are adapted to a range of salinity levels and can be diverse and ecologically significant.

**Bryophytes**

A group of plants that includes mosses, liverworts and hornworts. They are non-vascular plants, which means they have no roots or vascular tissue.

**Carbon sequestration**

The process by which carbon is removed from the atmosphere and stored. Natural habitats such as woodlands, peatlands and grasslands can sequester carbon and store it, either above ground or in their roots and soil. It plays a crucial role in limiting climate change by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

**Carbon storage**

Some natural habitats can store carbon they have captured, e.g. through the absorption of carbon dioxide.

**Coastal squeeze**

The loss or deterioration of coastal habitats where manmade structures prevent their landward movement in response to sea level rise.

**Defra**

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Distribution (of species)**

Where individuals of a particular species are found and how they are spread across their habitat or range.

**Ecosystems**

All of the living things (plants, animals, and organisms) in a given area, as well as the non-living parts (weather, earth, sun, soil, climate, atmosphere) that interact with them. The different components of an ecosystem are linked together through nutrient cycles and energy flows.

**Ecotone**

The transitional area where two different ecological communities meet and integrate. For example, where grassland grades into scrub, or where scrub grades into woodland. Ecotones are characterised by features and species from both bordering communities as well as unique species that may not be found in either. As a result they often exhibit high biodiversity.

**Environment Act 2021**

This Act sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world. It prioritises four areas, air quality, biodiversity, water quality and waste and includes targets to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030. It provides the statutory framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

**Environmental Land Management Schemes**

See above under 'Agri-environment schemes'.

**Epiphytic**

Means 'on the plant'. Epiphytes are organisms (plants and micro-organisms like mosses, liverworts, lichens, algae and micro-fungi) that grow on other plants or objects, using them for physical support, but not feeding from them. Epiphytic communities can take decades or centuries to develop and large, old, open-grown trees support rich epiphyte communities. These communities are also good indicators of air quality.

**Eutrophication**

The over-enrichment of soil and water by nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, leading to the excessive growth of a few dominant plant species, loss of habitat diversity, deterioration in important soil biochemical functions, and oxygen depletion in aquatic environments. Eutrophication can occur naturally but is often accelerated by human activities, such as agricultural run-off and sewage discharge.

**Fragmentation (of habitats)**

This occurs when a large, continuous natural habitat is broken into smaller, isolated patches, often due to human activities like urbanisation, agriculture, or infrastructure development.

**Green infrastructure (also green and blue infrastructure)**

The network of multifunctional green spaces, landscapes and features, both urban and rural, which can deliver multiple benefits for the economy, wildlife and communities. Blue infrastructure relates to water.

**Habitats**

An environment inhabited by living organisms. Or a place where plants or animals normally live, characterised primarily by its physical features (topography, plant or animal physiognomy, soil characteristics, climate, water quality, etc.) and secondarily by the species of plants and animals that live there. There are a range of systems for classifying habitats into categories.

**Health and wellbeing**

Mental and emotional health, physical health and a healthy lifestyle all contribute to an individual's health and wellbeing.

**Hectare (ha)**

A metric unit area, equal to 10,000 square metres, and the equivalent of 2.471 acres in the imperial system.

**Irreplaceable habitat**

Habitats that would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. Irreplaceable habitats found in East and West Sussex (as defined by the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) are: ancient woodland (including ancient semi-natural woodland, plantations on ancient woodland sites, ancient wood pasture and parkland, and infilled ancient wood pasture and parkland), ancient and veteran trees, coastal sand dunes, spartina saltmarsh swards, mediterranean saltmarsh scrub and lowland fens.

**Intensive agriculture**

Farming that uses a lot of machinery, labour, chemicals, etc, to grow as many crops or keep as many animals as possible on the amount of land available.

**Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

Animals or plants, introduced by human activity, outside their natural range, that spread rapidly and cause harm to the environment, economy, or human health.

**Landscape character**

The distinct, recognisable and consistent patterns in the landscape, and what makes one landscape different from another. Including natural and human elements, such as geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, and settlement patterns.

**Leachate migration**

The movement of leachate (a liquid formed when water percolates through solid waste) from its source (often a landfill) into the surrounding environment. It can potentially lead to soil and water contamination, impacting ecosystems and human health.

**Local Habitat Map**

A key component of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which maps the areas that have been identified as being the most important for nature recovery, or where measures would deliver the greatest benefits to nature recovery and wider environment benefits.



### Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

New statutory spatial plans underpinning a National Nature Recovery Network, produced by 48 responsible authorities across England. Introduced by the Environment Act 2021, they are intended to reverse the decline of biodiversity and improve ecological connectivity and functionality across England. They aim to identify opportunities and priorities for nature recovery.

### Local Wildlife Sites

Non-statutory sites that contain features of substantive nature conservation value. They are amongst the best sites for wildlife in Sussex. They contain species and habitats that are uncommon and rare in Sussex and sometimes further afield, and form an important component of our nature network, helping to connect and buffer statutory designated sites. Local Wildlife Sites Systems aim to establish an up to date comprehensive suite of sites. In Sussex, the Local Wildlife Sites system is maintained by the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative.

### Managed realignment

The controlled inundation of land by the sea by deliberately removing or breaching existing sea defences and creating new flood defences further inland. This approach provides more sustainable flood and erosion risk management by using newly created intertidal habitats like saltmarshes to absorb wave energy and protect inland areas.

### Measures

In Local Nature Recovery Strategies, measures are the official name for the set of practical actions that can deliver each LNRS's locally agreed priorities for nature's recovery.

### Microhabitats

A small, localised habitat within a larger ecosystem that has conditions that support a limited range of animals and plants. Examples include a decomposing log within a woodland or a rockpool within a wave cut chalk platform.

### Migrant birds

Birds that travel to a different place to take advantage of seasonal resources, especially food, so that they can breed successfully or simply survive. In the UK, we have spring migrations when summer visitors like swifts and cuckoos arrive, then autumn migrations when waders, wildfowl and other visitors return to feed and summer visitors leave.

### Mosaics (Mosaic habitat)

A landscape composed of a diverse mix of different habitat types in close proximity, creating a patchwork-like structure. This variety supports a wide range of species with varying ecological needs, as the juxtaposition of habitats allows for greater biodiversity. Examples include a combination of woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, and hedgerows within a single area. Mosaic habitats are particularly valuable for wildlife that depends on multiple habitat types throughout their lifecycle.

### No active intervention

Policy option decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences against flooding or erosion, whether or not coastal defences have existed previously.

### National Character Areas

Areas with similar landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, and economic activity in England that have been divided into 159 distinct zones by Natural England. They follow natural geographical lines rather than administrative boundaries. <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/>

### National Landscapes

Formerly called Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, there are 46 National Landscapes in the UK. These are places with national importance, designated under the 1949 National Parks and Access to Countryside Act for their habitat and biodiversity, protected for the nation's benefit and each managed locally by expert teams. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty remains the legal designation.

### Natural capital

The elements of nature that produce value, either directly or indirectly, to people, such as stock of forests, rivers, land, minerals and oceans. We depend on it for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. It boosts our health and wellbeing. It captures and stores carbon and has a vital role to play in helping us adapt to the impacts of climate change. Natural capital is also an economic concept. It considers nature as a stock of assets, which we have to invest in.



## Natural Flood Management

Natural Flood Management, or NFM, involves working with nature to reduce the risk of flooding for communities. It uses various techniques to restore or mimic the natural functions of rivers, floodplains and the wider catchment. NFM aims to store water in the catchment and slow the rate at which water runs into rivers, to help flooding downstream.

## Natural processes

A process existing in or produced by nature (rather than by the intent of human beings) that shape our environment and support nature, e.g. weathering, erosion, flooding, deposition etc.

## Nature-based solutions

Actions which support and draw on nature to provide wider environmental or societal benefits. For example, planting trees in cities for cooling, or wet woodland planting for natural flood management.

## Nature friendly

Not harmful to nature or helping to protect it. Incorporating features and practices that increase opportunities for wildlife alongside established land uses.

## No Mow May

Plantlife's annual campaign to avoid mowing the lawn during May, to allow wildflowers to grow and help nature. [Plantlife's No Mow May Movement](#)

## Nutrient cycling

A continuous process where dead plant material breaks down and provides nutrients to the soil that are absorbed by plant roots so that plants grow. Microorganisms play a crucial role in this cycling.

## Nutrient offsetting

An approach to ensure new residential development will not cause increased nutrient pollution (nitrates and phosphates) to specific protected sites. There are three main types of offsetting site: land taken out of agricultural use and managed as grassland, e.g. wildflower meadow; land taken out of agricultural use to create woodland; and wetland created to filter nitrates. [Nutrient Neutrality Principles – TIN186](#)

## Opportunities

Local Nature Recovery Strategies must include a statement of biodiversity priorities which must include a description of the opportunities for recovering and enhancing biodiversity in the Strategy area. Opportunities may be a specific action (or measure), a funding mechanism, a project or partnership, or a specific location.

## Parliamentary enclosures

Enclosure is a term used in English land ownership that refers to the appropriation of 'waste' or 'common land' by enclosing it and depriving commoners of their traditional rights or access and usage. Originally this was done through informal agreement, but from the 1750s, enclosure by parliamentary Act became the norm.

## Pollination

The process by which flowering plants reproduce. To produce offspring, a plant must first be fertilised with pollen which allows it to develop seeds that will grow into new plants. Pollination occurs when pollen is moved within flowers, or carried from flower to flower by pollinating animals such as birds, bees, moths or beetles, or by the wind.

## Priorities

In Local Nature Recovery Strategies, priorities are the most important habitats and species which have been identified locally as needing support for their recovery or enhancement, taking into account the contribution they can also make to other environmental benefits.

## Priority habitats

A wide range of semi-natural habitat types that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The UK list of priority habitats remains an important reference source and has been used to help draw up statutory lists of habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

## Ramsar sites

Wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Their purpose is conservation and promotion of sustainable development through local, national, and global cooperation. There are currently 73 Ramsar sites in England covering 400,000 ha. They are often also designated as SSSIs and afforded statutory legal protection.



**Refuge habitats**

A safe place that offers protection or shelter, such as an area (for example a nature reserve) that has been set aside for the purpose of conserving species and their habitats.

**Resilience**

Ability to absorb, resist or recover from disturbances or damage from both natural influences and human activities (including climate change).

**Responsible Authority**

Local Authorities, appointed by the Secretary of State to lead the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their area. In England, there are 48 Responsible Authorities, including East Sussex County Council leading the LNRS for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex County Council leading the LNRS for West Sussex.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the land notified as such by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). SSSIs are some of the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England, supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. There are over 4000 SSSI sites in England, covering over 8% of the country.

**Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

This international designation made by the UK Government protects the habitat of important species and those habitats considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). There are 256 SACs covering 2,115,880ha in England.

**Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPAs are selected to protect one or more rare, threatened or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, or certain regularly occurring migratory species. There are 87 SPAs covering 1,926,816ha in the UK. Like Ramsar and SAC sites, they are often also designated as SSSIs and afforded statutory legal protection.

**Species**

Commonly defined as a group of organisms that can successfully breed to produce fertile offspring.

**Successional habitats**

Temporary habitats that are in transition between one habitat and another. For example, scrub is often described as a successional habitat between one habitat, like grassland or heathland, to another, like woodland.

**Soil acidification**

A natural process where the soil pH decreases (becomes more acidic) over time. It can be accelerated by certain plants or human activities, or slowed down by sustainable management practices.

**Traditional land management practices**

Farming and other land management activities that have been used for many years and that often define and conserve landscape character. They are often low-intensity practices that are adapted to local climatic, geographic and environmental conditions, and often enhance the diversity and biomass of characteristic wildlife, improve soil quality and the functioning of natural systems.

**Transitional habitat**

Areas that serve as an intermediary zone between different ecosystems or land uses, often undergoing natural or managed changes. These habitats provide a mix of characteristics from adjacent ecosystems, supporting a diverse range of species and ecological processes. Examples include wetlands forming between aquatic and terrestrial environments or grasslands transitioning into forests. Transitional habitats are crucial for biodiversity, offering refuge, feeding grounds, and migration corridors for various species.

**Transition towns**

A community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and increasingly, economic contraction. For example, Transition Town Lewes is working to transform the town into a community that is not reliant on fossil fuels, and that can live, work and feed itself in ways that support rather than damage the natural world.

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- Brighton & Hove City Council
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- Crawley Borough Council
- Lewes & Eastbourne Councils
- Hastings Borough Council
- Horsham District Council
- Mid Sussex District Council
- Rother District Council
- Wealden District Council
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Natural England

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 Ditchling Beacon  
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# Sussex Nature Recovery

A collective blueprint for targeted action

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East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 1 – Context & Description of  
Strategy Area



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and  
the Local Habitat Map



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 3 – Priority Species



West Sussex, East Sussex and  
Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 4 – Technical Methods

View all the documents at:

[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)

Draft Published October 2025





**Sussex  
Nature Recovery**  
A collective blueprint for targeted action



# East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and the Local Habitat Map

Draft for consultation





### Cover image

📷 Ashdown Forest  
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### Illustrations

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# Section 1.

## About the LNRS

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## 1.1 Preface

This document is one of four that comprises the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and is Part 2 of its Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial plans for nature introduced by the Environment Act 2021. 48 strategies are being developed across England. Each covers a county (or equivalent) area and is led by a 'Responsible Authority' (RA), which in this instance is East Sussex County Council (ESCC).

Local Nature Recovery Strategies aim to develop and agree the priorities for nature's recovery in collaboration with local stakeholders including residents, farmers, community groups, organisations and businesses. They provide a set of practical actions that can deliver the priorities and map where actions to create or enhance habitats could be implemented to deliver the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. As documents that have been developed through collaboration and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, they can be used to help target investment and action where it is needed most to support nature's recovery across each LNRS area.

## 1.2 The other parts of this LNRS

Part 1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS provides important background for the contents of the rest of the strategy:

- A summary of how we developed this Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- An overview of the important habitats and species in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, their extent, condition and the pressures they face;
- A snapshot of the views of local people, expressed through our surveys;
- What is already happening – some of the organisations, partnerships, projects and groups that are working for nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Part 3 covers the priority species in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and the measures that can be taken to support their recovery.

Part 4 provides additional technical detail about how we developed this strategy.



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 1 – Context & Description of Strategy Area



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and the Local Habitat Map



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 3 – Priority Species



West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 4 – Technical Methods



# Section 2.

## Introduction

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📷 Corn bunting  
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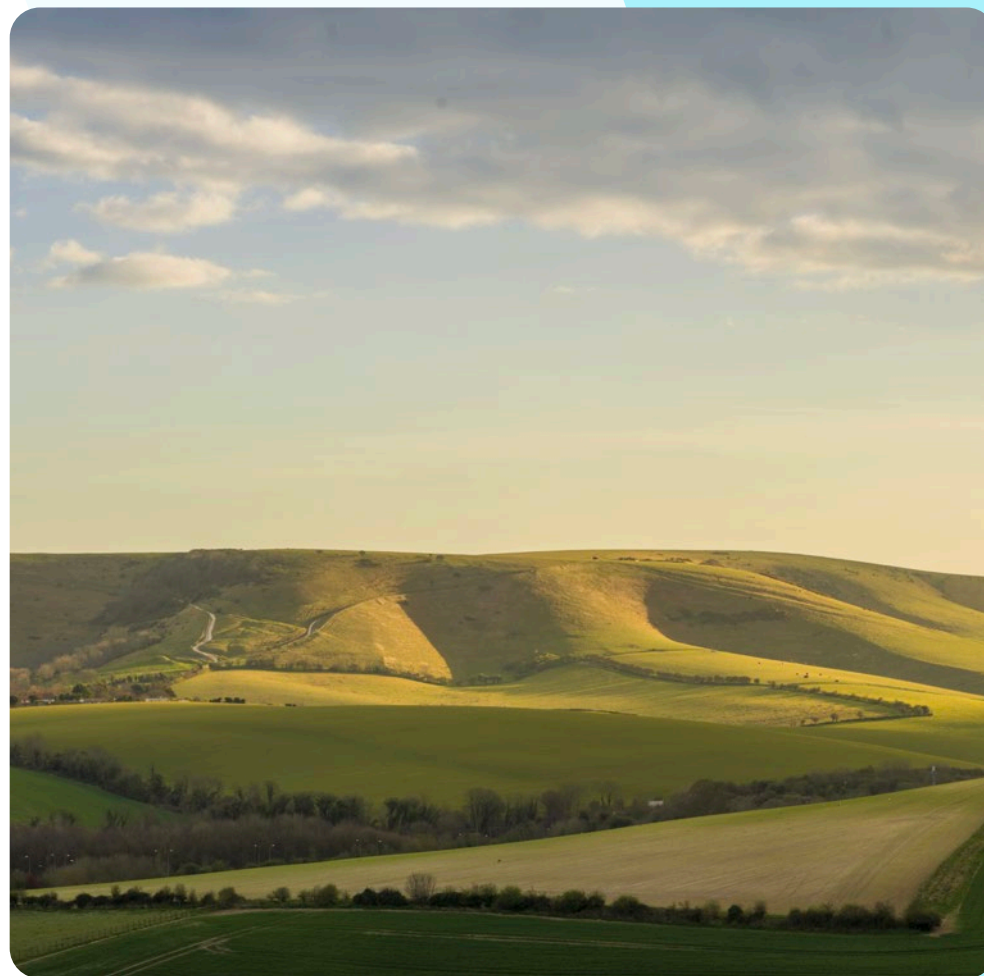
This document forms the core of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. It sets out the priorities for nature's recovery across the area and the actions (or measures) to deliver them. As required by LNRS government guidance, they focus primarily on **habitats** while those for species are set out in Part 3 of this Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

Ahead of the priorities and measures, a set of broad **principles** is provided to guide our approach to nature's recovery as set out in this strategy. These principles illustrate that success will require tackling the challenge as a complex problem that requires actions by different stakeholders at different scales and through varying techniques. They reflect the understanding and expertise of stakeholders across our LNRS area of the different elements that need to be in place if we are to achieve real progress over the years ahead. And, as Local Nature Recovery Strategies are themselves limited in their scope, these principles are accompanied by a reminder of how they will be interpreted within the strategy.

The **Local Habitat Map** follows the priorities and measures. This identifies where measures can best be located to deliver the greatest benefit for biodiversity and the wider environment.

A set of suggestions on **how to use this LNRS** is then provided, to explain how this document may be relevant to different individuals, organisations and partnerships, and how it can support them.

Finally, and **looking ahead** this document reflects on what will be needed to help deliver this Local Nature Recovery Strategy and fulfil its potential to halt the decline in nature across the LNRS area and move towards nature's recovery.



📷 South Downs © iStock.com/HerbySussex



## Section 3.

# Seven Principles for nature recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

📷 Swans, Pevensey Levels  
© iStock.com/suerob





## Principle 1.

### In our core areas for nature, hold on to what we have and make it better.

Our designated sites, irreplaceable and priority habitats are our core areas for nature around which future action can be based. Together they make up c30% of our LNRS area and are the foundation of our 'nature-recovery network'. This is high in comparison to other parts of England but means we have a responsibility to conserve these existing areas of important habitat, preventing further loss or degradation and improving their ecological condition.

While some of our sites and important habitats are well managed, many are not and remain in poor condition. While we have some large 'flag-ship' protected sites, many others are small and disconnected from each other. Small size, poor condition and disconnection from other sites means that many of our most important areas of habitat are not functioning well either in support of species or in delivery of important wider environmental benefits.

As a result, nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove must start by conserving these core areas of important habitat to prevent any further loss or degradation, while working to improve their ecological condition and resilience.



📷 Rye Harbour Nature Reserve © iStock.com/asmithers

### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Identifying how we can take the best care of our important habitats.
- Supporting the creation of a connected network of high-quality habitat around and between our core areas. ([See principle 2](#)).
- Targeting habitat creation and improvement in key locations in our river catchments to improve both the flow and the quality of freshwater. Many of our fragile and internationally important coastal and wetland habitats and designated sites depend on this.
- Supporting our most vulnerable core sites and areas of habitat to respond to pressures such as sea level rise, changes in temperature/precipitation, over-grazing by deer and so on.

### Important notes

- LNRS cannot strengthen existing legal protections for important sites or habitats, but they can help identify actions which will help to make them 'better' and support their key role as the foundation of our nature recovery efforts.
- Designated sites such as SSSIs and NNRs are already managed through a statutory mechanism, so to avoid confusion, any actions related to them in this strategy will be complementary to existing management arrangements.

## Principle 2.

### Create a network of ‘bigger, better, more and joined-up’ wildlife-rich spaces across our rural and urban landscapes.

To support our core sites, we also need to create new areas of habitat that expand the habitats around them help to ‘join them up’ across the landscape. Being part of a healthy network will increase their resilience to pressures and their ability to provide ecosystem services such as pollination, flood risk reduction and improvement of water quality. It will also support our species by allowing them to move safely across the landscape.

The actions required to create a ‘nature network’ of high-quality habitats may vary from place to place depending on what is there now. For example, habitats in the High Weald are already relatively well connected, so the emphasis in this area should be on enhancing the condition of what is there already and expanding smaller areas of habitat where possible. Chalk grassland patches in and outside of the South Downs National Park are very fragmented, so expanding these areas and joining them up will make the most difference. The farmed landscape of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove provides many patches and corridors of valuable habitat for wildlife, but the potential exists to expand and better connect these for nature alongside food production.

Our coastal habitats within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area are at extreme risk from climate change and due to ‘coastal squeeze’ will have very few places to go when sea levels rise. Key to their survival will be to identify where and how action can be taken to create new areas of coastal habitat where this may be viable and secure into the future.

Finally, in many of our urban areas, a lack of parks, greenspaces or easy access to the wider countryside on their edges means that there are few opportunities for nature to thrive or for local people to connect to nature.

Action by local authorities to create green and blue corridors in our built-up areas will help to connect people to nature while providing new and connected habitats for urban wildlife. Small actions at a local scale can also help to make our gardens, allotments, churchyards and greenspaces wilder and better able to support species.



#### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Guiding the creation of a much bigger, stronger, more resilient and connected network of core areas for nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.
- Targeting action where this will improve the ecological condition of habitats.
- Identifying strategic locations for the creation of new habitat, with an emphasis on locating this where it will expand or better connect the habitats we already have.
- Applying the ‘bigger, better, more and joined-up’ approach to urban areas, creating more opportunities for nature in spaces like golf courses, recreation grounds and playing fields.
- Providing information on the actions, big and small, which will help to support nature recovery across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

**The Weald to Waves vision.** Founded by farmers and now a movement, Weald to Waves seeks to establish a 100-mile nature corridor across Sussex.

© Weald to Waves



### Principle 3.

## Think big: work at scale to support ecosystems and natural processes.

The landscape of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is heavily modified by human presence. As a result, our key ecosystems are under pressure, and this threatens their ability to deliver the ecosystem services we depend on. In many places natural processes such as floodplain function, natural water storage in the landscape, carbon storage in soils and the role of coastal habitats in preventing or in slowing down coastal erosion have been degraded or lost completely.

Some habitats are being jeopardised by the decline in traditional practices (which have helped to create these habitats and mimic natural processes). A reduction in the practice of coppicing to manage woodland is now compromising the structure and diversity of our woodlands.

Invasion by non-native species is a threat to ecosystem function across the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area – particularly in freshwater habitats and woodlands – and is likely to become more serious with climate change.

Natural coastal processes, which move sediment, shape and influence habitats along our coastlines have been modified by hard coastal defences (e.g. sea walls and groynes) that predominate along much of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove coastline. Projections for increased sea level rise, sea water inundation and coastal erosion will increase the need to think about long-term solutions to how we protect people, property and habitats from these threats and the role that natural processes might be able to play in this. Approaches such as ‘managed realignment’ may be possible in some places, harnessing the power of natural coastal processes to both create habitat and provide a long-term approach to managing coastal flood risk.



Achieving meaningful change in ecosystem functioning and habitat creation requires an ambition to work at scale and collaboratively – rather than in isolation and in a small area. Key projects have been initiated to encourage the return of natural processes in Sussex and some of these are leading the way locally and nationally in thinking big and creating a vision of what can be done. Further work is required to support and scale-up these approaches across our LNRS area.

📍 Beachy Head – part of an undefended stretch of coastline between Cuckmere Haven and Eastbourne.

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### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Targeting actions for the restoration of natural processes where these can play a significant role in supporting nature’s recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, whilst being mindful of where this is feasible and will deliver the greatest benefit.
- Identifying where there is potential and appetite to work together **at scale** to support natural processes and create and enhance habitats for the benefit of nature and people.



## Principle 4.

### Showcase and support action for nature across our farmed landscapes.

About two thirds of the landscape of the LNRS area is farmed. Farming and woodland management has been shaping the countryside for centuries, creating and maintaining many of our most valued habitats. However, changes in agricultural policy and practices over decades put pressure on nature and the wider environment. Policies in the post-war period led to significant land-use changes, with the removal of hedgerows and lower-input grasslands to make way for greater food production. Today, practices such as widespread use of pesticides continues to put pressure on species and pollinators, while addition of nutrients to the land works alongside climate change to result in significant impacts to water courses from diffuse agricultural pollution.

However, many farms and estates across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove invest in nature on their land and have done for generations. They see this as an integral part of their purpose and business. This is despite ongoing changes to government agri-environment policy and lack of certainty about what this will look like in the future. Farmer clusters and landscape recovery initiatives bring landowners and managers together to collaborate for nature across their combined larger areas and funding schemes such as 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' have been popular with farmers in the South Downs and High Weald. Projects to support our 'farmland specialist' species, such as turtle dove and grey partridge, are assisting farmers to provide the specific habitats these species require. The use of regenerative farming practices that improve soil and water as well as the nutrient density of food are also becoming more commonplace.

However, many other landowners and managers (especially those running small, family farms) are working at capacity to merely stay in business. Many want to be more proactive in supporting wildlife, but do not have the time or expertise to engage with complex land management schemes. Additionally, an increasingly unpredictable climate which gave us very wet conditions in 2023 and 2024 and drought in 2022, further challenge the stability of farm incomes.

Achieving more nature across our farmed landscape and a reduction in its impacts on the wider environment will require support for farmers and landowners, primarily through funding, advice and agricultural policy. Much of this lies outside the scope of an LNRS but much more can be done locally to provide information on the actions that can be implemented by farmers and landowners and how these can play a key role in supporting the nature we have in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. More can also be done to showcase the many positive actions taken by farmers and landowners across the LNRS area and widen engagement to others who may need additional encouragement and support to get involved.

#### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Identifying the priorities for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove that can be delivered across our farmed landscapes and how these can be achieved in practice.
- Reflecting existing and future ambitions for nature held by estates, farms, farmer clusters and other farmer-led initiatives, thus supporting them in their bids for funding and support.
- Identifying where nature-based solutions (which may attract specific funding for farmers and landowners) could best be located to help address wider environmental issues. ([See Principle 6](#)).



## Principle 5.

### Support species special to East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is home to many species of conservation concern. Some of these are particularly important in a national, and in some cases, international context. This may be because we provide a stronghold for a species found in smaller numbers elsewhere or host remaining populations of species on the brink of extinction. We also see species in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove at the very edge of their geographical range, which are particularly vulnerable to changes in climate.

All species are dependent on the habitats found here, their extent, condition and spatial distribution. All are vulnerable to loss and degradation of habitats and so creating a network of bigger, better, more and joined-up wildlife rich spaces across our landscapes (see [Principle 2](#)) will go a long way to support their future presence in the LNRS area. But for those species of national or international importance, or those with very specific habitat requirements, we have additional responsibilities to secure their future, beyond general habitat enhancement and creation. This will require specific interventions to provide habitat in areas of importance for these species. It is important that we know what these species need and how best to provide it if their future is to be secured.

Some species are indicators of general habitat health, and by focusing on actions which will support them, widen their distribution and inch them towards healthy population numbers, we will know that their habitats are in good health and are supporting other species. The Adonis blue butterfly, found on chalk grassland on the South Downs, and the hazel dormouse found in our woodland, are both indicators – telling us that we have sufficient habitat of good

enough quality to support them and therefore a range of other species typical of these habitats. It is therefore important that we understand the key indicator species that we have in the LNRS area and what is happening to their populations. Action must then be tailored to supporting these species and tracking progress. Only then will we understand how well our actions to improve and create habitats are actually supporting the wildlife that depends on them

Finally, across the LNRS area and particularly in our urban and peri-urban areas a range of charismatic and visible species live alongside people. Some, like the fox, are thriving in these habitats, whilst others such as the hedgehog and swift are struggling due to habitat change and loss. Many of these species respond well to actions that communities and individuals can take in their houses, gardens, schools and local parks. These species can be adopted as ‘champions’, helping to enhance the connection people have to nature ‘nearby’ and providing opportunities to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of individual action in making nature’s recovery happen.

#### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Providing, for the first time in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, a consolidation of our knowledge and understanding of our most important species, their population numbers, distribution, trends and habitat needs.
- Identifying the actions that can be taken to provide very specific habitat interventions required by species to support their recovery, particularly those of national and international importance.
- Identifying the further surveys and research needed to better understand our species and their needs and guide suitable future interventions.

## Principle 6.

### Invest in and use nature to deliver wider benefits where we need them.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are actions that use nature and the natural functions of habitats and ecosystems to tackle issues such as flooding, coastal erosion, poor water quality, drought, rising urban temperatures and carbon storage. In some places they can also be used directly to improve a local environment and provide more access and connection to nature, which is so important for health and wellbeing.

Using nature in this way is a ‘win-win’, helping to tackle issues while supporting nature and wildlife through the creation of habitats. NbS also bring more funding sources into nature recovery, for example, funds for tackling flooding can help to create wetlands as part of flood reduction project. Climate adaptation funds for towns and cities will be a particularly important source of funds for creating new habitats and planting trees in our urban areas. In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, there is a great interest in finding ways to support NbS research and development, particularly for habitats in coastal and marine environments and the multiple benefits these can provide. Innovative approaches to ‘green financing’ for these sorts of projects is also highlighting new ways to attract funding and investment.

A key challenge is to know where and how to use a nature-based approach to deliver the required outcomes. Work is going on within Catchment Partnerships, government agencies and water companies across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove to help to answer this question. A key principle for all NbS projects is that they must not have negative consequences for nature and inadvertently destroy or damage the environment, habitat or ecological function. For example,



📍 Wild Park rainscape, Brighton & Hove is a special landscape being created to reduce flooding and help protect the chalk aquifer which supplies much of the city's drinking water.

©The Living Coast/Roderick Wilson

a tree planting project to store more carbon should not be located where it could damage or destroy other types of valuable habitat such as species-rich grassland. A ‘biodiversity double-lock’ principle was introduced in 2019 by the Sussex Nature Partnership to guard against this, and ensure that where NbS are used in Sussex, they are implemented in a way and in a location that provides positive benefits for nature.

#### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Reflecting a consensus on where and how NbS can play a role in delivering wider environmental benefits in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and engaging a wider range of stakeholders in these decisions.
- Specifying how and where NbS can be used effectively – and what benefit to nature they can also help to support (ensuring the ‘win win’).
- Identifying precautions that may need to be taken when considering the application of NbS in particularly fragile environments.





## Principle 7.

### Bring nature into everyday life, providing places for people to benefit from and engage with nature.

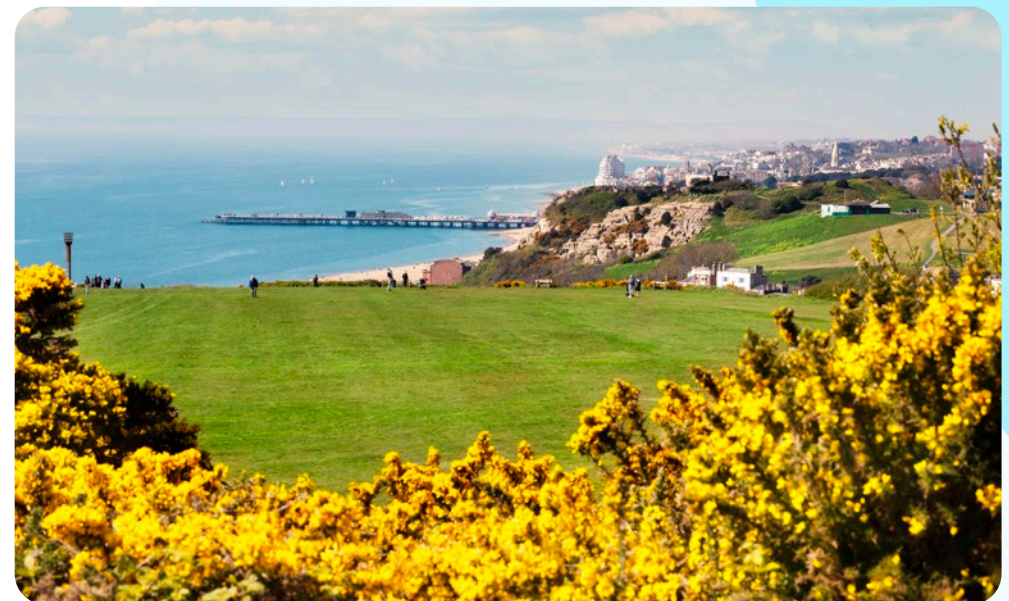
Spending time in nature has a proven positive impact on our health and wellbeing. Repairing the connection between people and nature is also vital to ensure wider support for nature and the types of decisions needed to achieve its recovery.

There are many other benefits to having nature-rich greenspaces in our neighbourhoods, from creating attractive spaces that enhance social cohesion to flood risk reduction and urban cooling. Natural England has developed 'Accessible Greenspace Standards' (AGS) to provide a guide for local planners, developers and communities. This recommends that *"everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces... within 15 minutes' walk from home"*. However, in many parts of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, there is an acknowledged 'nature deficit', where this standard is not met. These areas where the provision of more areas of natural greenspace should be prioritised.

However, it is acknowledged that bringing more nature into urban areas can be challenging for many reasons, such as pressure on land and reduced budgets for local authorities. Natural verges and areas of grassland in public greenspaces left for wildlife may not be perceived as welcome by many. Accessing nature in rural areas can also be difficult due to fewer greenspaces and poor provision or maintenance of footpath networks. Options for creating new opportunities may also be limited by funding and availability of land. Greater success across the board will be based in identifying practical, achievable local opportunities, that are ideally community-led.

#### Our strategy aims to help this by:

- Emphasising that provision of greenspace should be prioritised where there is a 'nature deficit' and where provision of more greenspace is advised to meet the Accessible Greenspace Standards (e.g. within a 15-minute walk).
- Identifying options for enhancing existing greenspaces so they are more valuable for wildlife and engaging for local people.
- Developing ideas for the creation and improvement of green and blue corridors to support nature, whilst better connecting people to natural areas within walking distance of their homes.
- Reflecting the ambition of communities and residents across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove to take action for nature in their gardens and neighbourhoods.




📍 West Hill, Hastings © iStock.com/Dgwildlife



## Section 4.

# Priorities & Measures

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 Ranger shows the group a common toad  
© Wilding Waterhall



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)





At the heart of each LNRS are the collaboratively produced and locally agreed **priorities** for nature's recovery (what we want to achieve) and the actions called **measures** that if implemented on the ground, can bring them about.

Through a comprehensive and rigorous process, **24 habitat priorities** for nature recovery in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area were prioritised from a longlist gathered through research and engagement with local people, organisations and groups (see the below four sources).

To deliver these priorities, **106 core measures** have been developed and refined with the help of local nature and land management experts.

For more information on how the priorities and measures were identified, see Part 4.

### Four sources of data have informed these priorities and measures:

- **Ecological evidence.** Data on the condition, extent, pressures and opportunities related to habitats and species in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area was gathered and analysed. This information is summarised in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 1.
- **Existing published priorities.** A comprehensive review of published plans and strategies related to East Sussex and Brighton & Hove (such as Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Catchment Management Plans and others) was undertaken to identify existing nature-based priorities.
- **Views of local people.** We invited residents, community groups and land managers to tell us about the most important environmental issues to them through surveys and workshops. A summary of public survey results can be found in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 1, with more detail in Part 4.
- **Environmental and land management expertise.** 40 of the key delivery and enabling organisations for nature in the LNRS area refined priorities and developed measures through a series of all-day workshops and by adding their comments to drafts. Leading local and national species experts meticulously collated and reviewed species priorities.



📷 Chalkland restoration

© Uni of Brighton/Sussex Wildlife Trust





# Priorities for nature's recovery – Summary Table

**Table 1: Priorities for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove**

Details of the actions (measures) that together can help achieve these are shown in the section below.

## Coastal Habitats

**C1.** Support the expansion, restoration, enhancement and creation of coastal and inter-tidal habitats.

## Farmed Landscape & Soils

**FL1.** Create and enhance opportunities for wildlife within the farmed landscape.

**SL1.** Enhance soil habitats and their health to support biodiversity and improve ecosystem services.

## Species-rich Grasslands

**G1.** Restore, expand, connect and enhance species-rich grasslands.

## Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub

**W1.** Enhance our existing woodland habitats\*, improving quality and ecological diversity of habitats, structural diversity and resilience.

**W2.** Create new woodland where this supports connectivity, biodiversity, ecosystem services and landscape character.

**W3.** Enhance and expand our urban treescapes, taking opportunities to establish new urban (and urban fringe) woodland and street trees where this will support biodiversity and deliver multiple benefits.

**Hdg1.** Enhance, expand, restore and connect our network of hedgerows.

**Scr1.** Create and enhance scrub habitats, as edge habitat, as part of habitat mosaics and as a habitat in its own right.

## Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops

**H1.** Expand, enhance and better connect lowland heathland and associated habitats.

**SO1. (Sandstone outcrops).** Enhance the unique biodiversity of the sandstone outcrops of the High Weald.

## Rivers, Streams & Aquifers

**R1. (Rivers and river systems).** Support the recovery of our rivers and river systems\*, their health, biodiversity and natural functions.

**R2. (Chalk streams).** Support the recovery and resilience of our chalk streams and their unique biodiversity.

**A1. (Aquifers).** Support the health and function of our aquifers.

## Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies

**Wt1. (Wetland habitats).** Restore and enhance our existing wetland habitats\* and create new wetlands particularly where this will expand and connect existing sites.

**SWB1. Standing water bodies (SWB). (reservoirs, lakes, ponds and ditches).** Restore and enhance existing standing water bodies and create new standing water body habitat for biodiversity and other benefits.

## Urban Nature

**U1.** Create and connect new nature-rich areas within the urban environment, for the benefit of wildlife and people.

**U2.** Enhance the value for nature of existing parks, buildings and other blue/green spaces.

## Nature Networks: Protected sites, wildlife corridors & more wildlife-rich habitat

**S1.** Support the expansion and enhancement of a network of protected sites.

**Cor1.** Enable landscape recovery at scale across landscapes and large-scale nature corridors where this supports biodiversity, ecosystem services and landscape character.

**Cor2.** Safeguard and enhance the value of existing green and blue corridors for nature and create new corridors and stepping stones of habitat where this will improve connectivity between habitats and between rural and urban green spaces.

**Cor3.** Enhance transport corridors, verges, historic routeways and footpath networks for wildlife

**WRH1.** Create new areas of wildlife-rich habitats (mosaics and mixed habitats) to compliment those created under habitat-specific priorities above.

## Nature, Health & Wellbeing

**NH1.** Create new areas of natural greenspace designed and located to deliver benefits for health and wellbeing while enhancing biodiversity.



## Definitions

<b>Priorities</b>	High level statements of what the LNRS should strive to achieve for nature recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area within its timeframe.
<b>'What does success in 10 years look like' statements</b>	These provide detail of what delivery of the priority should look like within a 10 year timeframe to be considered successful. In most cases, this will require the implementation of both the core measures and enabling measures listed for each priority (see below).
<b>Core habitat measures</b>	Actions 'on the ground' that are required to deliver the priorities and outcomes identified for nature's recovery in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area. These are the main focus of the LNRS as required by statutory guidance. Each measure is supported by notes on <b>'How'</b> (the techniques that could be used to deliver each measure (which in many cases will vary depending on the specific characteristics of a site), and <b>'Where'</b> – where they could be targeted to deliver greatest benefit. Links to <b>further information/guidance</b> and local case studies are also provided.
<b>Enabling Measures</b>	These are actions that, while not directly focused on habitats or species, play a vital supporting role in delivering the core objectives of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). Because they fall outside the statutory scope of the LNRS, they are not the responsibility of the designated Responsible Authorities. However, stakeholders identified these measures as essential for empowering the broader network of organisations involved in nature recovery across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. By strengthening the mechanisms, processes, and functions that underpin core measures, enabling actions help facilitate the overall success of the LNRS. For this reason, they are included alongside core measures as prompts for wider, collaborative efforts.
<b>Priority species</b>	The LNRS has identified a suite of species to target for nature recovery. These are species for which East/West Sussex is particularly important. Some have their own bespoke measures, and some have been grouped together into assemblages of species which share similar management requirements. The full species lists and targeted measures are presented in <b>Part 3</b> of the LNRS. The species and assemblages that are likely to benefit from our habitat measures have been incorporated into the relevant habitat sections that follow.
<b>Mapped/not mapped</b>	This indicates whether the measure has been mapped on the 'measures map' which follows this section.

## Delivery of multiple benefits through 'nature-based solutions'

Enhancement or creation of any habitat will support our natural capital and help to deliver wider environmental benefits by strengthening their natural functions.

Most of the measures set out in the LNRS are primarily concerned with supporting biodiversity but will also provide some secondary benefits for air, water, flood risk reduction and so on.

However, some measures are specifically included within the LNRS due to their role as '**nature-based solutions**' that can be used to tackle particular environmental problems, using approaches that also support nature. These may have their own funding streams through government schemes, water company funding, climate adaptation and mitigation approaches and so on. The icons on the following page (borrowed from the Defra [Environmental Improvement Plan \(2023\)](#)) are used throughout this document to identify those measures that have a specific role to play as nature-based solutions and thus may be supported by funding streams of this type.

Note: all core measures carry the icon for 'thriving plants and wildlife' indicating that they all support nature and the government's 'apex goal' to halt the decline in biodiversity and move towards nature's recovery.










📷 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is presented at the Nature and Climate event at Seven Sister Country Park.

© D Alcroft





## Icons identify those measures that have a specific role to play as nature-based solutions

Icon	Theme	Explanation
	<b>Thriving plants &amp; wildlife</b>	All measures that support habitat and/or species enhancement, restoration or creation.
	<b>Clean Air</b>	Measures where habitat creation can help to improve air quality. Particularly relevant in urban areas and along transport corridors.
	<b>Clean and Plentiful Water</b>	Measures that help to filter/purify water. Applies to both water supply that may come from rivers or aquifers (ground water) and a clean water environment and sufficient water flows to support biodiversity.
	<b>Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides</b>	Measures that support the reduced use of chemicals. These will have benefits to both nature and people.
	<b>Using resources from nature sustainably</b>	Measures that relate to sustainable management of our land, woodland and soils.
	<b>Mitigating and adapting to climate change</b>	<p><b>Climate change mitigation:</b> measures where the enhancement or creation of habitat will support greater carbon storage and sequestration. Those habitats with the greatest potential for this include: soils, woodland, hedgerows, grasslands, peatland, saltmarsh and seagrass</p> <p><b>Climate change adaptation:</b> measures which help society to adapt better to climate-related change such as flood risk, reduced water flows/supply and rising urban temperatures.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> all measures will support the resilience of habitats and species to climate related change and support their adaptation. Those that increase habitat size or create corridors/steeping stones will specifically support the ability of wildlife to move through the landscape in response to climate change. These have not specifically been given an icon but this role is assumed.</p>
	<b>Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards</b>	Measures that support the reduction of flood risk, coastal erosion and soil erosion. There is some overlap with the climate change theme above.
	<b>Enhancing biosecurity</b>	Measures that relate to the removal/ control of invasive non-native species, tackling and improving resilience to pests and diseases affecting plants/animals.
	<b>Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment</b>	All measures have the potential to support landscape and heritage. Therefore this icon is used to identify those that will make a contribution to enhancing access to/connection with nature – which is focused primarily on greenspaces, new woodland creation, green/blue corridors and so on.



# Coastal Habitats



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📷 Sand dunes, Camber Sands  
© iStock.com/BethAmber





## COASTAL HABITATS

**Priority: C1****Support the expansion, restoration, enhancement and creation of coastal and inter-tidal habitats****What does success in 10 years look like?**

- The condition, connectivity and resilience of our most fragile coastal habitats\* is improving through management, expansion and buffering of fragments and creation of new habitat 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 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 intertidal habitats and species from upstream diffuse inputs from land to sea have been reduced via 'nature-based solutions' and land and marine-based actions. 'Source to sea' approaches are playing a role in tackling impacts on coastal environments and habitats which originate on land, across catchments. In particular, the water quality of our harbours, inlets and coastal protected areas is improving, with the condition of affected coastal designated sites moving from unfavourable/declining to recovering condition as a result.
- The implementation of flood and coastal erosion risk management infrastructure is delivering positive benefits for nature, particularly where nature-based approaches such as managed realignment projects have been possible and successful. The design of future coastal flood defence schemes (e.g. [Eastbourne to Pevensey coastal management scheme](#)) is incorporating measures to support recovery of coastal habitats.



📷 Coastal vegetated shingle © D Acroft

\*Coastal habitats identified as 'at risk' by Sussex Nature Partnership include sand dunes, saltmarsh, coastal vegetated shingle, saline lagoons, intertidal kelp, seagrass, mudflats, coastal grazing marsh, oyster reefs, mussel beds, maritime cliff and slope, and chalk reefs.



- Where areas of coastal habitat are at significant risk from sea level rise and coastal squeeze, statutory bodies have led decision-making and delivery processes enabling nature recovery, particularly where habitat loss and degradation of designated sites may result.
- Larger contiguous areas of coastal and intertidal habitats have been created in some areas (e.g. saltmarsh, mudflats and coastal grazing marsh) and are delivering a range of ecosystem services. These include a reduction in coastal flood risk and erosion, as well as improved carbon storage, bioremediation (use of habitats to absorb excess nutrients), healthy inshore waters and nursery areas for fish and other marine wildlife.

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- 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.
- Achievement of the above is being facilitated through a collaborative approach to the recovery of habitats and species across marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems. The Sussex Bay 'Seascape Blueprint for research and recovery' (to be published in 2026) is guiding this work by providing an evidence-led approach to delivery of habitats and species within the coastal and marine environments of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.



📷 Intertidal habitat, Bexhill © D Alcroft








**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
C1.1	<p><b>Retain existing and re-create additional naturally functioning shorelines where appropriate, supporting the creation and increased connectivity of coastal and intertidal habitat and delivery of additional ecosystem services.</b></p> <p>Mapped</p>   	Managed realignment; removal of redundant coastal defence structures or coastal defence structures where dwellings or infrastructure are not at risk of flooding; encouragement of sedimentation on existing marshes/mudflats etc.	Areas identified under policies of ‘managed realignment’ and ‘no further intervention’ in Shoreline Management Plans; areas identified by Environment Agency and catchment partnerships as suitable for future proposals.	<p><a href="#">HM Gov. Shoreline Management Plan. Beachy Head to Selsey Bill (SMP12) and South Foreland to Beachy Head (SMP11)</a></p>
C1.2	<p><b>Restore and enhance existing areas of intertidal saltmarsh and mudflats.</b></p> <p>Mapped</p>  	Restoration of existing sites via grazing; cutting; protection from erosion.	Existing areas of intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat.	<p>Catchment Based Approach: <a href="#">Saltmarsh Restoration Handbook</a> and <a href="#">Restoring Estuarine and Coastal Habitats with Dredged Sediment</a></p>
C1.3	<p><b>Create new areas of intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat, in locations where it is likely to be resilient to future climate pressures.</b></p> <p>Mapped</p>  	<p>Creation of new saltmarsh requires inundation of land by tidal waters.</p> <p>Approaches used may involve managed realignment; regulated tidal exchange; water management; re-use of dredged material etc.</p> <p>The aim is to ensure ‘migration’ of this habitat to areas with less risk from sea level rise. This may have impacts on other habitats present on candidate sites which must be taken into consideration.</p>	<p>Areas where conditions are suitable for habitat creation and longevity (i.e. with future impacts of climate change/sea level rise in mind).</p> <p>Suitable locations for saltmarsh creation may include <b>tidal reaches of rivers</b> as these provide space for estuarine habitat types under threat from sea level rise to ‘migrate’ inland (upstream). Saltmarsh creation is therefore also included as an option under measure R1.1 i.e. within areas of the floodplain where conditions may be suitable due to tidal inundation (<i>See R1.1 ‘Renaturalise’ and reconnect rivers to their floodplains, allowing water to spill naturally onto adjacent land and restoring, expanding and better connecting floodplain habitats.</i>).</p>	<p>Catchment Based Approach: <a href="#">Marine and coastal habitat restoration principles</a> and <a href="#">Saltmarsh Restoration Handbook</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Rye Harbour saltmarsh creation</a></p>

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
C1.4	<p><b>Enhance existing coastal vegetated shingle habitats and create new areas, primarily through expansion of existing sites.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>  	<p>These will be site dependent but may include: control of invasive non-native species; reduction of disturbance from shingle excavation or recreational pressure (e.g. fencing/visitor management, education and interpretation); non-intervention management; retention of tide-swept debris, prevention of scrub encroachment; enhancement of adjacent supporting habitats etc.</p> <p>Expansion/creation of new area can be facilitated by shingle profiling to create microhabitats; recolonisation or planting; protection from recreational pressure and future shingle excavation.</p>	<p>Existing sites for enhancement and expansion where conditions will support this. e.g. where new vegetation is likely to survive pressures from recreation, coastal processes etc; seek opportunities within coastal defence projects.</p>	<p>Buglife: <a href="#">Coastal vegetated shingle</a></p> <p>Catchment Based Approach: <a href="#">Restoring Estuarine and Coastal Habitats with Dredged Sediment</a></p> <p>Nature After Minerals (NAM): <a href="#">Coastal Vegetated Shingle</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Living Coast: <a href="#">Black Rock Project, Brighton &amp; Hove</a></p>
C1.5	<p><b>Enhance existing areas of intertidal seagrass and create new areas primarily through expansion of existing sites*.</b></p> <p>(*note – seagrass and other habitats within the <i>marine</i> zone are not covered by the LNRS).</p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>  	<p>Removal of spartina and invasive non-native species (INNS), management of bait digging and hand gathering, boat management practices etc. Success may rely on improvement of water quality and reduction in pollution (beyond the scope of the LNRS). Establishment of new areas should follow best practice techniques which may include replanting/reseeding depending on site conditions.</p>	<p>Existing areas of inter tidal seagrass; areas identified in <a href="#">MMO 1135 Potential seagrass restoration</a>.</p> <p><i>Environment Agency</i> – <a href="#">seagrass potential</a>.</p>	<p>Catchment Based Approach: <a href="#">Seagrass Restoration Handbook</a></p> <p>LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES (a five-year marine conservation partnership): (<a href="#">website</a>)</p> <p>Solent Seascape Project: <a href="#">Seagrass</a></p> <p>Project Seagrass: (<a href="#">website</a>)</p>





Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
C1.6	<p><b>Enhance existing coastal lagoons*, providing optimal environmental conditions for aquatic life.</b></p> <p>(*These may be saline, brackish or freshwater depending on level of salinity.)</p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	Monitoring and control of salinity levels; management of water levels; reduction of disturbance; creation/enhancement of marginal habitats; improvement of water quality through reduction of pollution (beyond the scope of the LNRS) etc.	All coastal lagoons.	Solent Forum: <a href="#">Saline Lagoons</a>
C1.7	<p><b>Create new coastal lagoons*, to connect wetland habitats and compensate for those lost due to pressures such as climate change.</b></p> <p>(*These can be saline, brackish or freshwater depending on level of salinity.)</p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Land-forming to create lagoon areas; natural dispersal of species; natural coastal processes as part of managed realignment projects.	In transitional areas that are likely to flood and where possible pressures from recreation/disturbance are low; creation of new coastal lagoons within managed realignment projects; locations where this will support specific species and form part of a wider mosaic of connected wetland habitats. May form part of response to loss of coastal habitats to sea level rise.	Nature After Minerals (NAM): <a href="#">Saline lagoons</a>
C1.8	<p><b>Enhance the condition of existing sand dune habitats.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>   	Dune stabilisation; removal and control of INNS; reduction of disturbance, trampling and erosion via visitor management etc.	All sand dunes sites.	<p>Natural England: <a href="#">The Sand Dune Managers Handbook (2nd edition)</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Rother District Council: <a href="#">Dungeness Complex – Draft Sustainable Access and Recreational Management Strategy (See Sub area 3 Camber Sands and Broomhill)</a></p>

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
C1.9	<p><b>Enhance areas of existing maritime cliff and slope (hard and soft cliff) habitats, supporting key species associated with the habitat type.</b></p> <p>(Note: this only applies to areas of the coastline where natural coastal erosion processes continue to influence the cliffs.)</p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Allow cliff erosion processes to continue where possible (optional erosion rates are required to continued creation of the mosaic of habitats typical of these cliffs); manage cliff top vegetation to provide species-rich and connected habitats for wildlife, particularly invertebrates (species-rich grassland); visitor management in cliff top areas to reduce surface erosion, damage to flora and disturbance to nesting birds.</p>	<p>Areas of existing soft-cliff (where natural coastal erosion processes continue) and related cliff top areas.</p>	<p>Buglife: <a href="#">managing coastal soft cliffs for invertebrates</a></p>
C1.10	<p><b>Reduce impacts on coastal wildlife caused by coastal leisure and recreational activities on land and water as a key component of species recovery efforts.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Management of recreational use in and around fragile coastal habitats and key sites for coastal wildlife (such as wildfowl, waders, terns, brent geese); management of leisure activities (including dog walking) where this is a cause of wildlife disturbance.</p>	<p>Areas/sites of coastal habitat where wildlife is vulnerable to visitor pressure.</p>	<p>Local case studies:</p> <p>Rother District Council: <a href="#">Dungeness Complex – Draft Sustainable Access and Recreational Management Strategy</a></p>



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery:

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

R1.1 'Renaturalise' and reconnect rivers to their floodplains, allowing water to spill naturally onto adjacent land and restoring, expanding and better connecting floodplain habitats (such as wet grassland, fen, marsh and wet woodland). This will support biodiversity, increase ground water recharge and provide flood attenuation. [Note that in tidal reaches of rivers, this measure may include creation of saltmarsh where conditions are suitable.]

### WETLAND AND STANDING WATER BODIES

Wt1.4 Manage existing areas of floodplain grazing marsh (including coastal floodplain grazing marsh) to enhance the ecological condition of its mosaic of habitats and ditches.

### URBAN NATURE

U2.1 Increase the area of habitat created and managed for nature within existing green spaces, such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments, golf courses, foreshore, public gardens, shared spaces (flats/housing association land), hospitals, prisons etc. *(Where located along the coast, these urban spaces may have a role to play in enhancing/creating coastal habitats while also providing public access. This will be very site specific.)*

More generally, measures within **Rivers, Streams & Aquifers** section intended to enhance water quality within catchments, will also support the coastal and marine environment of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Similarly, measures within protected sites will be relevant to many coastal habitats, given the high proportion of these sites that sit within or in the proximity of protected sites such as SSSIs, SACs/SPAs, Ramsar Sites and Local Wildlife Sites (see **Nature Networks** section).

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>C1.11 (EM)</b>	Establish a consolidated inventory/map of opportunities for adaptive coastal management, bringing together the range of existing datasets, to help target action to mitigate sea level rise/coastal squeeze.
<b>C1.12 (EM)</b>	Research and understand the barriers to recovery of intertidal habitats and communities e.g. intertidal kelp, seagrass, chalk platforms.
<b>C1.13 (EM)</b>	Guidance, awareness raising and community support to reduce the impact of garden escapes on coastal vegetated shingle communities.
<b>C1.14 (EM)</b>	Develop the 'Seascape Blueprint' for Sussex Bay to highlight areas of opportunity for the marine and coastal environment, explore enhanced connectivity, set priorities for the future and expose overarching pressures to maximise ecosystem service delivery.



## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
A spider <i>Micaria albobittata</i>	C1.1, C1.9, C1.10
A spider <i>Trochosa robusta</i>	C1.1, C1.9
Potter flower bee	C1.1, C1.9
Mediterranean oil beetle	C1.1, C1.9

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Breeding waders – wet grassland & heathland assemblage	C1.2, C1.3, C1.10
Coastal grazing marsh & upper saltmarsh assemblage	C1.1, C1.2, C1.3
Shingle & sand dune assemblage	C1.1, C1.4, C1.8, C1.10
Breeding & migrating/winter shore birds assemblage	C1.2, C1.3, C1.4, C1.6, C1.7, C1.10
Cliff nesting birds assemblage	C1.1, C1.9, C1.10



 Rye Harbour Nature Reserve  
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# Farmed Landscape & Soils



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Castle Hill NNR & Kingston © Ben Rainbow





## FARMED LANDSCAPE &amp; SOILS

## Priority: FL1

## Create and enhance opportunities for wildlife within the farmed landscape

## What does success in 10 years look like?

(These are in addition to statements noted under other habitat groups which apply to farmland e.g. grassland, woodland, hedges and heathland, freshwater and soils.)

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Our species-rich grassland habitats that have been created by (and rely on) traditional farming practices, are improving in quality and extent through suitable management and understanding of their quality (see [Species-rich Grassland](#) section below).



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- Species-rich and more structurally diverse grass buffer strips and plots in fields are providing new areas of habitat for wildlife, supporting invertebrates (including pollinators) and creating linkages/corridors between other habitats. These buffers and plots are of a size that is appropriate to the landscape and field size.
- Nature friendly farming approaches are creating features and habitats for wildlife such as hedgerows, riparian buffer strips and species-rich field boundaries, supporting nature whilst also contributing to wider environmental quality by capturing nutrients, storing carbon, slowing the flow of water in the landscape etc. These habitat interventions are being supported by farming practices which are also focused on minimising impacts on the wider environment such as soil erosion and diffuse pollution across catchments, improved carbon storage in soils 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.





- Hedges are enhanced and gapped up, and hedgerow trees planted to ensure they have good structural diversity. New hedges are being established on farmland to improve the connectivity of hedgerows across the landscape.
- Ditches on farmland are managed sensitively to protect existing species and water levels are maintained where possible to enhance biodiversity.
- Farmland bird species (e.g. skylark, stone curlew, corn bunting, grey partridge and turtle dove) are being supported through the retention of important habitat and enhancement and creation of other habitats specific to their needs across the farmed landscape. The abundance and range of target species is increasing.

- Farm and land-based business are on a positive trend towards economic and environmental sustainability, with nature-based solutions forming part of their farm business model. Successes and progress in achieving greater sustainability and contributing to delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies are acknowledged.

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Rare arable plant species are present and increasing in their range and number of sites through appropriate management (e.g. reduced use of pesticides, leaving areas of uncultivated fallow ground etc).

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

- Farmers and landowners across the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area are engaging with support, advice and funding options available to enable them to carry out nature recovery actions.
- More farmers are implementing nature friendly and/or regenerative farming practices, delivering benefits for nature, soil and the wider environment alongside more sustainable food production.
- The network of farmers working together locally through farmer clusters, nature recovery partnerships or projects has grown and is playing a critical role in delivering for nature alongside sustainable food production, both on their own land and collectively at a larger scale.



**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
FL1.1	<p><b>Create <i>permanent, species-rich and/or structurally diverse grass blocks, strips, margins or headlands to support pollinators and other wildlife.</i></b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Creation of permanent grassland blocks, margins, headlands and strips with species and structural diversity. Suitable techniques will depend on whether these are being created on arable land or pasture. On arable, techniques can include seeding, mowing (including removal of arisings). On pasture, techniques are more likely to involve grazing regimes (e.g. mob grazing).</p>	<p>This is good practice across farmland but particularly where greater habitat connectivity is needed and/or to support specific species. Concentrate on connecting these strips, blocks and headlands across land holdings to support larger scale connectivity. Size of buffers, margins, blocks etc, should be sufficient to provide ecological benefit but of a scale that is suitable for the landscape and field size.</p>	<p>Kent Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Managing field margins for wildlife</a></p> <p>Agricology: <a href="#">Field margins, hedgerows, woodland and scrub</a></p> <p>South Downs National Park: <a href="#">Managing habitats for farmland birds</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">CIPM2 Flower-rich grass margins, blocks or in-field strips</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p><a href="#">South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative</a> (page and <a href="#">story map</a>)</p>
FL1.2	<p><b>Create new areas of cultivated fallow ground for arable plants and farmland birds and ensure that the overall area is maintained, even if individual plots are rotated through the landscape.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Creation of fallow margins or plots in spring or autumn; to provide vegetative cover throughout the growing season. No application of fertiliser or manure.</p> <p>The key is to encourage native plants within the seedbed to grow (rather than to plant seed). Site selection is therefore key in order to find locations with a rich seed bank (ideally in areas previously cultivated for up to 100 years).</p>	<p>Arable land, particularly on sandy or chalky soils.</p> <p>Target in areas known to be important for arable plants (e.g. from historic records) and where it will support specific bird species that are present in the area and will benefit from this type of habitat (e.g. stone-curlew, turtle dove).</p> <p>Rotation around the farm can prevent build-up of undesirable weed species.</p>	<p>Farm Wildlife: <a href="#">Fallow Plots</a></p> <p>Plantlife: <a href="#">Managing arable farm land</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">AHW11 Cultivated areas for arable plants</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">AB11 Cultivated areas for arable plants</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p><a href="#">South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative</a> (page and <a href="#">story map</a>)</p> <p>For more information on specific measures to support farmland birds, see Part 3 of this LNRS on ‘farmland birds assemblage’.</p>










Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
FL1.3	<p><b>Create new areas of agro-forestry where this will support and enhance landscape character, support biodiversity and deliver other benefits such as shelter and shade for livestock.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>This can be ‘in-field’ or ‘around field’ planting of in-field and hedgerow trees; management (pruning) of established trees; accompanying cropping or pastoral regimes.</p>	<p>Areas where this is a suitable land use in relation to landscape character (as guided by relevant local landscape character assessments<sup>1</sup>) and Protected Landscape Management Plans.</p> <p>Forestry Commission Mapping and <a href="#">Woodland Opportunity Map</a> (Sussex Nature Partnership and SDNP) can also help to spatially target opportunities<sup>2</sup>.</p>	<p>Gov.uk guidance – Forestry Commission: <a href="#">A guide to agroforestry</a></p> <p>Soil Association: <a href="#">Agroforestry Handbook</a></p>
FL1.4	<p><b>Provide nesting and roosting boxes or other features to support bats, birds, insects and reptiles in the farmed environment.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Provision of standing deadwood and log piles; bare ground; bird boxes; bat boxes; roosting/nesting sites in farm buildings.</p>	<p>For birds, rather than providing general bird boxes, provide specific types of boxes suited to <b>threatened</b> bird species found at the location (e.g. swift, house sparrow, starling, owl species etc) and in locations where over-wintering habitat and summer insect-rich forage is present. For bats, target areas where bats are known to roost or forage.</p> <p>Log piles and standing deadwood will support a general range of insects.</p>	<p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Provide nest boxes for birds</a></p> <p>Bat Conservation Trust: <a href="#">Bat boxes</a>; and <a href="#">Bat box information pack</a>.</p> <p>Barn Owl Trust: <a href="#">Where's the best place for your Barn Owl nestbox?</a></p> <p>Swift Conservation: <a href="#">(website)</a></p>

<sup>1</sup> East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, South Downs Landscape Character Assessment, High Weald AONB Management Plan.

<sup>2</sup> [https://data-forestry.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/aa20163c87814a3a8f5c19075244927a\\_0/explore](https://data-forestry.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/aa20163c87814a3a8f5c19075244927a_0/explore)  
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wildlife-habitats/habitats/healthy-woodlands/woodland-opportunity-mapping/>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
FL1.5	<p><b>Create and manage graded margins up to hedgerow and woodland edges on farmland, to support birds and other woodland and farmland species.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Creation of grass and scrub mosaic along the woodland/hedgerow edge; no application of pesticides/fertilisers.	Alongside priority habitat woodland types and ancient species-rich hedges (usually defined as 5 or more species within 30m).	<p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">AHW12: Manage woodland edges on arable land</a></p> <p><a href="#">CAHL4: 4m to 12m grass buffer strip on arable and horticultural land</a> and</p> <p><a href="#">CIGL3: 4m to 12m grass buffer strip on improved grassland</a></p>
FL1.6	<p><b>Plant new field trees to ensure continued presence of in-field trees within the farmed landscape.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>   	Tree planting (with a plan for their long-term management and maintenance); protection from grazing if required; creation of a buffer of low growing vegetation around in-field trees to ensure they are not isolated from other habitat.	In locations where in-field trees have been lost or are old/veteran trees and thus where a plan for 'succession' is required.	Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">BFS5 Protect in-field trees on intensive grassland</a>
FL1.7	<p><b>Implement sensitive land management practices on farmed land adjacent to rivers, streams, ditches and ponds to prevent run off and enhance the quality of the freshwater environment.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>   	Reduced fertiliser inputs on land adjacent to rivers/streams; management of cattle poaching along river banks; cover crops; presumption against specific livestock with known detrimental impact on water quality (e.g. pig farming and Cryptosporidium/chicken farming and nutrient runoff), promotion of soil health.	Land adjacent to watercourses, particularly in areas vulnerable to nutrients and/or sediment loads within watercourses/freshwater ecosystems.	Gov.uk: <a href="#">Catchment Sensitive Farming guidance</a>



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery, these include:

Many of the measures that relate to **Rivers, Streams & Aquifers** and **Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies** located on farmland will be relevant (see sections below). These include:

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

R1.6 Create and manage permanent vegetation buffer strips alongside rivers and streams to support biodiversity and intercept and reduce levels of pollutants (such as nutrients, chemical pollutants, veterinary chemicals, excessive sediment) reaching watercourses.

### WETLAND AND STANDING WATER BODIES

SWB1.1 Enhance and restore existing ponds and pond complexes to improve biodiversity and water quality. This includes restoration of degraded and lost (ghost) ponds, pond complexes, farm ponds, hammer ponds, dew ponds and urban ponds.

SWB1.2 Create new ponds / pond networks (complexes) to provide additional freshwater habitat and deliver wider environmental benefits (e.g. storage of water in the landscape). *Pond creation on farmland will provide additional ecological variety. Can be designed to store additional water in the landscape and support farmland bird species.*

SWB1.5 Create and manage permanent vegetation buffer strips alongside ditches and ponds to support biodiversity and intercept and reduce levels of pollutants (such as nutrients, chemical pollutants, veterinary chemicals, excessive sediment) reaching watercourses.

The farmed landscape in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove contains a range of other habitat types and covers a large percentage of its total land area. Therefore, measures within the following sections will also be relevant in delivering nature's recovery in the farmed landscape: **Species rich-grassland; Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub; Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops; Nature Networks** (protected sites and wildlife corridors).

Also relevant may be measures relating to **Coastal Habitats** – where these sit within agricultural landholdings.



📷 Turtle dove © iStock.com/CreativeNature\_nl

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>FL1.8 (EM)</b>	<p>Improve and coordinate support to farmers to provide clearer signposting and advice on options and funding available for nature-based actions on their land (e.g. ELMS, catchment-based funding, protected landscape funds etc).</p> <p><i>This will require the organisations involved in providing landowner advice in Sussex to coordinate their activity, share information on activities they are supporting and develop a clearer, targeted offer to farmers on funding and support available.</i></p> <p><i>Include sustainable farming practices, such as regenerative farming, also linking to best practice and sources of funding available.</i></p>
<b>FL1.9 (EM)</b>	<p>Support collaboration between farmers at a landscape scale, via farm-cluster groups and applications to Landscape Recovery Schemes – through provision of facilitation and funding.</p> <p>Cross-reference to Corridor 1 priority (landscape scale activity).</p>
<b>FL1.10 (EM)</b>	<p>Showcase best practice ‘farmer to farmer’ e.g. exemplar hedgerows etc.</p>
<b>FL1.11 (EM)</b>	<p>Support a farmer-led communications initiative to promote greater understanding of farming by the public, illustrating the pressures on farm businesses and the role of the sector in delivering positive impacts for nature and the environment.</p> <p>This could include actions such as farm tours and walks which get people out onto farms as well as traditional communications approaches.</p>

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>FL1.12 (EM)</b>	<p>Enhance the evidence base for farmland habitats, encouraging and support long term monitoring and evidence gathering to inform future interventions to support farmland habitats.</p>

### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
European water vole	FL1.7
Hazel dormouse	FL1.3, FL1.5
Pine marten	FL1.3, FL1.5
West European hedgehog	FL1.5
Bechstein's bat	FL1.5
Grey long-eared bat	FL1.1, FL1.4, FL1.5
White-clawed crayfish	FL1.7
Glow-worm	FL1.5

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Farmland birds assemblage	FL1.1, FL1.2, FL1.4, FL1.5
Rare arable plants assemblage	FL1.1, FL1.2
Woodland birds assemblage	FL1.3





## FARMED LANDSCAPE &amp; SOILS




**Priority: SL1****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 East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is improving through a range of management and land use practices including rotation, suitable tillage and grazing regimes, retention of permanent pasture.
- There is increased integration of grass and herb-rich leys within farming systems, where appropriate, to increase biodiversity and improve soil health. Temporary habitats on farmland are recognised for the role they have on soil health.
- There is a greater understanding of soil condition and soil type, potential and variability across the LNRS area. There is more 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 and minimised.

- 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 watercourses. This is benefitting the quality of the freshwater and marine environment.



**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
SL1.1	<b>Implement farming techniques that improve soil health and biodiversity.</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	Regenerative farming; organic farming; crop rotation; reduced tillage practices; mob grazing; integration of grass and herb-rich leys (arable); use of seed/plants of local provenance, use of cover crops etc.	Suitable for widespread application.	Regenerative Food & Farming: <a href="#">website</a> Groundswell: <a href="#">5 principles of regenerative agriculture</a>
SL1.2	<b>Implement sensitive forestry practices to reduce impacts and compaction to forest floor and protect mycorrhizal systems.</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	Timber extraction by heavy horses; if using conventional equipment, timing of works to reduce impact.	Particularly important in ancient woodland.	Gov.uk – <a href="#">Forestry Commission</a> . <a href="#">The UK Forestry Standard (see soil section)</a>
SL1.3	<b>Reduce pesticide and fertiliser inputs, particularly within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Source Protection Zones.</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	Strategic use of chemicals; use of alternatives.	Suitable for all farmland; particularly important in NVAs, SPZs.	Defra statutory guidance: <a href="#">Enforcing the farming rules for water</a>



Code	Enabling Measures
<b>SL1.4 (EM)</b>	Increase knowledge in soils and biology via training for farmers/landowners on soils and organic carbon.
<b>SL1.5 (EM)</b>	Provide advice and support for introduction of healthy soil management techniques.
<b>SL1.6 (EM)</b>	Establish a programme of funded soil testing and monitoring for organic carbon and biology to target arable and low-input grassland.

### Priority species that would benefit from soil habitat priorities and measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
European water vole	SL1.3
Hazel dormouse	SL1.2
Pine marten	SL1.2
Bechstein's bat	SL1.1, SL1.2, SL1.3
Grey long-eared bat	SL1.1, SL1.3
White-clawed crayfish	SL1.3
Field gentian	SL1.1

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Rare arable plants assemblage	SL1.1



📷 Hazel dormouse © iStock.com/SzymonBartos



# Species-rich Grassland



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 Meadow © iStock.com/Chris Page





## SPECIES-RICH GRASSLAND

**Priority: G1****Restore, expand, connect and enhance species-rich grasslands\***

*\*For the purposes of this priority these include: lowland calcareous grassland (chalk grassland), species-rich meadows (including lowland meadows) and pastures, waxcap grasslands, and neutral grasslands.*

*Note: Semi-natural grasslands within the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) are dealt with under their own measures, given the complexity of grasslands in this area and the specific way in which the HWNL Team has been collating data and providing management support for the grasslands within its boundary. The term 'species-rich grassland' in these measures therefore relates to the definition of the term used by HWNL Team.*

*Acid grassland is most commonly found in association with heathland habitats and is thus dealt with primarily in the lowland heathland section below. Wet grassland and floodplain grazing marsh is included in the Wetland section below.*

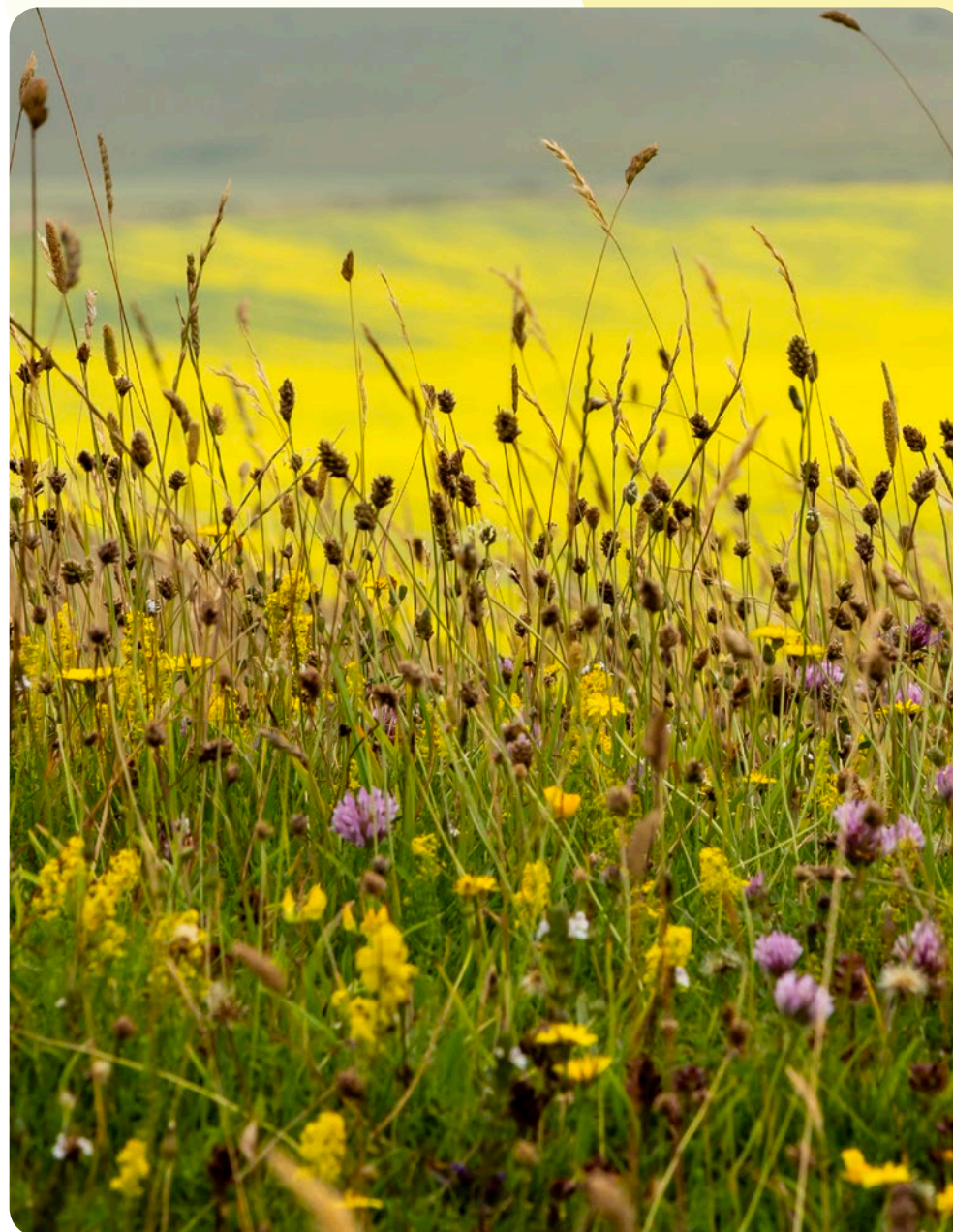
**What does success in 10 years look like?**

- The focus has changed from managing small fragments of species-rich grassland, to a more joined-up approach that is delivering bigger, better and connected areas of species-rich grassland and associated habitats (e.g. scrub). Projects at a county and regional scale are helping to deliver progress at a landscape scale.
- More areas of existing species-rich grassland are being managed and restored to protect and enhance their value for nature. This includes management of grassland with low chemical inputs and appropriate grazing regimes. As a result, there is increased abundance of important plant species and the specific priority species associated with these habitats.
- Remnants of these valuable habitats have been identified and are being buffered and better connected through appropriate management of suitable adjacent high quality semi-improved grassland to create larger connected areas of species-rich grassland. Where creation of larger contiguous areas is not 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 high quality semi-improved 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 the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area 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 such as the declaration of The Seven Sisters NNR in East Sussex (details to be announced) and the [Big Chalk Initiative](#) across Southern England.

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- There is a much greater understanding and appreciation of the variety and value of the different types of species-rich grasslands found in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area, which are directly related to the underlying soils and geology and can vary immensely within a small area in some parts of the county.
- There is increasing recognition of the value of the undisturbed soils of our semi-natural grasslands for both carbon storage and carbon capture.






📷 Wildflower meadow, South Downs © iStock.com/Lemanieh

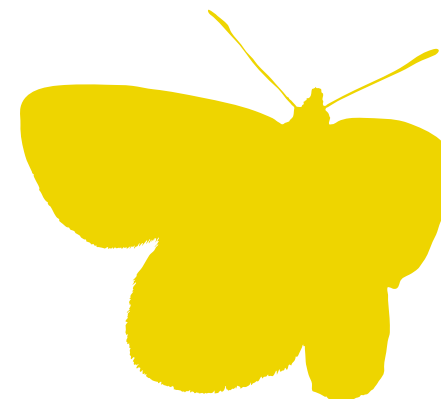








**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:


Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
G1.1	<p><b>Enhance existing areas of species-rich lowland calcareous (chalk) grassland, maintaining and improving its quality, diversity of species, suitable sward height and structure.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>These will be site specific but may include: rotational extensive grazing throughout the year; grazing/cut and collect regimes sensitive to the flora, fauna and fungi of the site; reduction in erosion; control of invasive non-native species (such as cotoneaster on downland areas of chalk grassland); use of locally harvested wildflower seed suitable for soil conditions or green hay for seeding new areas; reduction of recreational pressure on habitat and species disturbance via visitor management; control or removal of scrub where required.</p> <p>Note: on chalk grassland in particular, it may be beneficial to control scrub to create a grassland/scrub mosaic for the benefit of specific species (e.g. butterflies) and to create viable grazing areas. Seek ecological advice to identify suitable percentage scrub cover that would be valuable).</p>	All areas of existing lowland calcareous (chalk) grassland; particularly those areas within and adjacent to Local Wildlife Sites and SSSIs/NNRs.	<p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Maintain species rich grassland</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">GS6 Management of species-rich grassland</a></p>
G1.2	<p><b>Create new areas of calcareous (chalk) grassland, particularly where this will expand existing sites and improve connectivity with existing areas of chalk grassland and related chalk habitats (such as chalk heath).</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	These will be site specific but will include allowing natural regeneration/ colonisation of adjacent land via seed dispersal; use of green hay; use of local provenance seed or other plant material; grazing; cutting and removal of hay crop to reduce nutrients if required.	<p>Locations where this will help to expand or better connect existing areas of high-quality chalk grassland and other chalk habitats.</p> <p>In terms of target sites, a good starting points will be suitable areas of semi-improved grassland on chalk soils, particularly those adjacent to existing chalk grassland. Reversion of improved grassland and arable on chalk soils is also possible but may be harder to achieve.</p>	<p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>National Trust: <a href="#">Changing Chalk Partnership</a></p> <p>Big Chalk: (<a href="#">website</a>)</p>





Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
G1.3	<p><b>Within the High Weald National Landscape, enhance the existing species-rich grasslands and lowland meadows found within the protected landscape, maintaining and improving ecological condition, diversity of species, suitable sward height and structure.</b></p> <p><i>(These include ancient, undisturbed and unimproved neutral grasslands, dry acid grassland, lowland meadows, hay meadows and pastures found within the High Weald National Landscape as defined and mapped by High Weald National Landscape).</i></p> <p><i>For <b>waxcap grasslands</b> which are also found in the High Weald, see separate measure below.</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>  	<p>These will be site specific but may include: rotational extensive grazing throughout the year; grazing/cut and collect regimes sensitive to the flora, fauna and fungi of the site; reduction in erosion; control of invasive non-native species (INNS); use of local provenance/ locally harvested wildflower seed suitable for soil conditions* or locally sourced green hay for seeding new areas and/or locally grown Weald native plug plants for re-introductions; reduction of recreational pressure on habitat and species disturbance via visitor management; control or removal of scrub where required.</p>	<p>All areas of species-rich grassland within the HWNL not already in positive conservation management; particularly those in and around protected sites (i.e. those within LWS and LNRs or adjacent to/ between SSSIs).</p>	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Wildflower Grasslands in the High Weald (video)</a> and <a href="#">Grassland management and Meadow Grassland in the High Weald Landscape (land manager's pack)</a></p> <p>Advice can also be provided by High Weald National Landscape Team.</p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
G1.4	<p><b>Within the High Weald National Landscape, create new species-rich grassland, particularly where this will expand and better connect the species-rich grasslands and lowland meadows of the protected landscape.</b></p> <p><i>(This may include creation of neutral grassland, dry acid grassland, lowland meadow and other types of species-rich grassland relevant to the High Weald and as advised by the HWNL Team).</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>  	<p>Start with <b>low-input or high quality semi-improved grassland sites adjacent to or in close proximity to existing species-rich grassland sites.</b></p> <p>Techniques will be site specific but may include: introduction of rotational extensive grazing throughout the year; grazing/cut and collect regimes sensitive to the flora, fauna and fungi of the site; use of local provenance/ locally harvested wildflower seed suitable for soil conditions* or locally sourced green hay for seeding new areas and/or locally grown Weald native plug plants for re-introductions; reduction of recreational pressure on habitat and species disturbance via visitor management; control or removal of scrub where required.</p> <p><i>*Weald native origin wildflower seed is harvested from existing species-rich grasslands in the Weald for use in creation of Weald grasslands.</i></p>	<p>Areas of high quality semi-improved grassland or low-input grassland (within the HWNL) adjacent (or in close proximity) to existing species-rich grassland sites or existing priority habitats.</p>	<p>Advice can be provided by High Weald National Landscape Team.</p>
G1.5	<p><b>Manage existing waxcap grasslands to retain and enhance their value for grassland fungi.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>  	<p>Avoid use of fertilisers, manures, herbicides and lawn treatments; retain as permanent grassland and avoid cultivation; maintain a low sward height through low input grazing or mowing (with removal of arisings); avoid compaction and re-seeding.</p>	<p>All existing areas of waxcap grasslands. These may be located in agricultural grasslands or lawns, cemeteries and amenity grasslands.</p> <p>For more information, see measures within waxcap grassland fungi (assemblage) set out within Part 3 of this LNRS.</p>	<p>Plantlife: <a href="#">Waxcaps and grassland fungi – a guide to identification and management</a></p> <p>Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre: <a href="#">Grassland waxcap identification tool</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
G1.6	<p><b>Enhance existing areas of species-rich neutral grassland and lowland meadow (outside the High Weald National Landscape), maintaining and improving their quality, diversity of species, suitable sward height and structure.</b></p> <p><i>(Within the High Weald National Landscape, these types of grassland are already included in the definition of 'species-rich grassland and lowland meadows of the High Weald' and so are covered by measures G1.3 and G1.4 for this area of East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove).</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>These will be site specific but may include: rotational extensive grazing throughout the year; grazing/cut and collect regimes sensitive to the flora, fauna and fungi of the site; reduction in erosion; control of invasive non-native species (such as cotoneaster on downland areas of chalk grassland); use of local provenance/ locally harvested wildflower seed suitable for soil conditions* or locally sourced green hay for seeding new areas and/ or locally grown Weald native plug plants for re-introductions; reduction of recreational pressure on habitat and species disturbance via visitor management; control or removal of scrub where required.</p>	<p>All areas of species-rich neutral grassland and lowland meadow outside High Weald National Landscape not already in positive conservation management; particularly those in and around protected sites (i.e. those within LWS or LNRs or adjacent to/ between SSSIs/NNRs) or in close proximity to other priority habitats.</p>	<p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Maintain species-rich grassland</a></p> <p>Guidance for relevant ELMS options: GRH6 <a href="#">Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland (endorsed)</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">GS6 Management of species-rich grassland</a></p> <p>Kent Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Management of neutral grassland</a></p> <p>Plantlife: <a href="#">Managing meadows</a></p>

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
G1.7	<p><b>Create new areas of species-rich neutral grassland and lowland meadow (outside the High Weald National Landscape), particularly where this will improve connectivity with existing neutral grassland and lowland meadow sites.</b></p> <p><i>(Within the High Weald NL this action is covered by measure G1.4 for this area of East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove).</i></p> <p><i>Note: the intention of this measure is to create species-rich neutral grassland in good condition rather than species-poor/moderate neutral grassland which may also fall under the definition of 'Other Neutral Grassland' as per the BNG metric).</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>  	<p>Starting point is <b>semi-improved grassland on neutral soils</b> in the first instance (easier to convert to species-rich grassland); reduction of nutrient levels if required; allow natural regeneration/colonisation; use of locally sourced green hay; use of local provenance seed or other plant material; once established, grazing/cut and collect regimes sensitive to the flora, fauna and fungi of the site; management or removal of scrub where required.</p>	<p>Based on underlying soil type (neutral clay and alluvial soils with pH between 5.5 and 6.5); locations where this will help to expand or better connect existing areas of high-quality neutral grassland.</p>	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Managing grassland habitats</a></p> <p>Plantlife: <a href="#">The Good Meadow Guide</a></p> <p>Kent Wildlife Trust. <a href="#">Management of neutral grassland</a> (includes a section on how to re-create neutral grassland)</p> <p>How to rewild: <a href="#">Neutral grassland habitat management plan</a></p>
G1.8	<p><b>Manage existing areas of high quality semi-improved/ low-input grassland to retain and enhance biodiversity and support species-rich grassland habitats.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>  	<p>Manage to prevent degradation (e.g. over grazing or under grazing) or 'improvement' (addition of fertilisers); low input grazing to support increased sward height and structure; enhance species diversity (local seed sources/ green hay).</p>	<p>Known areas of low input/ semi-improved grassland; specifically target areas adjacent to species-rich grassland to act as buffer and basis for expansion of the species-rich habitat.</p>	<p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">CLIG3 manage grass with very low nutrient inputs</a></p>

For acid grassland – see [lowland heathland](#) section. For wet grassland – see [wetland](#) section



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery. These include:

### FARMLAND

FL1.1 Create permanent, species-rich and/or structurally diverse grass blocks, strips, margins or headlands to support pollinators and other wildlife.

### WOODLAND

W1.5 Enhance existing wood pasture and parkland to ensure healthy veteran trees, a succession of age classes and a functioning habitat with naturally regenerating trees, shrubs and ground flora.

W2.3 Create new wood pasture and parkland habitat where this will enhance landscape character and increase habitat connectivity; seek opportunities to restore wood pasture and parkland on historic sites.

### HEATHLAND

H1.1 Enhance existing areas of lowland heathland habitat through the improvement of ecological condition and structural diversity. *[This will include acid grassland as part of a mosaic of heathland and associated habitats.]*

H1.2 Create new areas of lowland heathland and acid grassland mosaic on suitable soil, particularly where

this will expand existing sites and improve connectivity between them (e.g. by creation of 'stepping stones' of new habitat).

### WETLAND

Wt1.5 Enhance existing areas of lowland wet grassland habitats to improve ecological condition

Wt1.6 Create new areas of lowland wet grassland habitats, particularly where this will expand and connect existing wetland habitats and deliver wider environmental benefits.

More generally, other measures within the [Nature Networks](#) and [Urban Nature](#) sections may help to deliver this priority, where enhancement of species-rich grassland is suitable within wildlife corridors (e.g. verges, routeways, footpath networks etc), and in new and existing parks/greenspaces. Species-rich grassland may also play a role in providing buffers to woodland and hedgerows (see [Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub](#) section) and in buffers and interception habitat for water courses and aquifers (See [Rivers, Streams & Aquifers](#) section).

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>G1.9 (EM)</b>	Collate best practice and learning from previous grassland restoration projects, identifying what works and what does not in specific landscapes, soils and situations.
<b>G1.10 (EM)</b>	Encourage and support harvesting and use of local/native seed and proper use of suitable seed mixes.  Support creation of a supply of local provenance of UK Biosecure plugs and seeds that are native to Sussex, which meet ALPHA's seed certification and marketing criteria and conform with CIEEM's code of practice.
<b>G1.11 (EM)</b>	Provide information and awareness raising for landowners on the biodiversity value and significance of their species-rich grassland and importance of suitable management.
<b>G1.12 (EM)</b>	Support knowledge sharing across farmers and landowners on management best-practice, including grazing/livestock management techniques and timings; identify a lead 'champion'/advocate for each sub-county area of the LNRS.
<b>G1.13 (EM)</b>	Support farmers and land managers with grazing livestock, machinery, contractors and infrastructure (fences, water, signs, seed, gates, local abattoirs) required on grassland sites targeted for restoration/expansion.





Code	Enabling Measures
<b>G1.14 (EM)</b>	<p>Establish an effective, proportionate mechanism for surveying chalk grassland and determining value before land-use change, building on learning by SDNPA and Big Chalk Consortium on chalk grassland rapid condition assessment. Start with targeting of low input grassland sites which are not included in priority habitat inventory or within SSSIs. Produce a historic chalk grass land-use map to help target restoration.</p> <p><i>Regarding other grassland types: a waxcap grassland surveying methodology is under development and can be disseminated once finalised.</i></p> <p><i>In some areas of Sussex (e.g. High Weald) it is very difficult to develop a rapid assessment approach due to the complexity of grassland types found in the area (related to varied underlying soils/geology). Expert ecological advice/surveying should be used until such times as other alternatives have been developed.</i></p>
<b>G1.15 (EM)</b>	<p>Identify grassland data gaps and develop methodology for mapping non-calcareous species-rich grasslands (acid, waxcap, floodplain, lowland meadow) and their current condition.</p>

### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Grey long-eared bat	G1.3, G1.4, G1.6, G1.7, G1.8
A spider <i>Micaria albobittata</i>	G1.1
A beetle <i>Geotrupes mutator</i>	G1.3, G1.6, G1.8
Wart-biter	G1.1, G1.2
Field gentian	G1.2, G1.
Red star-thistle	G1.1, G1.2

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Chalk grassland assemblage	G1.1, G1.2
Waxcap grassland fungi assemblage	G1.5





# Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub



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📷 Young Carers activity day in the woods as part of The Low Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project.  
© James Ratchford/WTML





## WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS &amp; SCRUB

**Priority: W1****Enhance our existing woodland habitats\*, improving quality and ecological diversity of habitats, structural diversity and resilience****What does success in 10 years look like?**

- Significant pressures on woodland, such as over-grazing by fallow deer (and increasingly muntjac deer), grey squirrels and invasive non-native species, are being addressed. In particular, a landscape-scale approach to deer population management and control is being prioritised over a piece-meal site-based approach. This landscape-scale approach is focused on locations where the pressures are most severe. More natural regeneration of woodland is occurring due to the subsequent reduction in deer numbers and other pressures.
- The value of our ancient and irreplaceable woodland habitats is understood and recognised in decision-making at all scales, helping to reduce its vulnerability to loss and degradation from a range of sources.

- A greater percentage of existing woodland within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area has been brought into active management to support biodiversity and improve age and structural diversity. In particular, our ancient, irreplaceable and priority woodland is being managed to improve ecological function and quality of habitat for woodland species.
- Our remaining types of 'priority woodland' (e.g. gill woodland, wet woodland, traditional orchards, wood pasture and parkland) are being restored and managed to improve their condition.
- Historic coppiced woodlands (including hazel) are being restored through suitable management, supported by skills training and a growing local forestry and woodcraft industry.
- More of our plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are in positive management for biodiversity.
- Removal of conifers in some areas and where underlying geology and soil is suitable, is providing opportunities for creation of more wooded heath and open heath habitats.
- 'Ecotone' habitats (areas of scrub or other boundary habitats which act as transitional areas between adjacent habitats and support species) are being created along woodland edges. These are providing structural diversity, buffering the woodlands and providing other ecosystem services such as protection of soils and watercourses.

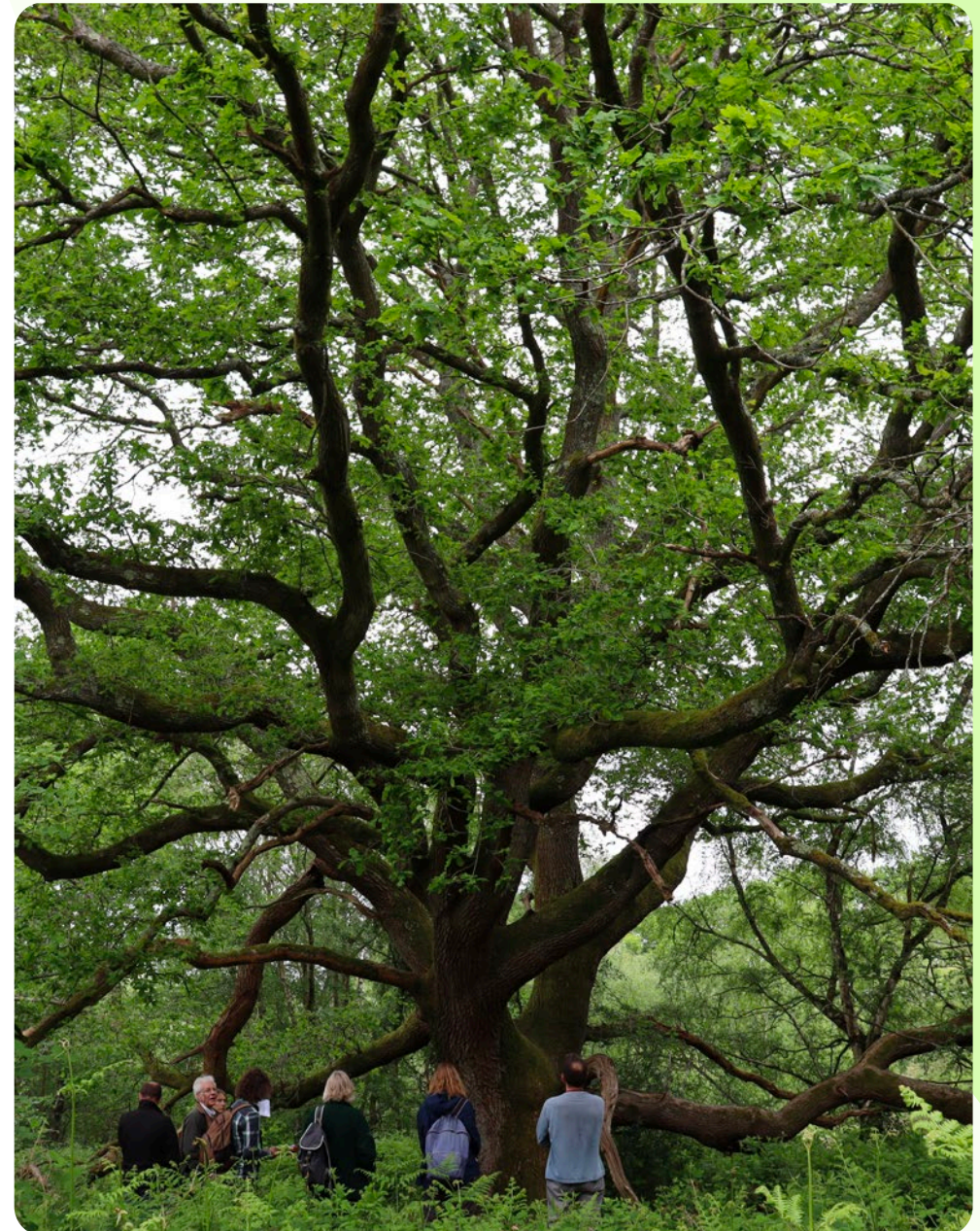
\*This includes ancient woodland, semi-natural woodland, plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), gill woodland, wet woodland, coastal woodland, wood pasture and parkland, orchards, trees outside woodland, veteran and ancient trees.



- Tree species diversity within woodland is being increased, particularly where this is low; increased species diversity is supporting biodiversity and increasing the resilience of these woodlands to the impacts of climate change, pests and diseases etc.
- The loss of trees from our woodland from pests and diseases is being managed where possible to reduce impacts. Where impacts are inevitable, these are providing opportunities for land use change, woodland replanting and regeneration all of which are enhancing the age and species diversity of woodland and its value for nature. Species choice is also ensuring future resilience where possible and is guided by best available evidence and advice.


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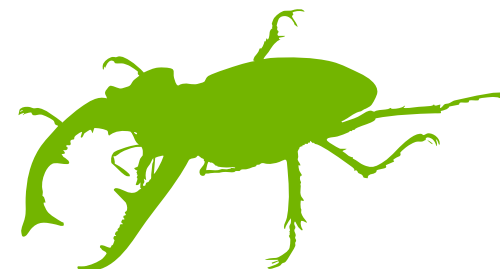
- Our ancient and veteran trees are being mapped, recorded and managed to protect them from damage and enhance their value as habitat.
- The native black-poplar population is stable and increasing through natural reproduction. Yew, juniper and other tree species are regenerating and being planted where appropriate to expand the presence of these tree species in the landscape.




📷 Ancient and veteran tree recording volunteers © WTML






**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.1	<p><b>Deer Management (landscape scale). Undertake landscape scale deer management with targeted humane culling to reduce the impact of deer on woodland regeneration, recolonisation and quality of woodland habitats.</b></p> <p><i>Note: This approach should take priority over individual sited-based approaches to deer management which tend to displace deer to adjacent areas.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Large-scale, coordinated deer control; best delivered via a landscape scale approach involving collaboration of landowners across a wide area. See enabling measures (below) required to support this.	Cross-boundary/regional scale coordinated activity but may focus on agreed hotspots and information from monitoring of deer numbers and impacts.	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Deer management (Support for farmers and land managers and stalkers)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Deer Management FAQs for landowners</a></p> <p><a href="#">Blog: all about deer in the High Weald</a></p>





Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.2	<p><b>Bring ancient woodland into positive conservation management to support woodland species and enhance its ecological condition and resilience.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Key to this is preparation of a management plan to guide future management.</p> <p>This can then set out the most appropriate techniques to use for the site. This may include: traditional woodland management practices (such as coppicing/pollarding); diversification of age structure and species diversity; control of invasive non-native species (INNS); creation of 'edge habitats'/ ecotones of scrub or semi-natural vegetation; retention of deadwood; fencing of the site to manage livestock/deer access to woodland to allow natural regeneration; management of other pressures on woodland regeneration e.g. grey squirrels; monitoring for pests/disease and suitable management to reduce impacts; visitor management to protect woodland habitat/reduce disturbance where required.</p>	<p>All ancient woodland sites; particularly beneficial where there is no current management plan and/or where the ecological condition of the woodland is known to be threatened, where woodland habitats are concentrated and of ecological importance.</p> <p>It may be practical to gradually expand areas under good management by bringing more areas into conservation management in locations where progress towards deer management and woodland management is already being achieved. This will allow expertise and resources to be shared across wider areas.</p>	<p>Seek guidance from Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and Protected Landscapes (depending on location this will be South Downs National Park Authority or High Weald National Landscape).</p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Ancient woodland restoration advice and support</a> and <a href="#">Practical guidance on restoring your ancient woodland</a></p> <p>Butterfly conservation: <a href="#">Managing woodland for butterflies and moths</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs: (<a href="#">website</a>)</p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Clearing Runtingdon Wood of Invasive plants (East Sussex)</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.3	<p><b>Enhance the condition of gill woodland through sensitive management and minimal intervention; create buffer habitat around these areas of woodland where appropriate* to protect the core habitat and increase connectivity for species.</b></p> <p><i>(*this can be any type of suitable semi-natural habitat that will support the gill woodland biodiversity. The type and scale of any buffer habitat must be guided by adjacent habitats and landscape character (many areas of gill woodland are bounded by small field sizes and so the size of any buffer should be designed with field size/ landscape type in mind).</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>  	<p>Minimal intervention to retain unique characteristics of these areas of woodland; control of invasive non-native species (INNS); management of livestock/deer access to woodland to allow natural regeneration; retention of deadwood; visitor management to protect woodland habitat/ reduce disturbance where required.</p> <p>Note: some gill woodlands, especially those with bryophyte interest will need specific dappled light/shade conditions which may be impacted by a buffer. Ecological advice should therefore be sought for these sites.</p> <p>Ecological advice on type/size of any buffer habitat is recommended and can be provided by relevant Protected Landscape Team, Woodland Trust etc.</p>	All areas of gill woodland (enhancement); creation of buffer of semi-natural habitat for those where this is a useful and appropriate action.	CIEEM: <a href="#">Restoring ghyll woods</a>
W1.4	<p><b>Enhance and restore existing traditional orchards.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>   	<p>Seek specialist advice when restoring old orchards.</p> <p>Suitable techniques include: identification of fruit cultivars and restoration of veteran trees through expert pruning; bringing grassland back into management through light grazing or cutting early in the spring then later summer; monitoring for pests and diseases.</p> <p>Note: restoration of traditional orchards requires a specific approach, different to that used for commercial/new orchards.</p>	Existing traditional orchards not already under management.	High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Orchards in the High Weald Landscape – Land manager's pack</a>

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.5	<p><b>Enhance existing wood pasture and parkland to ensure healthy veteran trees, a succession of age classes and a functioning habitat with naturally regenerating trees, shrubs and ground flora.</b></p> <p><i>(Note: this habitat type supports an extensive range of species many of which are rare and only known in the UK in this habitat type).</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Take expert advice to avoid unintended impacts and loss of biodiversity.</p> <p>Suitable techniques include: protection of veteran trees from browsing and management for health requirements; retention of deadwood and fallen trees; replacement with new plantings at optimum spacings; protection of new plantings from browsing; establishment of optimum grazing pattern to encourage good ecological condition of the grassland and soil; use of green hay, overseeding and plant plugs to enhance grassland condition; retention of deadwood where possible; take an agro-forestry approach to productive land where appropriate and feasible.</p>	Existing areas of wood pasture not currently under woodland management plan.	<p>People's Trust for Endangered Species: <a href="#">Tree Care and Management in Wood Pasture and Parkland</a></p> <p><a href="#">Pasture Management for Wood Pasture and Parkland</a></p> <p><a href="#">Historic Management of Wood Pasture and Parkland</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WD5 Restoration of wood pasture and parkland</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">National Trust: The parkland at Sheffield Park and Garden</a></p>
W1.6	<p><b>Manage existing floodplain and wet woodland to support biodiversity including bryophyte and fern populations.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Retention of continuous cover (microclimate); coppicing/pollarding to improve structural and age diversity; selective felling of mature trees; reduction of browsing pressure; retention of deadwood; planting of suitable species.</p> <p>Species suitable for use in East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove include alder, crack willow, oak, black-poplar, downy birch, ash and white willow.</p> <p>Seek guidance from relevant protected landscape team (South Downs National Park Authority; High Weald National Landscape).</p>	Areas of wet woodland not already under management for improvement of habitat condition.	Sussex Otters and Rivers Project: <a href="#">How to create and restore wet woodlands</a>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.7	<p><b>Restore PAWS (Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites), replanting with a more species rich tree mix.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Selectively thin or clear fell plantations on ancient woodland as appropriate and replant with native species or allow natural regeneration to occur.</p> <p>Note: it may be necessary to retain areas of conifer woodland to support certain species dependant on it; seek advice from Forestry Commission.</p>	<p>All PAWS not already restored or under this type of management.</p>	<p>Gov.uk: <a href="#">Keepers of Time (Ancient and native woodland and trees policy)</a></p> <p>Forestry England: <a href="#">Restoring ancient sites</a></p>
W1.8	<p><b>Bring other priority woodland (i.e. priority woodland types not covered by measures W1.2 – W1.7) into positive conservation management to support woodland species and enhance its ecological condition and resilience.</b></p> <p><i>In addition to the woodland types above, this may include lowland beech and yew woodland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Preparation of management plan; thinning; coppicing; retention of dead wood; creation of open areas (rides, glades, scallops); encouragement of 'edge habitat' (ecotones) of scrub or semi-natural habitats; fencing of the site to manage livestock/deer access to woodland to allow natural regeneration; management of other pressures on woodland regeneration e.g. grey squirrels; monitoring for pests/disease and suitable management to reduce impacts; visitor management to protect woodland habitat/ reduce disturbance where required etc.</p>	<p>All priority woodland not covered by measures (W1.2 – W1.7) particularly where there is no management plan currently in place. This will include the large category of 'lowland mixed deciduous woodland'.</p>	<p>Forestry Research (Forestry Commission UKFS practice guide): <a href="#">The management of semi-natural woodland (lowland mixed broadleaved woods)</a></p> <p>Wildlife Trusts: <a href="#">How to manage a woodland for wildlife</a></p> <p>The Conservation Volunteers: <a href="#">How to manage traditional British and Irish Woodlands (Handbook)</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance: <a href="#">Manage and protect woodland for wildlife</a></p> <p>Butterfly conservation: <a href="#">Managing woodland for butterflies and moths</a></p> <p>Buglife: <a href="#">Managing woodland for pollinators</a></p> <p>People's Trust for Endangered Species: <a href="#">Management of woodlands with dormice</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Laughton Greenwood (East Sussex)</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.9	<p><b>Control invasive non-native species (INNS) having a significant impact on woodland habitat and/or regeneration.</b></p> <p><i>Note. Control of INNS is included in other woodland management measures but is included under its own measure due to its importance and the fact that it may require coordinated and large-scale approaches. This measure does not include control of deer, which is covered under W1.1.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Site level control of species having a significant impact on the woodland habitats and/or regeneration. This may include grey squirrel, rhododendron, cherry laurel, oak processionary moth. Larger-scale actions to control across land holdings where required.	Areas of woodland particularly affected by INNS and/or where these are having a detrimental impact on woodland flora/fauna.	<p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">How invasive non-native species threaten our woodlands</a></p> <p>Woodland Wildlife Toolkit: <a href="#">Invasive species and disease</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance: <a href="#">Manage threats to woodland: destructive animals, invasive species</a></p>
W1.10	<p><b>Replace lost elm with disease resistant varieties that support the same woodland species and assemblages and improve resilience to pests/disease and likely future climate change.</b></p> <p><i>Within the East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove LNRS area this will include protecting the National Elm Collection within Brighton &amp; Hove.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Replanting with suitable provenance.	Areas where elm has been lost and replacement is required to sustain population and/or support treescape (in the case of towns/cities).	<p>Forest Research: <a href="#">Dutch elm disease – Central and southern Britain</a></p> <p>The Conservation Foundation: <a href="#">The Great British Elm Experiment</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Woodlands TV: <a href="#">Elm Trees in Brighton</a> (YouTube video)</p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W1.11	<p><b>Replace lost ash within woodland to support woodland biodiversity and future resilience to pests/disease and likely future climate change.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Natural regeneration from retained disease resistant trees; management of pressures on the site (e.g. deer/squirrel damage) to encourage regeneration; tree planting using mixture of tree species/provenance sourced from UK grown planting stock to minimise biosecurity risks.</p> <p>Factors to include in choice of species and provenance include site conditions, increasing species/provenance diversity to increase resilience to future disease; choice of provenance/species likely to handle future climate changes.</p> <p>Advice on best species choice may change through time as evidence emerges on resilience of provenances and species to likely future climate changes.</p>	Areas where ash has been lost from woodland.	<p>East Sussex County Council: <a href="#">ash dieback</a>.</p> <p>Brighton &amp; Hove City Council: <a href="#">Ash Dieback Action Plan (2022)</a> and <a href="#">How we manage ash dieback</a></p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Woodland restoration and the fight against tree disease</a></p> <p>Forest Research: <a href="#">ash dieback</a></p> <p>Forestry Commission: <a href="#">Operations Note 046b. Restocking woodland following the loss of ash due to ash dieback</a>.</p> <p>Tree Council: <a href="#">Ash Dieback – an action plan toolkit</a></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Ash Dieback</a></p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Targeting tree disease packs (ash replacement – specific for soil types found in East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove)</a></p>
W1.12	<p><b>Manage existing and ‘future’ veteran and ancient trees to maintain good ecological condition and ensure continued habitat for the species they support.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Replanting; pruning/tree management; protection of root zones etc.	All existing and future veteran trees.	Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Ancient and Veteran Trees – caring for special trees on farms</a>

**Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery. These include:**

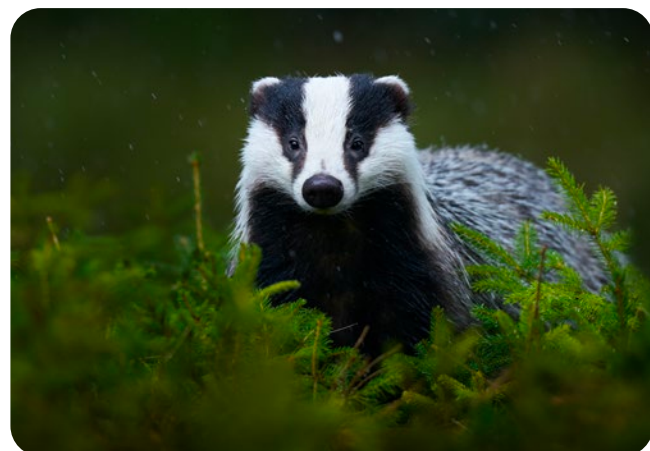
#### **FARMLAND**

FL1.5 Create and manage graded margins up to hedgerow and woodland edges on farmland, to support birds and other woodland and farmland species.

#### **WOODLAND**

W3.2 Restore the treescape of cities and towns, particularly those that have declined through time and/or suffered loss of species (e.g. elm, ash, London plane), ensuring replacement with resilient species.

W3.4 Bring existing urban woodlands into active management to enhance nature conservation, historic environment and access.



Badger © iStock.com/Ondrej Prosicky

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>W1.13 (EM)</b>	Develop a Deer Management Strategy – working across key stakeholders and at a regional scale.
<b>W1.14 (EM)</b>	Work across stakeholders to develop an awareness raising/communications strategy on the need for deer management to support woodland management.
<b>W1.15 (EM)</b>	Work across stakeholders to support the growth of a local venison market, necessary to support deer management approaches.
<b>W1.16 (EM)</b>	Provide support and encourage creation of ancient woodland management plans focusing initially on key and vulnerable sites before rolling out support for their creation more widely.
<b>W1.17 (EM)</b>	Develop community woodland management projects where there are clear benefits for public economy and health and positive woodland management.  Example of local best practice: <a href="#">Lost Woods of Low Weald and Downs</a>
<b>W1.18 (EM)</b>	Support the <a href="#">Sussex Black-Poplar Partnership</a> to grow and distribute black-poplar to landowners creating and restoring wet woodland.



Code	Enabling Measures
<b>W1.19 (EM)</b>	Promote adoption of UK tree and plant health biosecurity policies and encourage local sourcing and growing of tree stocks.
<b>W1.20 (EM)</b>	Support development of local markets for wood-based products that support traditional woodland management approaches such as coppicing (e.g. <i>fuel, timber</i> ).
<b>W1.21 (EM)</b>	<p>Local Authorities – adopt local plan policies to support recovery of woodland in Sussex, supporting their protection in planning and maximising opportunities for creation, restoration and enhancement of woodland.</p> <p><i>e.g. local planning policies seeking 50m buffers to development around ancient woodland, with smaller buffers where it can be shown to be sufficient. See Woodland Trust Planning Guidance.</i></p>

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📷 Grey long eared bat © iStock.com/CreativeNature\_nl



### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Beaver	W1.6, W2.4
Hazel dormouse	W1.1, W1.2, W1.3, W1.7, W1.8
Pine marten	W1.1, W1.2, W1.3, W1.7, W1.8
Bechstein's bat	W1.2, W1.3, W1.7, W1.8
Grey long-eared bat	W1.2
Oak mining bee	W1.2, W1.7, W1.8
Six-spotted pot beetle	W1.2, W1.8
Southern oyster mushroom beetle	W1.2, W1.7, W1.8
Stag beetle	W1.2, W1.8
Small pearl-bordered fritillary	W1.2, W1.8
Spiked rampion	W1.1, W1.2
Round-leaved feather-moss	W1.2, W1.8

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Deciduous woodland & wood pasture fungi assemblage	W1.2, W1.5, W1.7, W1.9
Open parkland mature and veteran tree lichens assemblage	W1.5, W1.12
Open deciduous woodland assemblage	W1.2, W1.7, W1.8
Woodland birds assemblage	W1.1, W1.2, W1.3, W1.6, W1.7, W1.8

## WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS &amp; SCRUB

**Priority: W2****Create new woodland where this supports connectivity, biodiversity, ecosystem services and landscape character****What does success in 10 years look like?**

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Our networks of existing woodlands are being strengthened by woodland creation designed to expand and connect existing woodland sites. Rather than larger-scale projects, this is the main focus of woodland creation within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area given the existing high coverage of woodland habitats and the need to protect and enhance landscape character and priority habitats. These constraints are most notable in particular National Character Areas (NCAs), such as the High Weald (characterised by existing woodland, historic field boundaries and fragile grasslands) and South Downs (with its predominantly open landscape character of chalk grassland and related habitats).

- Smaller areas of ancient semi-natural woodland (such as those found predominantly in the High Weald and Low Weald NCAs) and vulnerable fragments of hanger woodland (in the South Downs NCA) are being expanded by creating areas of new woodland around their boundaries where this is appropriate, increasing their resilience and enhancing their value for wildlife.
- Connectivity of these woodland habitats is being enhanced through creation of new areas of woodland and trees outside woodland which act as stepping-stones and corridors between existing sites. The Low Weald in particular provides opportunities for small-scale new woodland creation to 'significantly enhance the area's intricate and characteristic mix of semi-natural woodlands, gill woodlands, shaws, small field copses, hedgerows and individual trees to reduce habitat fragmentation and benefit biodiversity'<sup>3</sup>.
- The appropriate technique for woodland creation is being used based on-site considerations. e.g. natural colonisation, regeneration or planting. Within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area, where deer pressure is low enough to allow it, approaches which encourage recolonisation and regeneration are particularly effective and produce areas of new woodland with significant benefits for nature. Where planting is used, species choice supports biodiversity and landscape character, but is also mindful of resilience to climate change, and pests and disease.

<sup>3</sup> Natural England. [National Character Area Profile 121: Low Weald](#)



- Specific woodland types (including orchard, and wood pasture and parkland) are being re-established or restored in locations where they have been 'lost', enhancing historic landscapes whilst providing woodland connectivity and habitat. This includes restoration of woodland as part of wider woodland/heathland habitat mosaics in medieval forests and 'deer parks' such as those found in the High Weald.
- Care is being taken to ensure that woodland is created where this complements and protects other priority habitats, landscape character or archaeological heritage, rather than loss or degradation of these. The principle of the 'right tree in the right place for the right reason' is being implemented.

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- New woodland creation is also being located and designed to deliver multiple benefits where possible, including biodiversity, nature-based solutions for water quality, slowing the flow of water in the landscape to support river base flows and flood management, carbon storage, air quality, enhancement of landscape character and new opportunities for access to nature.
- The appropriate technique for woodland creation is being used based on site considerations. e.g. natural colonisation, regeneration or planting. Species choice is supporting biodiversity, landscape character, resilience to climate change, and pests and disease.
  - Opportunities are being taken to ensure succession of veteran and parkland trees, in-field trees, hedgerow trees and groups of trees in the landscape.

📷 The Wilderlands estate in East Sussex runs tree planting and tending days for volunteers, and partners with Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Forests Without Frontiers to support nature at the multi-acre site.

© D Alcroft






**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W2.1	<p><b>Create new areas of species-rich woodland and ‘trees outside woodland’ to expand and better connect existing woodland and deliver multiple benefits (such as habitat, flood risk reduction, water quality, shelter, access and recreation, landscape enhancement and carbon sequestration).</b></p> <p><i>This is in addition to creation of new orchards, wood pasture and parkland and floodplain/wet woodland which are covered by measures below.</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Recolonisation; regeneration; or planting.</p> <p>Include open areas (glades and rides) in design and encourage ‘edge habitats’ (ecotones) of scrub or semi-natural habitat.</p> <p>When planting, tree species choice should support biodiversity but consider climate/ disease resilience and local landscape character.</p> <p>Seek guidance from Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and/ or relevant protected landscape teams (South Downs National Park Authority; High Weald National Landscape).</p>	<p>Given the extent of existing woodland in the East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove LNRS area, new woodland creation will be most beneficial in locations where it will expand existing woodland sites or increase connectivity between sites.</p> <p>It will be particularly beneficial where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be located on previously wooded sites (Epoch 1 OS maps where available);</li> <li>• It will help to better connect areas of ancient woodland;</li> <li>• It will expand the area of smaller woodland sites;</li> <li>• It will improve connectivity between particularly ‘isolated’ woodland areas.</li> </ul> <p>In all cases, the principle of the ‘right tree in the right place for the right reason’ must be applied. As such, all woodland creation in East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove must be guided by landscape character and constraints on the site including presence of other habitats, archaeology etc. Preferably, it will also be located where it will deliver other benefits such as flood risk reduction, carbon sequestration, air quality improvement and landscape character.</p>	<p>South Downs National Park/ Sussex Nature Partnership: <a href="#">Woodland Opportunity Mapping</a></p> <p>(This tool maps ‘woodland opportunity areas with less sensitivity’ across Sussex and South Downs National Park. These tend to be areas of 50-350m around existing woodland where there are the least constraints to woodland creation and where it will deliver benefits such as flood risk reduction and a buffer to noise/ air pollution along major roads.)</p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Woodland Creation Guide</a> and <a href="#">Tree species handbook</a> and <a href="#">Managing your new woodland</a></p>

Continued overleaf



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W2.1 cont.			<p><a href="#">Woodland Opportunity Mapping for Sussex</a> provides a general guide to areas of sensitivity for woodland creation across Sussex and the South Downs National Park based on a number of key benefits and constraints (but excluding landscape character).</p> <p>New woodland creation is noted as a particular opportunity within the <b>Low Weald</b> National Character Area as a means to enhance and better connect existing woodland and hedgerow networks in this area.</p> <p>In the High Weald National Landscape area, due to limited areas of opportunity and fragility of grassland sites which may be affected, it is important to seek initial advice on site suitability from High Weald National Landscape.</p>	<p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Lost Woods of The Low Weald and Downs: <a href="#">Nature corridor scheme (helping to reconnect ancient woodlands)</a></p> <p>South Downs National Park Trust: <a href="#">Trees for the Downs</a></p> <p>Upper Rother Landscape: <a href="#">Map of lost woodlands and orchards in the Upper Rother catchment (East Sussex)</a></p>
W2.2	<p><b>Establish new orchards, including community orchards, with a focus on maintaining locally distinctive varieties.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Tree planting (using suitable varieties).	Any suitable site as per advice (Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, Protected Landscape Teams for relevant area) and following the principle of the 'right tree in the right place' as outlined in W2.1 above.	Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">BE5 Creation of traditional orchards</a>

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W2.3	<p><b>Create new wood pasture and parkland habitat where this will enhance landscape character and increase habitat connectivity; seek opportunities to restore wood pasture and parkland on historic sites.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>Natural colonisation of scrub and tree species; planting of individual and groups of trees; grazing to create variety in the sward and encourage recolonisation; avoidance of agricultural inputs; habitat restoration using natural processes driven by grazing herbivores.</p>	<p>Farmland (arable or improved grassland) particularly where it extends, links or buffers existing sites, sites with open grown trees or areas of other woodland priority habitat; areas of 'lost'/historic wood pasture where this information is available; and following the principle of the 'right tree in the right place' as outlined in W2.1 above.</p>	<p>National Trust: <a href="#">Creation of wood pasture systems (Toolkit)</a></p> <p>Farm Wildlife: <a href="#">Wood pasture and parkland</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WD6: Creation of lowland wood pasture</a></p>
W2.4	<p><b>Create new areas of floodplain and wet woodland, particularly where this will expand existing sites and contribute to habitat connectivity and the management of water flow in the landscape.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>Natural colonisation; tree planting (black-poplar and other suitable species); creation of leaky dams to encourage wet areas for woodland establishment.</p>	<p>Target creation of new areas in locations which will expand/connect existing sites; best located in areas where trees and scrub are already growing near streams, springs or rivers (in flood plains but also in other locations across the landscape which flood regularly). Creation of this habitat can play a role in slowing the flow of water in the landscape (as part of Natural Flood Management projects – see R1.5 below).</p>	<p>Sussex Otters and Rivers Partnership: <a href="#">How to create and restore wet woodlands</a></p>
W2.5	<p><b>Plant new parkland trees, tree groups and individual hedgerow trees to support succession and continued presence of these features in the landscape.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>Tree/hedgerow planting; protection of individual trees from grazing.</p>	<p>Areas of existing and historic parkland; within existing hedgerows.</p>	<p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">TE2 Planting standard parkland trees</a></p>





**Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery, these include:**

#### WOODLAND

W1.1 Deer Management (landscape scale). Undertake landscape scale deer management with targeted humane culling to reduce the impact of deer on woodland regeneration, recolonisation and quality of woodland habitats.

W3.3 Establish new areas of urban and peri-urban woodland which offer multiple benefits to residents, wildlife and landscape.

#### FARMLAND

F1.3 Create new areas of agro-forestry where this will support and enhance landscape character, support biodiversity and deliver other benefits such as shelter and shade for livestock.

More generally, woodland creation may play a role in how other measures are delivered on the ground. For example, the [Rivers, Streams & Aquifers](#) section contains measures which may see creation of riparian woodland to provide shade or buffer vegetation. Natural Flood Management may also employ woodland creation as a technique. The [Urban Nature](#) section also contains measures which may employ woodland creation as part of creating more areas of wildlife habitat in parks, greenspaces or other urban locations.

Code	Enabling Measures
W2.6 (EM)	Support communities to create new community woodlands, particularly in areas targeted for funding.
W2.7 (EM)	Identify/map historic/'lost' hedgerows to target their re-creation.
W2.8 (EM)	Local Authorities – adopt local planning policies which set a target for minimum canopy cover and prioritise action in areas of low tree equity ( <a href="#">as per Woodland Trust mapping</a> ).  Woodland Trust advises setting an area-wide target of 20% cover, prioritising areas of greatest need (using tree equity mapping). For development sites, Woodland Trust also recommends setting site specific targets which may be higher depending on site location and characteristics.

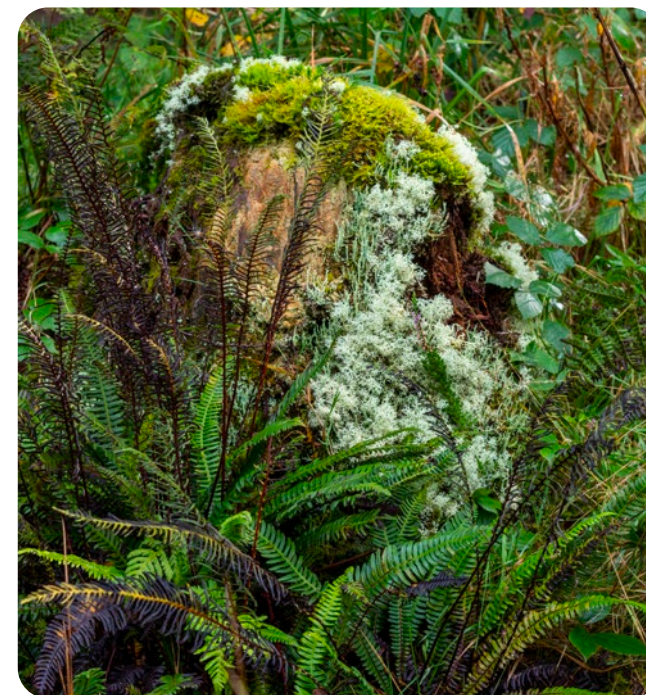


## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Hazel dormouse	W2.1
Pine marten	W2.1
Bechstein's bat	W2.1
Grey long-eared bat	W2.1
Oak mining bee	W2.1
Six-spotted pot beetle	W2.1
Southern oyster mushroom beetle	W2.1
Stag beetle	W2.1
Small pearl-bordered fritillary	W2.1

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Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi assemblage	W2.1, W2.3
Open parkland mature and veteran tree lichens assemblage	W2.3
Open deciduous woodland assemblage	W2.1
Woodland birds assemblage	W2.1, W2.4



📷 Lichen on old tree stump

© iStock.com/Goldfinch4ever



## WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS &amp; SCRUB

**Priority: W3**

**Enhance and expand our urban treescapes, taking opportunities to establish new urban (and urban fringe) woodland and street trees where this will support biodiversity and deliver multiple benefits**

**What does success in 10 years look like?**

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The presence of trees in our urban areas is increasing (as measured by tools such as 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. The principles of 'right tree in the right place' is also being applied to the creation of new woodland and to tree planting projects in urban areas. Species choice for urban areas is supporting biodiversity and resilience to climate change, pests and diseases.
- Species-rich tree planting and woodland creation is encouraged in new developments through strong local planning policies.
- The treescapes of our cities and towns which have suffered losses of particular species (e.g. elm/ash) are being restored as advised by Forestry Commission to ensure future resilience.




📷 Young oak sapling © iStock.com/Nickbeer

- 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 & Hove is being managed to ensure its future resilience, attempting to ensure that losses from the disease are minimised where possible and countered through sufficient replacement by new trees.



**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W3.1	<p><b>Plant new street trees to deliver multiple benefits.</b></p> <p><i>Note: there are often significant practical constraints to planting trees in existing streets including presence of existing urban infrastructure which will need to be taken into consideration.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Tree Planting. Species choice as per guidance from Forestry Commission/ Woodland Trust.</p> <p>Where street trees are already present, ensure planting is phased to replace ‘over-mature’/ diseased and felled trees when necessary.</p>	<p>New streets in developments (see NPPF para 136 and National Design Guide); existing streets where planting will deliver benefits such as: wildlife connectivity (creating wooded corridors close to existing woodland); improved ‘tree equity’ in areas of low tree cover; increased resilience to flooding; shading/urban cooling; restoration of previous street trees and planting for succession and range of age classes in the future.</p> <p><a href="#">Woodland Trust Tree Equity mapping tool</a> provides a useful guide to where new street trees will deliver multiple benefits.</p>	<p>Gov.uk: <a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (See para 136)</a> and <a href="#">National Design Guide</a></p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Tree Species Handbook</a></p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Urban tree planting packs (currently contain crab apple, field maple, hazel, rowan and silver birch)</a></p> <p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Soft Landscaping Guidance (once published)</a></p> <p>CPRE/Brighton &amp; Hove City Council: <a href="#">Soft and Hard Landscapes Tree Planting Opportunity Mapping Report (2023)</a></p> <p><b>Local Case studies:</b></p> <p>Trees for Cities: <a href="#">Tree planting in Bexhill</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
W3.2	<p><b>Restore the treescape of cities and towns, particularly those that have declined through time and/or suffered loss of species (e.g. elm, ash, London plane), ensuring replacement with resilient species.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Tree planting; colonisation; regeneration.	<p>Streets and urban woodland areas which have experienced loss of trees; riparian zones; parklands; small linear woodlands alongside roads and footpaths; other locations beyond edges of existing woodland which will improve woodland connectivity and deliver multiple benefits.</p> <p>Focus on restoration and management of the <a href="#">National Elm Collection</a> in Brighton &amp; Hove.</p>	<p>Gov.uk: <a href="#">Local Authority Treescapes Fund</a></p> <p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Contact for information on tree packs for ash replacement (specific for Sussex and Kent and tailored for soil type – clay, sand, wet or chalk)</a></p>
W3.3	<p><b>Establish new areas of urban and peri-urban woodland which offer multiple benefits to residents, wildlife and landscape.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Tree planting; community tree planting projects.	<p>Create as sites become available. Target in areas if possible which will deliver most benefits; in peri-urban areas, ensure it enhances landscape character and does not impact any existing priority habitats; follow guidance and good practice in site selection, design and species choice.</p> <p>Note – these can be community woodlands and/or orchards (see measure W2.2).</p>	<p>Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Planning your community wood</a></p> <p>Tiny Forest Earthwatch project: <a href="#">(website)</a></p> <p>Trees and Design Action Group: <a href="#">Trees in the Townscape – A guide for decision-makers</a></p>
W3.4	<p><b>Bring existing urban woodlands into active management to enhance nature conservation, historic environment and access.</b></p> <p><i>(This may overlap with measures for specific woodland types above if urban woodland falls into those categories.)</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Preparation of management plan; thinning; coppicing; retention of dead wood; create open areas (rides, glades, scallops); encourage 'edge habitat' (ecotones) of scrub or semi-natural habitats; provision of access.	Existing area of urban woodland not already in management to enhance condition.	Woodland Trust: <a href="#">Urban Trees and Woodland</a>

Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery, these include:

#### WOODLAND

Measures related to enhancement and creation of specific priority woodland types if relevant to the site (see priorities W1 and W2 above).

More generally, the [urban nature](#) section also contains measures which may enhance existing woodland in existing urban parks or greenspaces and the [Nature Networks](#) section contains measures which may involve enhancing woodland habitat within existing wildlife corridors and transport corridors in urban areas.

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>W3.5 (EM)</b>	Expand elm protection areas and promote biosecurity guidance on measures to reduce future spread of elm disease.  <i>Useful guidance: <a href="#">Trees and Design Action Group: Trees in the Townscape – a guide for decision-makers</a>.</i>
<b>W3.6 (EM)</b>	Adopt local plan policies for tree replacement and phased succession (i.e. young trees coming up to replace old trees felled due to disease, safety, old age etc).
<b>W3.7 (EM)</b>	Develop county/district level tree strategies to support delivery of tree planting targets.  <b>Local case study example:</b> <a href="#">West Sussex Tree Plan</a> (covers trees in county council's ownership).

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>W3.8 (EM)</b>	Promote best practice in species selection for new tree/woodland planting within development.  <i>e.g. Tree species appropriate to the local area (e.g. of local provenance); ensure future-proofing against climate change/pest and disease vulnerability.</i>  <i>Examples of existing guidance: <a href="#">Woodland Trust: residential development and trees</a>. <a href="#">Guide for Planners and Developers</a></i>
<b>W3.9 (EM)</b>	Promote guidance for species-selection for tree planting in gardens to provide benefits for wildlife and wider environment.  <i>Examples of existing guidance: <a href="#">Woodland Trust: British Trees and Shrubs: 14 native garden trees</a></i>

### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Hazel dormouse	W3.3, W3.4
West European hedgehog	W3.3, W3.4
Oak mining bee	W3.4
Southern oyster mushroom beetle	W3.4
Stag beetle	W3.4

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Open deciduous woodland assemblage	W3.4
Woodland birds assemblage	W3.3, W3.4





## WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS &amp; SCRUB

**Priority: Hdg1****Enhance, expand, restore and connect our network of hedgerows****What does success in 10 years look like?**







- More hedgerows across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove 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. This includes hedgerow creation within new development.
- Existing hedgerows have been 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.



Hedgerow © Steve Webster

- 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).
- This is helping to support and enhance the historic field patterns and boundary features within the LNRS area, particularly where these are of significant landscape character value (e.g. High Weald).
- Deer management at a landscape scale is helping to support the recovery and establishment of hedgerows particularly in areas of high deer population density where this is creating a significant pressure on this habitat type.

**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Hdg1.1	<b>Manage existing hedgerows to improve their structure, longevity and value for biodiversity.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>  	Hedge cutting; suitable cutting cycle; gapping up; encourage ‘edge habitats’ (ecotones) of scrub/ semi-natural habitat.	Hedgerows not in this type of management already.	<p>Hedgeline: (<a href="#">website</a>)</p> <p>People’s Trust for Endangered Species: <a href="#">Tips for managing hedgerows and Hedge management</a></p> <p>Butterfly Conservation: <a href="#">Hedgerows for Hairstreaks</a></p> <p>LandApp: <a href="#">PTES Healthy Hedgerow survey now fully integrated on LandApp and LandApp mobile</a></p> <p>Weald to Waves: <a href="#">Healthy Hedgerows</a></p> <p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Hedgerows in the High Weald Landscape (Land managers pack)</a></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Wildlife Gardening – How to manage my hedgerow for wildlife</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">BE3 Management of hedgerows</a></p> <p>Landowner advice can also be sought from Protected Landscape teams in relevant areas.</p>
Hdg1.2	<b>Restore degraded hedgerows and replace ‘lost’ and historic hedgerows.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>    	Replanting stretches of hedgerow; gapping up; replanting of hedgerow trees; encouragement of ‘edge habitats’ (ecotones) of scrub/semi-natural habitats.	Areas of ‘lost’/ historic hedgerows’ (where mapping is available to guide location) and where remnants of existing hedgerows remain.	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Hedgerows in the High Weald Landscape (Land managers pack)</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Hdg1.3	<p><b>Create new hedgerows, including hedge trees where appropriate, to support habitat connectivity, enhance landscape character and deliver multiple benefits.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Planting; hedge laying; encouragement of 'edge habitats' (ecotones) of scrub/semi-natural habitats.</p> <p>Include new hedgerow trees at specific spacings and intervals (this is landscape specific so must follow guidance for relevant landscape character area and protected landscape); follow historic field patterns and avoid straight lines in the landscape; use specific techniques to ensure greater success in areas of high deer population (advice available from High Weald National Landscape Team).</p>	<p>Locations where this will improve connectivity between woodland habitats, support landscape character and capture water and minimise runoff from land.</p> <p>Contact protected landscape teams in relevant area for advice.</p>	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Hedges</a></p> <p>Tree Council: <a href="#">Tree and hedge planting (guide)</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">BN11 Planting new hedges</a></p>
Hdg1.4	<p><b>Create new hedgerows and enhance existing hedgerows within new development, creating important corridors for wildlife and wildlife permeable boundaries.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Retention of existing hedgerows on site; management to enhance their condition; planting of new hedgerows and creation of edge habitats; accompany with relevant lighting restrictions where hedgerows are in important areas for night flying species (birds, bats).</p>	<p>All new development. But can include specific enhancement/creation of hedgerows specific to types of development and the impacts these will have on wildlife e.g. solar farms where this measure would be particularly beneficial for bat populations.</p>	<p>CPRE Sussex: <a href="#">Biodiversity enhancements in new housing developments</a></p>



**Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery. These include:**

#### **FARMLAND**

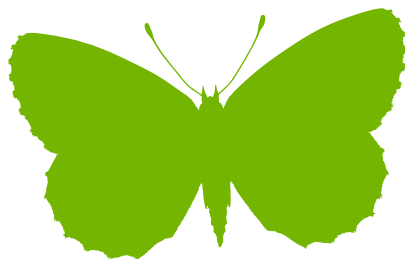
FL1.5 Create and manage graded margins up to hedgerow and woodland edges on farmland, to support birds and other woodland and farmland species.

Creation and enhancement of hedgerows may play a role in how other measures are delivered on the ground. For example, Natural Flood Management (**Rivers, Streams & Aquifers** section) may use hedgerows as part of its approach on specific sites. The **Urban Nature** section also contains measures which may establish or enhance hedgerows to create more/better areas of wildlife habitat in parks, greenspaces or other urban locations. Hedgerows may also play an important role in the enhancement or creation of wildlife corridors and there are several measures within the **Nature Networks** section which are therefore also relevant.

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>Hdg1.5 (EM)</b>	Improve mapping of existing and lost hedgerows at Sussex scale; identify target areas for restoration and replanting.
<b>Hdg1.6 (EM)</b>	Adopt/encourage local plan policies to encourage use of hedgerows/natural boundaries within developments (rather than fencing) and consider lighting around hedgerows, to minimise impact and ensure that it is wildlife sensitive if areas need to be lit for public safety.

#### **Priority species that would benefit from these measures**

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Hazel dormouse	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2, Hdg1.3, Hdg1.4
Pine marten	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2, Hdg1.3
West European hedgehog	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2, Hdg1.3, Hdg1.4
Bechstein's bat	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2, Hdg1.3, Hdg1.4
Grey long-eared bat	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2, Hdg1.3
Glow-worm	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2, Hdg1.3
Spiked rampion	Hdg1.1
Round-leaved feather-moss	Hdg1.1, Hdg1.2



## WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS &amp; SCRUB

**Priority: Scr1**

**Create and enhance scrub habitats, as edge habitat, 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 and enhanced to provide valuable habitat for wildlife. In some places this is helping to support specific species such as red-backed 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 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, wetlands and areas of species-rich grassland.
- Scrub is recognised as a valuable habitat in its own right and as a component that helps in the restoration of other habitats.





- In parts of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area, coastal scrub is being established and expanded as part of an existing coastal woodland, scrub, grassland and early successional habitat 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. The scale and extent of its creation and enhancement in the landscape is appropriate for field size and local landscape character.

📷 Blackberries (brambles) are valuable components of scrub habitat, providing food, shelter, and nesting opportunities for a wide variety of wildlife.

© D Alcroft

**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Scr1.1	<p><b>Create and enhance successional and scrub habitats to create a dynamic mosaic with diverse age and structure.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Grazing management, scarification*, and assisted sowing/planting; retention of areas of uncut grassland next to existing scrub to provide important herb layer (structural diversity and ecotone).</p> <p>*Definition: the removal of dead organic matter or thatch to reveal bare ground and allow germination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement of areas of existing ‘high-value’ scrub where these can be enhanced and expanded (including areas of important juniper scrub which is a key habitat in places within the East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove LNRS area).</li> <li>Creation of new areas of scrub along woodland and hedgerow boundaries, particularly on arable or improved grassland (see measure FI 1.5 and techniques within woodland and hedgerow measures for creation of ‘edge habitats’).</li> <li>Creation of small areas (patches) of scrub habitat within or adjacent to open mosaic habitats, heathland or grassland where needed to provide structural diversity and habitat for species (but note that in some cases, control of scrub may be needed on areas of lowland heath, open mosaic habitats or species-rich grassland).</li> <li>Enhancement and creation of scrub habitats to support specific species (e.g. red-backed shrike, turtle dove, nightingale, Duke of Burgundy etc).</li> <li>Creation of scrub as a wildlife-friendly habitat in and around community spaces (e.g. as boundaries or screening).</li> </ul>	<p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Managing scrub and scrub mosaics</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">SCR2 Manage scrub and open habitat mosaics</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WD7 Management of successional areas and scrub (archived)</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Rewilding Sussex: <a href="#">Love your Scrub Project</a></p>
Scr1.2	<p><b>Control scrub where necessary along watercourses, to prevent overgrowth of habitat of importance for specific species e.g. water vole.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Grazing, browsing; cutting of scrub.</p>	<p>Known areas of water vole presence where scrub encroachment may be a problem.</p>	<p>People’s Trust for Endangered Species: <a href="#">Helping water voles on your land</a></p>





### Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

Scrub creation and management may play a role in creating useful edge habitat (ecotones) along woodlands and hedgerows (see measures within [woodland](#) and [hedgerow](#) priorities above).

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>Scr1.3 (EM)</b>	Develop guidance on scrub establishment as buffers to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland.
<b>Scr1.4 (EM)</b>	Raise awareness of the value of scrub as a habitat.
<b>Scr1.5 (EM)</b>	Work with land managers to identify and encourage best practice in scrub management.

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### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
European water vole	Scr1.2
Hazel dormouse	Scr1.1
Pine marten	Scr1.1
West European hedgehog	Scr1.1
Bechstein's bat	Scr1.1
Grey long-eared bat	Scr1.1
Glow-worm	Scr1.1
Six-spotted pot beetle	Scr1.1



📷 Glow-worm © Don Baker





# Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops



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Heather, Ashdown Forest © iStock.com/HerbySussex





## LOWLAND HEATHLAND &amp; SANDSTONE OUTCROPS

**Priority: H1****Expand, enhance and better connect lowland heathland\* and associated habitats****What does success in 10 years look like?**

- Our core areas of lowland heathland are being managed in a way that enhances their ecological condition and prevents loss or degradation due to lack of or inappropriate management. This management is creating a diverse mosaic of vegetation and open ground and is controlling encroachment by woodland and scrub where necessary. Improved condition of these habitats is supporting lowland heathland species and creating greater resilience to the impacts of climate change and increased fire risk.
- Core areas of heathland habitat are being expanded to create larger contiguous areas of lowland heathland and associated mosaic habitats (e.g. on acidic soils, a mosaic with wet heath, bog/mire, dry heath, bare ground, acid grassland, scrub and woodland; and on chalk heath, with calcareous grassland and scrub).

- Other new areas of heathland are being created, where conditions are suitable, to create stepping stones of habitat to better connect existing sites. Opportunities are also being taken to expand and connect existing heathland through the restoration of areas of degraded and/or 'lost' heathland where these sites are known. Opportunities are also being taken to use sites such as disused minerals workings for creation of heathland habitat where conditions are suitable.
- On acidic soils, acid grassland habitat is being enhanced and created as part of the overall heathland mosaic.
- Invasive non-native species, such as rhododendron, gaultheria and deer, are being controlled where they pose a threat to areas of heathland.
- Visitor pressure at core sites (e.g. Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC) is being managed to reduce disturbance, nitrogen deposition (due to traffic levels), and other impacts on heathland species.

\*This includes all forms of lowland heathland found in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area e.g. dry heath, wet heath, wooded heath and chalk heathland.





**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
H1.1	<p><b>Enhance existing areas of lowland heathland through the improvement of ecological condition and structural diversity of the heathland and associated habitats (including acid grassland).</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Appropriate grazing; control of invasive non-native species; scrub and bracken control/management; tree removal; retention of areas of bare ground and creation of new areas on a rotation; creation of fire breaks; rewetting (for wet heath); visitor management to reduce pressures on habitats/disturbance of key species.</p>	<p>Existing heathland sites, particularly those not in conservation management.</p> <p>All heathland types, including chalk heath.</p>	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Heathland in the High Weald Landscape (Land managers pack)</a></p> <p>Buglife: <a href="#">Lowland Heath</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">LH1 Management of Lowland Heath</a></p> <p>Kent Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Management of acid grassland</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Chailey Common: <a href="#">Habitat management (East Sussex)</a></p>
H1.2	<p><b>Create new areas of lowland heathland and acid grassland mosaic on suitable soil, particularly where this will expand existing sites and improve connectivity between them (e.g. by creation of ‘stepping stones’ of new habitat).</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Identify and prioritise suitable sites based on soil type, historic land use, and proximity to existing heathland; remove nutrient-enriched topsoil where necessary; for wet heath, restore suitable hydrology to the site if necessary (e.g. damming ditches or unblocking drains); control existing vegetation (e.g. grass-dominated swards, bracken or scrub) and invasive species; introduce appropriate seed mixes or allow for natural regeneration from adjacent heathland; implement grazing or mowing regimes to maintain early successional stages; create and retain areas of bare and open ground; monitor establishment success and adapt management accordingly.</p>	<p>Areas on suitable geology where this can help to expand or connect core sites; former areas of heathland; historic medieval forest and deer park areas (as mosaic with woodland); areas of woodland plantation on lowland heath; sites with low soil nutrient levels.</p>	<p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">LH3 Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland</a></p>



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

### WOODLAND

W1.1 Deer Management (landscape scale). Undertake landscape scale deer management with targeted humane culling to reduce the impact of deer on woodland regeneration, recolonisation and quality of woodland habitats.

### WETLANDS & STANDING WATER BODIES

Wt1.1 Enhance remaining areas of peatland habitats by improving their hydrological function and ecological condition. Encourage expansion of existing areas where possible. This relates to the small patches of peatland habitat and 'wet heath' found within wider heathland habitat mosaics.

Code	Enabling Measures
H1.3 (EM)	Collate examples of best practice on how to manage and create lowland heathland; provide knowledge sharing/training to others on 'what good looks like'.
H1.4 (EM)	Provide landowner advice to support heathland creation in targeted areas (where this will create connectivity and expansion of existing sites); map historic heathland cover to aid targeting and awareness of historic heathland areas.
H1.5 (EM)	Facilitate collaboration across landowners/eNGOs/others to identify target areas for heathland expansion/creation at landscape scale.
H1.6 (EM)	Support heathland creation through a system to produce and supply local provenance UK bio-secure plugs and seeds.
H1.7 (EM)	Test proportionate but effective habitat monitoring utilising techniques such as rapid habitat condition assessments (with agreed methodology).
H1.8 (EM)	Adopt/support local plan policies that require mitigation for any impact of development on core heathland sites (Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA).

## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Heath potter wasp	H1.1, H1.2
Field gentian	H1.1, H1.2
Heath lobelia	H1.1
Marsh clubmoss	H1.1, H1.2
Upright chickweed	H1.1, H1.2

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Breeding waders – wet grassland & heathland assemblage	H1.1
Heathland birds assemblage	H1.1, H1.2

## LOWLAND HEATHLAND & SANDSTONE OUTCROPS

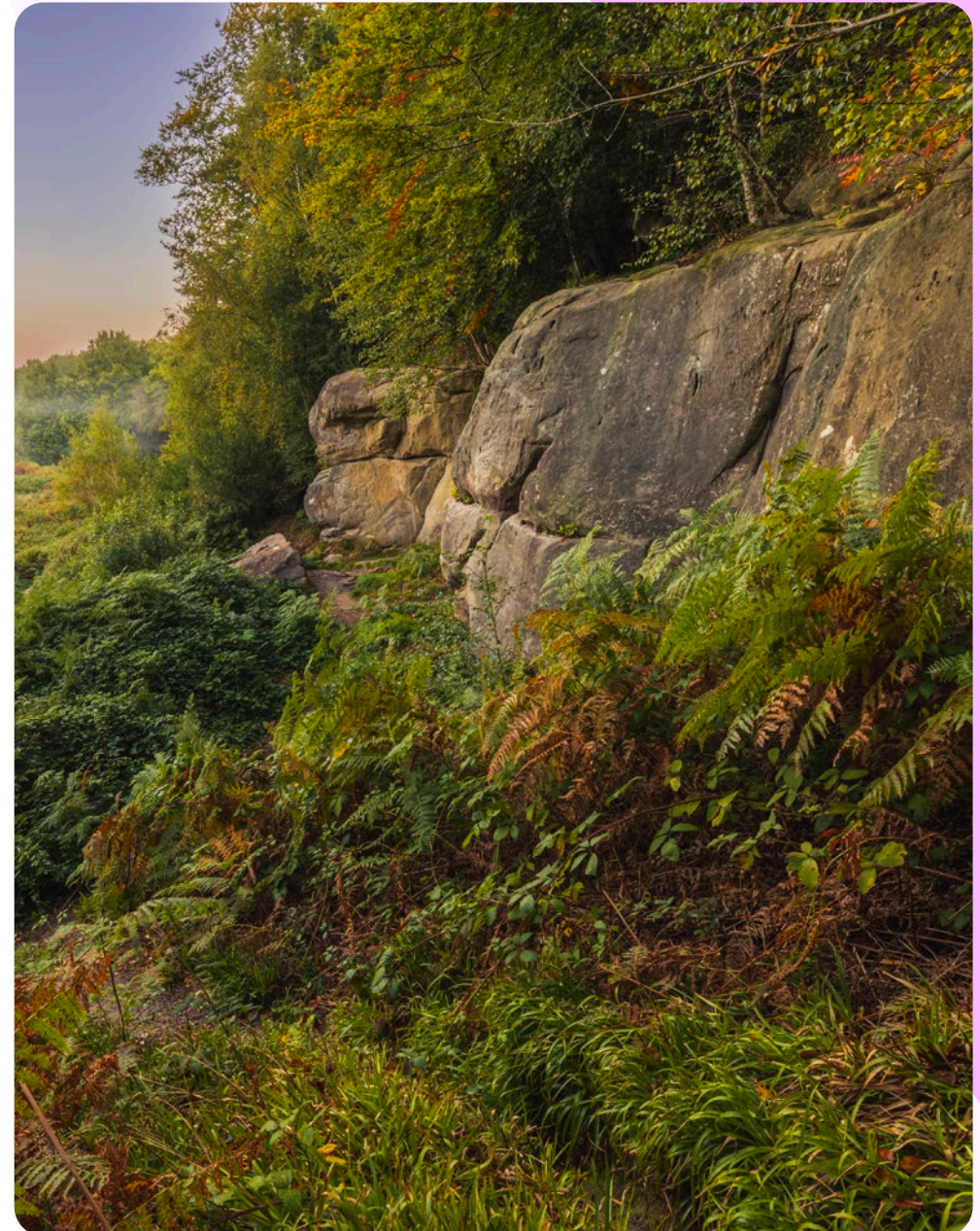
### Priority: SO1 (Sandstone outcrops)

#### Enhance the unique biodiversity of the sandstone outcrops of the High Weald

##### What does success in 10 years look like?

- The sandstone outcrop habitats in the High Weald 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.

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📷 Harrisons Rocks, High Weald, Eridge Rocks Nature Reserve © iStock.com/HerbySussex





**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
SO1.1	<b>Enhance and maintain the condition of important plant communities within sandstone outcrop sites in the High Weald.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	<p>Techniques required will depend on the type of communities and conditions found on each site (there are highly variable); ecological advice is recommended on a suitable management approach.</p> <p>Suitable techniques may include: management of vegetation around outcrops if present to prevent overshadowing whilst creating and maintaining required humid microclimate and light levels for plants, bryophytes and ferns; removal of rhododendron and other non-native species where required; sensitive removal of some natural vegetation e.g. holly, yew, scrub, bramble or bracken to adjust light levels to create/maintain dappled shade; visitor management to reduce visitor impacts on accessible sites used for climbing/access; management of other uses of these sites that would cause damage to valuable plant communities; creation of habitat buffers of sites within the farmed landscape to reduce impacts on plant communities from enrichment by agricultural runoff and fertilisers buffering of sites found on road verges to reduce impacts from vehicle damage.</p>	<p>Sandstone outcrop sites, particularly those supporting important plant communities. Most of these are within the High Weald.</p> <p>Creation of habitat buffers around sites within farmed landscape.</p>	<p>High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">The High Weald Sandstone Project</a> and <a href="#">Sandrock in the High Weald Landscape (Land managers pack)</a></p> <p>Advice can also be provided by High Weald National Landscape Team.</p>

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Code	Enabling Measures
SO1.2 (EM)	Monitor key species diversity, population and distribution on sandstone outcrops and adjust management accordingly.
SO1.3 (EM)	Work with geologists to produce geodiversity site action plans for key sandstone outcrop sites.
SO1.4 (EM)	Work with climbing clubs and organisations to minimise impacts on important sandstone outcrop sites.
SO1.5 (EM)	Produce up-to-date site dossiers for all SSSI sandstone outcrops notified for their fern, bryophyte and lichen communities (compiling information on these sites as per the <a href="#">Common Standards Monitoring</a> guidance for bryophytes and lichens).

**Priority species that would benefit from these measures**

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Sandstone outcrops assemblage	SO1.1



# Rivers, Streams & Aquifers



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Damselflies © Clément Falize/unsplash.com



## RIVERS, STREAMS &amp; AQUIFERS

**Priority: R1** (Rivers and river systems)**Support the recovery of our 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 (which include protection of base flows in rivers and streams at times of drought, improved water quality and reduced flood risk (critical in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove as part of increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change)).

- The natural functions of our rivers and streams are being enhanced and restored. The connection between our rivers and their floodplains has been increased where this is suitable. Mosaics of dynamic floodplain habitats are delivering benefits for nature and are supporting the natural function of river systems in times of flood and drought. In some places, watercourses are also being ‘re-naturalised’ to improve their habitat and flow paths, undoing ‘straightening’ and removing/adapting man-made barriers to flow and species movement. This is giving rivers and streams room to flow more naturally over a greater length.
- Networks of habitats (e.g. woodlands, trees, scrub, grasses and water dependent vegetation) in our riparian zones are supporting biodiversity and providing greater habitat connectivity along our river corridors. These ‘functional habitats’ are also delivering important benefits for our river systems, improving water quality, regulating flow of water off the land and supporting base flows in our river systems. Targeted use of ‘Natural Flood Management’ (NFM)<sup>4</sup> is helping to create these habitats as part of a set of wider actions which store water in the landscape and slow its flow.

\* River systems include rivers and their network of tributaries, streams and channels. The measures in this section include all streams, with additional measures specifically for chalk streams under R2 below.

4 NFM techniques include: planting cross-slope hedgerows; planting or allowing regeneration of cross-slope, riparian and floodplain habitats; installing leaky dams across flow pathways and in channels; digging or de-silting ponds; soil restoration and conservation; encouraging rougher vegetation and buffer strips; intercepting surface water with swales and sediment traps; ditch management/reprofiling; increasing seasonal storage through creation of scrapes, rills and wetlands through opening up floodplain washlands and restoring meanders; coastal and river flood defence re-alignment [SDNPA \(2017\)](#).



- Pollution of the aquatic environment is being reduced through targeted work to reduce harmful inputs and more beneficial land management practices, particularly in areas vulnerable to high nutrient and sediment loads. Farmers and landowners are being supported in this through advice and access to relevant funding schemes.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and constructed wetlands are being used to treat contaminated surface water and discharges and are also reducing the impact of road and urban runoff on rivers and aquifers, particularly in areas of high risk.
- The level of shade along our rivers, streams and standing water bodies is being managed to create optimum balance of light and shade for aquatic biodiversity and to reduce the impact of climate change on water temperature where this is required. This may involve creation of new riparian vegetation where shade is required or management/removal of existing vegetation where it is causing excess shading.
- Catchment scale work is being targeted to eradicate and control Schedule 9 Wildlife & Countryside Act invasive non-native species that pose a threat to freshwater ecosystems and species, particularly in areas of most concern. Work in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area is contributing to the region-wide ambition to eradicate American mink in the South East of England ([Waterlife Recovery Trust](#)).
- Willing landowners and farmers understand areas of potential beaver suitability, and the available grants and potential benefits of beaver reintroductions should their land be suitable.


- Across the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area, a catchment-based approach involving Environment Agency, farmers and land managers, protected landscapes, water companies, local authorities and communities is driving a targeted and collaborative approach to action which benefits our river systems.





📍 Railway Land Nature Reserve in Lewes is nestled on the Ouse floodplain. © The Living Coast

**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:






*Note: measures R1.1, R1.2 and R1.3 can often be delivered together as a package of measures as part of a river restoration approach.*

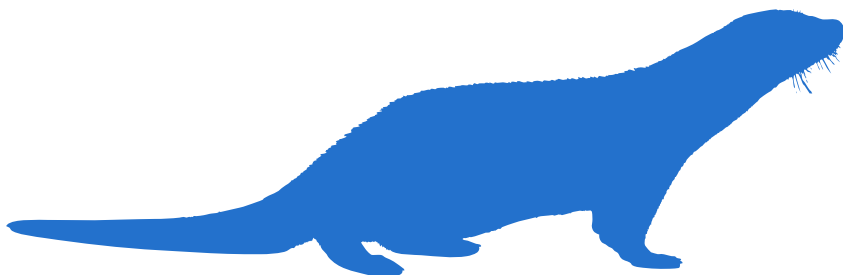
Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R1.1	<p><b>‘Renaturalise’ and reconnect rivers to their floodplains, allowing water to spill naturally onto adjacent land and restoring, expanding and better connecting floodplain habitats (such as wet grassland, fen, marsh and wet woodland). This will support biodiversity, increase ground water recharge and provide flood attenuation.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>A suite of techniques can be used for this, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowering height and gradient of banks, removing or realigning embankments;</li> <li>• Removing culverts to ‘daylight’ stretches of rivers and streams;</li> <li>• ‘Rewiggling’ (undoing straightening/ restoring meanders);</li> <li>• Reconnecting old side channels;</li> <li>• Increasing habitat variety through retention/ increase of natural structures such as leaky dams and letting fallen trees remain in situ;</li> <li>• Removal of hard engineering, including artificial bank and bed protection;</li> <li>• Removal/de-commissioning of pumps (previously used to reduce water levels);</li> <li>• Rewetting fields to encourage new wetland and grassland habitats;</li> <li>• Implementation of a ‘Stage 0’ approach (where suitable) thinking beyond the river channel itself and working to restore the river to its ‘pre-disturbance’ state;</li> <li>• Beavers may play a role in implementation of this measure where sites are suitable and landowners and communities are supportive of their reintroduction. Any future reintroduction of beaver must be carried out under license and as per licensing requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>Areas of river/floodplain where this is both feasible and desirable e.g. where it does not conflict with land protection or flood mitigation requirements.</p> <p>This measure will result in a change of land use/habitat in affected areas (e.g. where drained farmland reverts to floodplain) and therefore these changes must be factored into any projects.</p> <p>Target this activity using information from Environment Agency and Catchment Partnerships and via engagement with landowners.</p> <p>Note – that in tidal reaches of rivers, this may include creation of saltmarsh where conditions are suitable (see also coastal measure C1.3 above).</p> <p>R1.1 will be effective when delivered as part of a package with improvement of ‘in-river’ habitat connectivity and restoration of ‘in-river’ habitat (i.e. measures R1.2 and R1.3 below).</p>	<p>The River Restoration Centre: <a href="#">RRC Guidance Documents</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>National Trust: <a href="#">River Ouse Restoration Project, Sheffield Park</a></p> <p>Owletts Farm: (<a href="#">See Rapid Restoration video about re-wiggling a stream</a>)</p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R1.2	<p><b>Improve ‘in-river’ connectivity for species through removal of barriers to fish passage and natural flows of water and sediment.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of barriers to fish passage and aquatic organisms (including weirs and culverts), where this is possible.</li> <li>• Retrofitting of structures to include fish passes.</li> <li>• Removal of redundant concrete water gauging.</li> </ul>	<p>Areas of river/floodplain where this is feasible.</p> <p>Target removal of those barriers which block greatest amount of river and priorities identified by Environment Agency and Catchment Partnerships.</p> <p>Effective as part of a package with re-naturalisation and restoration of ‘in-river’ habitat (R1.1 and R1.3).</p>	<p>Environment Agency: <a href="#">Improving river habitats to support wildlife during high and low flows</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust: <a href="#">Breaking Barriers</a></p>
R1.3	<p><b>Manage, restore and enhance ‘in river’ and riparian habitat to support biodiversity, the natural function of the river/stream and temperature regulation in the face of climate change.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement of in-channel vegetation (macrophytes) (e.g. by bank-regrading, creation of in-channel features such as berms and bars).</li> <li>• Use of large wood structures, in-channel flow deflectors and other approaches to create variation in flow.</li> <li>• Creation of mammal ledges.</li> <li>• Reduction of fragmentation of river habitats.</li> <li>• In-river channel enhancements such as: channel pinching; addition and cleaning of gravels in sections of rivers/streams where sediment or other impacts are affecting habitat function such as impacting fish spawning.</li> <li>• Management and / or planting of riparian woodland and bankside trees to control shading as required (creation of scrub not advised as this may end up ‘tunnelling’ the river); coppicing of bankside trees to allow more light into shaded sections of over-shaded river.</li> </ul>	<p>Suitable for widespread implementation but effective as part of package with removal of fish barriers and re-naturalisation (R1.1 and R1.2).</p>	<p>Environment Agency: <a href="#">Improving river habitats to support wildlife during high and low flows</a></p> <p>The Rivers Trust: <a href="#">Woodlands for Water</a></p> <p>Wild Trout Trust: <a href="#">Trees and Rivers</a></p>






Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R1.4	<b>Enhance aquatic and riparian habitat within ditches connected to the river network.</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	<p>Managing vegetation on one side of the ditch only during each operation; removing vegetation by cutting above the base; allowing vegetation to re-establish by natural regeneration etc.</p> <p>Ensure larger ditches are more open than those off the 'main drain' which can be more vegetated.</p>	All ditches.	<p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WBD2 Manage ditches</a> and <a href="#">WT3 Management of ditches of high environmental value</a></p>
R1.5	<b>Deliver Natural Flood Management (NFM) interventions across catchments, targeting areas where this will deliver multiple benefits and provide greatest benefit to communities at risk of flooding.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>    	<p>NFM includes a range of techniques including planting cross-slope hedgerows; planting or allowing regeneration of cross-slope, riparian and floodplain woodlands; installing leaky dams across flow pathways and in channels; digging or de-silting ponds; soil restoration and conservation; encouraging rougher vegetation and buffer strips; intercepting surface water with swales and sediment traps; ditch management/reprofiling; increasing seasonal storage through creation of wader scrapes; wetland creation through opening up floodplain washlands and restoring meanders; coastal and river flood defence realignment.</p>	Areas mapped by Catchment Partnerships and Environment Agency as suitable for NFM.	<p>South Downs National Park Authority and Sussex Flow Initiative: <a href="#">Natural Flood Management: A practical guide for farmers and landowners of the Solent and South Downs</a>.</p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Wilder Ouse</a> (previously <a href="#">Sussex Flow Initiative</a>)</p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R1.6	<p><b>Create and manage permanent vegetation buffer strips alongside rivers and streams to support biodiversity and intercept and reduce levels of pollutants (such as nutrients, chemical pollutants, veterinary chemicals, excessive sediment) reaching watercourses.</b></p> <p>Mapped</p> 	<p>Creation of permanent vegetation buffers (grassland, wetland, hedgerows, trees, others).</p> <p>For farmland, buffer size to be suitable for site, field size and landscape scale.</p> <p>For grassland buffers, there is a recommended width under ELMS schemes &gt;6m (SFI) and 12-24m (arable land at high risk of erosion).</p>	<p>This is good practice along all watercourses but is particularly important in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• watercourses in an agricultural setting (arable and pasture);</li> <li>• priority watercourses e.g. chalk streams, wood gills;</li> <li>• those located in source protection zones and nitrate vulnerable zones;</li> <li>• those in upper catchments.</li> </ul>	<p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Water body buffering standard of the Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMS options: <a href="#">BFS1 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land</a></p>
R1.7	<p><b>Create nature-based interception features (e.g. ponds, swales, wetlands) as part of a package of actions to prevent runoff from roads and highways entering watercourses.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>Creation of ponds, swales or wetland to capture runoff; ongoing maintenance and treatment of water within these features to reduce the presence of pollutants which may be harmful to wildlife (guided by ongoing monitoring of pollutants).</p> <p>Seek technical and ecological advice on suitability. May need to be part of a wider package of measures to capture and remove sediment and other pollutants before it reaches the nature-based feature.</p>	<p>Not on the aquifer/source protection zones due to risk of pollution of the aquifer unless permitted by EA/water companies (due to increased risk that these may increase pollution of groundwater). Nature-based features alone may be suitable for low-traffic roads where level of pollutants in runoff are less; on motorways, trunk roads or those with high congestion levels, other interventions will be required to remove sediment/pollution before it enters a nature-based feature.</p>	<p>CIWEM and Stormwater Shepherds: <a href="#">Highway runoff and the water environment</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R1.8	<p><b>Reduce the impact and spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) on freshwater habitats (rivers, streams, wetland sites, standing water bodies).</b></p> <p><i>Note: Key species of concern across freshwater habitats in the East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove LNRS area include:</i></p> <p><u>On the banks:</u> <i>Himalayan balsam; American skunk cabbage; giant hogweed; Japanese knotweed; Rhododendron ponticum</i></p> <p><u>In the water:</u> <i>floating pennywort; parrots feather; water fern; New Zealand pygmyweed; Elodea species; Lagarosiphon major (curly waterweed); signal crayfish; Chinese mitten crab; Asian clam; Chinese mystery snail; American mink.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Techniques used will depend on species, distribution and efficacy of management approaches.</p>	<p>Initial focus on 'target areas' where concentrations are high and/or the sites may be acting as a source of spread.</p> <p>Presence of species in the Ouse catchment by waterbody has been <a href="#">mapped</a> and a <a href="#">strategy</a> produced for tackling their impact at a catchment scale.</p> <p>For some species, it is recommended to start from headwaters and work downstream. For others, the species may be spreading from tidal reaches. Advice on best approach can be sought from relevant Catchment Partnerships.</p> <p>For efforts to control American mink: this work should form part of existing regional eradication efforts in South East England.</p>	<p>GB Non-native species secretariat: <a href="#">Information hub</a></p> <p>Ouse &amp; Adur Rivers Trust: <a href="#">Sussex Ouse non native invasive species project (see control techniques)</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Ouse &amp; Adur Rivers Trust: <a href="#">Sussex Ouse non native invasive species project</a></p>



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

A1.1 Create high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce storm overflows, support ground water quality and encourage groundwater recharge/infiltration where required.

A1.2 Implement land management practices, habitat creation and management to support ground water recharge and reduce levels of nutrients (nitrates/phosphates) and other pollutants reaching groundwater. This includes buffering karst features.

### COASTAL

C1.3 Create new areas of intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat, in locations where it is likely to be resilient to future climate pressures.

### URBAN NATURE

U1.3 'Re-naturalise' stretches of urban rivers/streams to support biodiversity and natural processes, where this is feasible and aligns with flood risk approaches. Provide access along these stretches where possible to better connect people to urban rivers/streams.

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>R1.9 (EM)</b>	Work collaboratively to design a data and monitoring system (including identifying data gaps) to provide more information on the health of our rivers and streams in Sussex, how and where to target interventions and monitor their effectiveness.
<b>R1.10 (EM)</b>	Coordinate engagement across catchments with landowners, farmers, water companies with existing and new initiatives to achieve enhancements in water quality. Support this with a database of opportunities for delivery for use by all sector delivery partners.
<b>R1.11 (EM)</b>	Develop a coordinated approach to tackling INNS within each catchment, based on collated best practice and working across partners. <b>Local case study example:</b> <a href="#">Sussex Ouse Non-native species project</a>
<b>R1.12 (EM)</b>	Adopt local plan policies to require buffer zones along streams, rivers and ponds within new development, in order to reduce flood risk and run-off from development.
<b>R1.13 (EM)</b>	Identify sources/pathways/receptors of river pollutants and provide guidance on suitable action to take (e.g. reduce or buffer inputs). Pollutants could be from a range of sources including urban areas, industrial sites, highly mobile soils, roads, or farming. Guidance will be needed for all sectors.
<b>R1.14 (EM)</b>	Raise awareness of the pressures on rivers and watercourses, with identifiable actions for businesses, local government and residents to take to reduce pressures and support water quality, low base flows, the structure and form of rivers and streams (e.g. side bars, pools, glides, vegetation, woody debris, riparian habitats etc), flood risk and biodiversity.



## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Beaver	R1.1, R1.3, R1.5
European water vole	R1.1, R1.2, R1.3, R1.3, R1.4, R1.5, R1.6, R1.8
White-clawed crayfish	R1.2, R1.3, R1.3, R1.4, R1.6, R1.8
Fen raft spider	R1.4, R1.6
Emerald damselfly	R1.1, R1.7
Lesser marshwort	R1.4
Bristly stonewort	R1.4

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Breeding waders – wet grassland & heathland assemblage	R1.1
Coastal grazing marsh & upper saltmarsh assemblage	R1.1
Reedbed & river birds assemblage	R1.1, R1.3, R1.4, R1.5, R1.6
Breeding & migrating/winter shore birds assemblage	R1.1
Streams & rivers assemblage	R1.1, R1.2, R1.3, R1.4, R1.5, R1.6, R1.8



Water vole © iStock.com/Rachel Bennett

## RIVERS, STREAMS &amp; AQUIFERS

**Priority: R2** (Chalk streams)**Support the recovery and resilience of our chalk streams and their unique biodiversity****What does success in 10 years look like?**

- For the small, chalk streams which emerge from the steep scarp slope of the chalk downs, effort has been focused on safeguarding these streams from physical modification and retaining and enhancing their natural chalk stream characteristics.

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Where necessary, the natural functions of chalk streams have been increased through actions to restore the following: stream slope (improving longitudinal connectivity); an intact gravel bed; dynamic interaction with fallen trees and living riparian trees; interaction with the floodplain (lateral connectivity); ecological processes and habitats that support their key species (fish, insects, mammals and plants).

- Chalk streams are benefitting from sensitive land use within the wider catchment and are buffered from pollutants, supporting recovery of water quality. In particular, actions have been taken to reduce sediment load entering these streams.
- Winterbournes (seasonally flowing chalk streams) have been identified and there is greater awareness of their presence and function. Efforts have been focused on retaining and restoring these streams where required.




📷 Numerous fish in chalk stream © iStock.com/ChrisAt





**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

*Note: These are in addition to standard measures for rivers/streams in R1 above and are specific to chalk streams which are of particular importance within the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area.*

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
R2.1	<p><b>Restore chalk streams and winterbournes to support base flows, water quality, natural functions, aquatic habitats and biodiversity.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Beneficial actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoration of lost/former channels where known;</li> <li>• Restoration of meanders and gradient;</li> <li>• Removal of culverts and other barriers which may be impacting sedimentation, low flows and longitudinal connectivity;</li> <li>• Expansion of wet and floodplain margins;</li> <li>• Creation of buffer habitat and to intercept pollutants;</li> <li>• Management of shade from riparian vegetation to create optimal light/shade conditions for macrophyte development;</li> <li>• Retention/establishment of natural leaky large wood structures.</li> </ul>	<p>Target all chalk streams and winterbournes (given their rarity and fragility). Specifically target those streams at greatest risk of low base flows in summer/drought periods, those experiencing low ecological condition or under pressure from high nutrient/pollution levels and those where channels have been modified and where there is potential to ‘renaturalise’ them.</p>	<p>Catchment based approach: <a href="#">Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy 2021</a></p> <p>Chalk Streams.org: <a href="#">Chalk Streams – England’s freshwater marvel</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Cockshut Stream Restoration Project, Lewes: <a href="#">(website)</a></p>

## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

R1.8 Reduce impact and spread of invasive non-native species on freshwater habitats (rivers, streams, wetland sites, standing water bodies).

Measures to support groundwater recharge and water quality of the aquifers will also support chalk streams, for example:

A1.2 Implement land management practices, habitat creation and management to support ground water recharge and reduce levels of nutrients (nitrates/phosphates) and other pollutants reaching groundwater. This includes buffering karstic features.



📷 Mallard and brown trout in chalk stream © iStock.com/Paul Colley

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>R2.2 (EM)</b>	Agree Targets and Environmental Flow Indicators to support the environmental quality of chalk streams, winterbournes and greensand streams in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Abstraction levels are within these targets.
<b>R2.3 (EM)</b>	Increase/restore monitoring and testing of chalk and greensand streams.
<b>R2.4 (EM)</b>	Develop more accurate mapping for location of chalk and greensand streams to support decision-making (including planning).
<b>R2.5 (EM)</b>	Adopt Local Plan/Development Policies to reduce impacts on chalk and greensand streams from development (water levels, water quality, shape/form etc).

## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
European water vole	R2.1
White-clawed crayfish	R2.1

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Streams & rivers assemblage	R2.1

## RIVERS, STREAMS &amp; AQUIFERS

**Priority: A1** (Aquifers)**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. On the chalk aquifers, in many cases this will mean enhancing and restoring chalk grassland and associated habitats (including arable reversion).
- 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<sup>5</sup> to reduce risk of ground water pollution.

<sup>5</sup> In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, these are features in the chalk caused by erosion – (e.g. streamlines, dolines (sinkholes), dissolution pipes and springs). These can cause rapid infiltration of surface water containing pollutants to enter the aquifer.





📍 Carden Avenue, Brighton rainscape © SuDS interreg project Brighton

- Impacts on ground water quality and recharge from runoff are being reduced through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), 'rainscapes' 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.
- Communities living on the 'chalk block' are informed and engaged in activities to support the aquifer, such as reducing demand for water, water-friendly gardens, creation of raingardens, schools projects etc.



**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
A1.1	<p><b>Create high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)<sup>6</sup> to reduce storm overflows, support ground water quality and encourage groundwater recharge/infiltration where required.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Various types of SuDS depending on purpose: swales and conveyance channels; filtration; infiltration; retention and storage; wetland, inlets, outlets and control structures.</p> <p>Specific examples include green roofs, permeable paving, rain gardens, tree planting, swales, ponds, infiltration basins and soakaways.</p>	<p>Widespread but only in areas suitable for creation of SuDS (which depends on factors such as underlying geology, proximity to Ground Water Source Protection Zones (where SuDS may risk contaminating water resources), topography, flood risk, archaeology, landscape etc).</p> <p>See maps identifying local ‘SuDS Suitability Scores’ for information.</p>	<p>East Sussex County Council: <a href="#">Guide to Sustainable Drainage in East Sussex</a></p> <p>West Sussex County Council: <a href="#">SuDS design guidance – Water, People, Places: a guide for master planning sustainable drainage into developments</a></p> <p>Susdrain.org: <a href="#">website</a></p> <p>WWT and RSPB: <a href="#">Sustainable Drainage Systems: a guide for local authorities and developers</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>The Aquifer Project: <a href="#">Wild Park Rainscape, Brighton</a></p>
A1.2	<p><b>Implement land management practices, habitat creation and management to support ground water recharge and reduce levels of nutrients (nitrates/phosphates) and other pollutants reaching groundwater. This includes buffering karst features.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Restoration of ponds/dew ponds; habitat creation and enhancements; reduced use of chemical inputs; use of cover crops; identifying and buffering karstic features.</p>	<p>Source Protection Zones; Nitrate Sensitive Areas; Sussex North Water Supply Zone (<a href="#">StatMap Earthlight</a>).</p> <p>South East Water: strategy for habitat creation and NbS in SPZs (to be drafted during course of this LNRS).</p> <p>Environment Agency’s <a href="#">Nitrate Leaching Tool</a> to measure how much nitrate is lost from farmed land.</p>	<p>Contact water companies who can provide direct advice for landowners.</p> <p><b>Local Case Study:</b></p> <p>New ‘Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve (NNR)’ – details to be announced</p>

<sup>6</sup> SuDS are drainage systems designed to manage surface water run off. When designed well, they can deliver a range of benefits which include reduction of surface water flooding, replenishment of ground water supplies, creation of new habitat, filtering of pollutants preventing them reaching water courses, and creation of valuable amenity greenspaces for communities to enjoy. (Aecom and Lead Local Flood Authorities of the South East of England. [Water. People. Places. A guide for master planning sustainable drainage into developments](#)).



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery

Measures within the **Species-rich Grassland** section to create and enhance chalk grassland habitat will most likely be located on chalk geology and thus may support ground water quality and aquifer recharge.

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>A1.3 (EM)</b>	<p>Community engagement projects to support delivery of actions to support the aquifer (e.g. via residential gardens, creation of raingardens in schools/public spaces etc).</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <a href="#">The Aquifer Project, West and East Sussex.</a></p>

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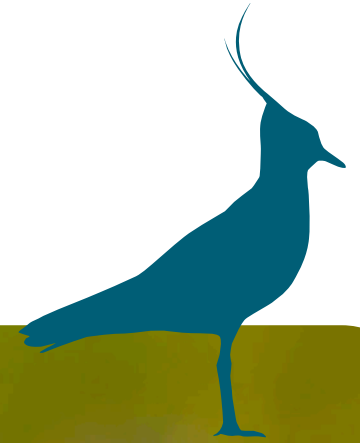
📷 The Wild Park Rainscape in Brighton has been created to reduce flooding and help protect the chalk aquifer.

© The Living Coast/Roderick Wilson





# Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies



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## WETLANDS &amp; STANDING WATER BODIES

**Priority: Wt1** (Wetland habitats)**Restore and enhance our existing wetland habitats\* and create new wetlands particularly where this will expand and connect existing sites****What does success in 10 years look like?**




- More of our existing wetland sites are in positive management, resulting in improved ecological condition, sufficient water levels and reduced threat from invasive species.
- Measures to support river systems and aquifers (R1 and A1) are supporting the hydrological function of our wetlands, which is increasing their resilience in the face of climate change.
- 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.
- Our most fragile and vulnerable wetland habitats such as fen, bog and mire, marsh, reedbed, coastal and flood plain grazing marsh are being managed to restore their hydrological function and ecological condition. In many cases, this has meant removing

artificial drainage, preventing nutrient enrichment and removing encroaching vegetation where required. Areas of these habitats are expanding 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. Water vole populations in these wetland areas are also increasing thanks to improved habitat connectivity and control of American mink.
- Floodplain habitats and wet woodland areas have been created as part of the wider restoration of floodplain function. More generally, our wetlands are delivering a range of wider environmental benefits. By increasing the storage of water in the landscape they are contributing to reduced flood risk, improved water quality, improved base flows in our rivers in times of drought and carbon storage.
- Harmful impacts from flooding, surface water runoff and combined sewer overflow discharges are being mitigated and reduced through nature-based solutions. Natural Flood Management (NFM), nature-based Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICWs) are creating benefits for nature while delivering more space for water alongside benefits for reducing flood risk, pollution and improving water quality.
- Defunct infrastructure which is inhibiting wetland expansion is being removed (e.g. sluices, field drainage etc.)

\*Where wetland includes reedbeds, coastal/floodplain grazing marsh and our small areas of peatland habitat such as bog, mires, wet heath and fen.


**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Wt1.1	<b>Enhance remaining areas of peatland habitats by improving their hydrological function and ecological condition. Encourage expansion of existing areas where possible.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	Identification of the hydrology of the site and its functional boundaries; restoration of hydrological regimes and water table (e.g. by blocking drains); manage vegetation to remove non-typical wetland species; remove trees where the site has dried out and trees have been planted/colonised; influence surrounding land use to support water levels and reduce pollution; create wetland buffer for the site.	All existing peatland habitats in East Sussex (lowland fen, lowland bog, mire). Note that many are found within heathland habitat mosaics (see Priority H1).	Natural England (NERR 064): <a href="#">A narrative for conserving freshwater and wetland habitats in England</a>  Natural England: <a href="#">Climate Adaptation Manual (NE751)</a> – See Lowland raised bog PDF  CIEEM. <a href="#">Fen Management Handbook</a>
Wt1.2	<b>Enhance existing areas of reedbed to improve ecological condition and function and delivery of wider environmental benefits.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	Maintain water levels at a high and stable level or restore to these levels if required; manage the habitat to maintain all stages of succession (young reedbed to older reedbed), structural and species diversity; grazing; cutting if necessary should be on a long rotation; scrub control to prevent encroachment but retaining some scrub in places to support biodiversity.	Enhance all existing areas.	Catchment Based Approach: <a href="#">Reedbeds Biodiversity Habitat Guide</a>  Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WT6 Management of reedbed</a>
Wt1.3	<b>Create new areas of reedbed, particularly where this will expand and connect existing sites and/or deliver wider environmental benefits (such as improvement of water quality).</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	Groundworks to create suitable ground and water condition; establish reed vegetation; manage water levels and supply; vegetation management to control any opportunistic/invasive species.	Create new reedbeds where soils and hydrology are suitable within floodplains, estuaries, lake edges and reclaimed industrial sites such as gravel pits/quarries.	Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WT7 Creation of Reedbed</a>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Wt1.4	<p><b>Manage existing areas of floodplain grazing marsh (including coastal floodplain grazing marsh) to enhance the ecological condition of its mosaic of habitats and ditches.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Manage to create variety of vegetation height and density (including bare ground, patchy scrub, temporary pools); maintain light grazing and/or cut for hay/silage; prevent scrub invasion; maintain drainage ditches to provide a range of successional stages of vegetation and a rotational approach to ditch cleaning. This will support the value of the ditches for aquatic and water margin fauna; manage water levels to maintain high water levels in ditches throughout the year; for coastal floodplain grazing marsh manage saline incursion and flooding; create varied ditch profiles; maintain water quality by reducing nutrient input from fertilisers.</p>	<p>All existing coastal floodplain grazing marsh; other floodplain grazing marsh along rivers.</p>	<p>Buglife: <a href="#">Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh</a> and <a href="#">Grazing Marsh Ditches</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Pevensey Levels Wetland Restoration Project</a></p>
Wt1.5	<p><b>Enhance existing areas of lowland wet grassland habitats to improve ecological condition and delivery of wider environmental benefits.</b></p> <p><i>Note: this refers to those areas of grassland that are periodically inundated and not considered to be floodplain grazing marsh (which tends to be drained for grazing). It may include floodplain wetland mosaic, washland grasslands, wet pasture and wet meadow.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Manage water levels to allow/enable seasonal shallow flooding (inundation) of grassland in winter/spring; create areas of standing water and wet features (e.g. scrapes and pools); graze (low levels) or cut for hay; avoid use of fertilisers, slurry or manure; use of green hay to enhance grassland species diversity.</p>	<p>Existing areas of wet grassland, particularly that in poor ecological condition and where actions to restore seasonal inundation will be possible.</p>	<p>Catchment Based Approach: <a href="#">Biodiversity Habitat Pack – Wet grasslands</a></p> <p>River Restoration Centre: <a href="#">Creating Floodplain Wetland Features – floodplain wetland mosaic</a></p> <p>Freshwater Habitats Trust: <a href="#">Floodplain grassland restoration</a></p> <p>Natural England: <a href="#">A narrative for conserving freshwater and wetland habitats in England (NERR064)</a></p> <p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">SFI Manage lowland wet grassland for birds</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">GS10 Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Wt1.6	<p><b>Create new areas of lowland wet grassland habitats, particularly where this will expand and connect existing wetland habitats and deliver wider environmental benefits.</b></p> <p><i>Note: this refers to those areas of grassland that are periodically inundated and not considered to be floodplain grazing marsh (which tends to be drained for grazing). It may include floodplain wetland mosaic, washland grasslands, wet pasture and wet meadow.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Restoration of hydrological conditions; use of “re-wetting” techniques to raise water levels (e.g. drain blocking); consider creating variations in landform (hollows, channels etc.) to allow water to build up on the surface; manage water levels in winter to (where possible to do so) to retain water on the site; graze/cut to create suitable sward conditions.	Existing areas of low input grassland or species-rich grassland in sites with potential for water level control/flooding in winter.	<p><a href="#">Catchment Based Approach: Biodiversity Habitat Pack – Wet grasslands</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">GS12 Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl</a></p>



📷 Emerald damselfly © Ben Rainbow

## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

R1.8 Reduce impact and spread of invasive non-native species on freshwater habitats (rivers, streams, wetland sites, standing water bodies).

A1.1 Create high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)<sup>7</sup> to reduce storm overflows, support ground water quality and encourage groundwater recharge/infiltration where required.

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>Wt1.7 (EM)</b>	Map historical wetland sites to identify potential reinstatement of wetlands.
<b>Wt1.8 (EM)</b>	Identify the vulnerability of wetland sites to climate change and what this will mean for water level management/resilience into the future.  <i>Note the results of SSSI risk/vulnerability assessments for wetland sites once published.</i>

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## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
European water vole	Wt1.1, Wt1.2, Wt1.3, Wt1.4
Fen raft spider	Wt1.4
Emerald damselfly	Wt1.4, Wt1.5, Wt1.6
Large plain stiletto	Wt1.4
Lesser marshwort	Wt1.4
Bristly stonewort	Wt1.4

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Breeding waders – wet grassland & heathland assemblage	Wt1.4, Wt1.5, Wt1.6
Coastal grazing marsh & upper saltmarsh assemblage	Wt1.4
Grazing marsh molluscs assemblage	Wt1.4
Reedbed and river birds assemblage	Wt1.2, Wt1.3, Wt1.5, Wt1.6

<sup>7</sup> SuDS are drainage systems designed to manage surface water runoff. When designed well, they can deliver a range of benefits which include reduction of surface water flooding, replenishment of ground water supplies, creation of new habitat, filtering of pollutants preventing them reaching watercourses, and creation of valuable amenity greenspaces for communities to enjoy. (Aecom and Lead Local Flood Authorities of the South East of England. [Water. People. Places. A guide for master planning sustainable drainage into developments](#)).

## WETLANDS &amp; STANDING WATER BODIES

## Priority: SWB1 Standing water bodies (SWB). (reservoirs, lakes, ponds and ditches)

### Restore and enhance existing standing water bodies and create new standing water body habitat for biodiversity and other benefits

#### What does success in 10 years look like?

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- 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. This is being achieved through appropriate restoration activity, the creation and enhancement of habitats that prevent nutrient and sediment runoff entering standing water bodies, and supportive land management practices in the wider catchment.
- There is more understanding of the range of value to biodiversity that can be found in ponds in various ecological stages and therefore the need to take ecological advice before embarking on pond restoration.
- 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.

- A new reservoir capacity at Arlington has been created, providing not only a water storage asset but creation of new standing water and associated habitats.
- Strategies are in place for the management of invasive non-native species within standing water bodies.
- Standing water ditches of high and potentially high environmental value are under management that is enhancing their value for all related species.
- There is more awareness that ditches can be part of the river network and are managed as such for their support of aquatic biodiversity and habitat connectivity.
- People understand how to manage and use ponds and other standing water bodies to reduce impacts caused by actions such as duck feeding, swapping plants between ponds, adding invasive non-native species such as terrapins and so on.











**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
SWB1.1	<p><b>Enhance and restore existing ponds and pond complexes to improve biodiversity and water quality. This includes restoration of degraded and lost (ghost) ponds, pond complexes, farm ponds, hammer ponds, dew ponds and urban ponds.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>It is vital to seek ecological advice to identify if a pond requires restoration as they can be ecologically valuable in different ecological stages. The techniques required will therefore vary depending on the pond type/location, threats from runoff and other reasons for poor ecological condition.</p> <p>Techniques may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation/management of riparian habitats (creating a buffer where needed to reduce impacts of runoff and shading where needed);</li> <li>• desilting;</li> <li>• removal of leaves and rubbish;</li> <li>• management of water levels and depths;</li> <li>• cutting/thinning of bankside vegetation;</li> <li>• reducing vegetation in the pond.</li> </ul>	<p>Dependent on ecological advice.</p> <p>May include farm ponds, historic ponds (hammer ponds), dew ponds, village ponds, urban ponds. It may be particularly important to target Priority Ponds (which support uncommon and declining species) and ponds in poor condition.</p>	<p>Freshwater Habitats Trust: <a href="#">Pond Management Hub</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>South Downs National Park: <a href="#">Ponds for Ponds</a> and <a href="#">Seaford Head Dew Pond Restoration</a></p> <p>Froglife: <a href="#">Discovering Dewponds Project 2021-2024</a>.( East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove)</p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
SWB1.2	<p><b>Create new ponds/pond networks (complexes) to provide freshwater habitat for wildlife and deliver wider environmental benefits.</b></p> <p><i>Whilst these will provide wider environmental benefits (such as slowing the flow of water in the environment), these are primarily 'wildlife ponds' and their design, location and riparian habitats should reflect this.</i></p> <p><i>(For creation of water storage ponds, swales and scrapes primarily for water storage and flood risk reduction, see measure R1.7 (Natural Flood Management)).</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Identify suitable site seeking ecological advice if necessary; excavate pond creating profile/edges which will be beneficial for wildlife (see guidance).	<p>Re-creation of 'lost ponds' where the location is known; locations where pond creation is suitable based on soils and geology; areas where pond creation is beneficial for species (e.g. great crested newts); location close to other ponds/wetlands.</p> <p>Use historic pond survey work to target areas of 'lost ponds' for restoration. Information exists for South Downs National Park (lost dew ponds) and parts of High Weald National Landscape.</p>	<p>Freshwater habitats (Million Ponds Project): <a href="#">Locating ponds and finding a water source</a></p> <p>Farming for Nature: <a href="#">Building a wildlife pond on your land</a></p> <p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Create ponds and lakes (on farmland)</a></p> <p>Great crested newt district licensing resources: <a href="#">East Sussex County Council</a>; <a href="#">West Sussex County Council</a>; <a href="#">Naturespace</a></p>
SWB1.3	<p><b>Create new large standing water bodies (reservoirs/lakes) with beneficial riparian habitat; this may include reservoir creation where identified as required to support water resources management.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Construction of new water body; restoration of ex-mineral sites to create new lakes/ponds where suitable; creation of ambitious areas of riparian habitat around any new features (as suitable for location) and as required for support of species.	In East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, opportunities include the planned creation of additional reservoir at Arlington.	<p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Portsmouth Water: <a href="#">Havant Thicket Reservoir Project Environment and Wildlife (Hampshire)</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
SWB1.4	<p><b>Restore and enhance standing water ditches to improve value for species and restore habitat linkages via ditch-side vegetation.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>Maintenance of water levels; allow some sections of ditches to become choked to provide habitat for invertebrates; management on a long rotation to provide different stages of vegetation; clearance of ditches on one side only; creation of shallow margins; cattle poaching on some stretches to maintain shallow profile and control excessive vegetation growth.</p>	<p>All ditches but of particular importance are ditches of high and potentially high environmental value.</p>	<p>Defra Blog: <a href="#">Create and manage ditches for wildlife</a></p> <p>Freshwater Habitats Trust: <a href="#">Ditches</a></p> <p>Buglife: <a href="#">Ponds and ditches</a></p> <p>Nature Friendly Farming Network: <a href="#">Ditches – ways to unlock multiple benefits</a></p> <p>Archived ELMs options (provides advice): <a href="#">WT3 Management of ditches of high environmental value</a></p>
SWB1.5	<p><b>Create and manage permanent vegetation buffer strips alongside ditches and ponds to support biodiversity and intercept and reduce levels of pollutants (such as nutrients, chemical pollutants, veterinary chemicals, excessive sediment) reaching watercourses.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p>   	<p>Creation of permanent vegetation buffers (grassland, wetland, hedgerows, trees, others).</p> <p>For farmland, buffer size up to 20m – but to be to be suitable for site, field size and landscape scale.</p>	<p>This is good practice along all standing water bodies but is particularly important in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• water bodies in an agricultural setting (arable and pasture);</li> <li>• ditches and ponds of high environmental value;</li> <li>• those located in source protection zones and nitrate vulnerable zones.</li> </ul>	<p>Farm Wildlife: <a href="#">Farm ponds and water bodies (See how to do it)</a></p> <p>Gov.uk guidance for relevant ELMs options: <a href="#">BFS2: Buffer in-field ponds on arable land</a> and <a href="#">BFS3: Buffer in-field ponds on improved grassland</a></p>



## Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

R1.8 Reduce impact and spread of invasive non-native species on freshwater habitats (rivers, streams, wetland sites, standing water bodies).

Measures to support **aquifers** and to deliver more **urban nature** may also include creation or restoration of dew ponds/ponds in suitable areas.

Code	Enabling Measures
SWB1.6 (EM)	Produce guidance/policy to guide creation of standing water bodies (ponds, lakes etc) and raise awareness of the importance of site suitability for pond creation to ensure no harm to ground water. Include guidance for all pond types/locations (rural and urban).

## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
European water vole	SWB1.4, SWB1.5
Emerald damselfly	SWB1.1, SWB1.2, SWB1.4, SWB1.5
Pondweed leafhopper	SWB1.1, SWB1.2, SWB1.5
Lesser marshwort	SWB1.4, SWB1.5
Bristly stonewort	SWB1.4, SWB1.5

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Grazing marsh molluscs assemblage	SWB1.4, SWB1.5
Ponds for amphibians assemblage	SWB1.1, SWB1.2, SWB1.5



© Robin Crane/Sussex Wildlife Trust



# Urban Nature



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 Female hedgehog with hoglets © iStock.com/slowmotiongli



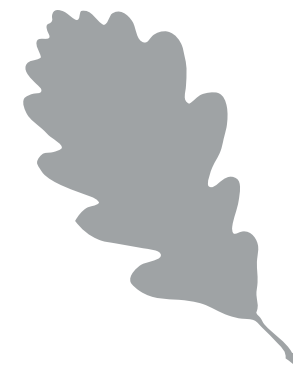
## URBAN NATURE

**Priority: U1****Create and connect new nature-rich areas within the urban environment, for the benefit of wildlife and people****What does success in 10 years look like?**

- Greenspaces across our urban and peri-urban areas are being thought of as a vital part of our 'ecological networks' – with opportunities being taken where possible to add to and complement existing greenspaces to enhance these networks. All new and existing parks and greenspaces are being managed for people and nature (See Priority U2 below).

- Creation of new greenspace 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, local 'no-mow' zones, swift bricks etc). Opportunities for larger scale interventions are being sought for community and neighbourhood green spaces that benefit nature and people. Local government policies for green infrastructure and urban greening are important drivers of action with planning conditions ensure 'green' development is delivered in practice.

- The public and private sectors are playing their part. New and additional 'nature-rich' greenspaces (e.g. local nature reserves, allotments, parks, verges, public gardens, areas of habitat creation on public land (schools, hospitals)) are being created as part of a wider network, located and designed to provide benefits for nature and people. Existing business and industrial zones are creating new habitat-rich and green areas of value to nature and employees.
- New areas are creating much needed connectivity for nature within the urban environment, particularly those of a linear nature such as verges, embankments, new green walking and cycling corridors etc.
- 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.
- Communities are being encouraged to develop community-led plans which address nature recovery and include actions that can be delivered by residents. The design of new greenspaces reflects the needs and views of local people and aims to provide spaces which are considered safe and welcome to all. Opportunities are being taken to innovate, test and research nature-based approaches which better connect communities to these projects.





- Creation of new greenspaces is being targeted, particularly where the provision of existing green space falls below national standards and where income and health inequalities have been mapped<sup>8</sup>. Creation and enhancement (see U2) of our urban green spaces is also reflecting 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.

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- ‘Sustainable Drainage Systems’ (SuDS) such as ponds and rain gardens are being created in urban areas particularly where these can also provide ecosystem services such as flood risk reduction and water storage in the urban landscape.
- Local government, the Protected Landscapes in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area (South Downs National Park and High Weald National Landscape) and geographical partnerships such as [The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere](#) and [Weald to Waves Community Network](#) are helping to improve access to green spaces for the benefit of the populations within their boundaries.

<sup>8</sup> Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework mapping. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx>



📷 The walled garden in Preston Park, Brighton & Hove. © D Alcroft

**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
U1.1	<p><b>Create new accessible natural greenspaces in urban areas, designed and located to deliver multiple benefits for people and nature.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Creation of new parks or green spaces, with delivery of multiple benefits in mind (wildlife, health and wellbeing, air quality, urban temperature regulation, flood risk reduction etc). These can include a range of size and type of greenspace – from larger parks, allotments/community food growing spaces to smaller parks and corners of habitat/greenspace at the street scale.</p> <p>Design should seek to deliver specific benefits to wildlife, health/wellbeing, climate change mitigation (e.g. tree and hedgerow planting) and climate adaptation (e.g. flood risk reduction, urban temperature regulation – as required in that locality).</p>	<p>Opportunities to include new greenspaces in all new larger housing developments; within existing urban areas opportunity will be more limited by space/funds but should be targeted in areas of ‘nature deficit’, highest health inequalities, air pollution and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change (e.g. flooding and urban heat island effects) – and where possible to enhance connectivity between existing green spaces; locate within proposed urban ‘ecological networks’ if mapped by local authorities.</p> <p>NE Green Infrastructure Standards <a href="#">mapping tool</a> can be used to identify areas in need of greater provision of accessible natural greenspace.</p>	<p>Natural England Blog: <a href="#">Green infrastructure – the catalyst for urban greening</a></p> <p>Natural England, Green Infrastructure Framework: <a href="#">Principles, attributes and standards</a> and <a href="#">mapping tool</a></p> <p>Heritage Lottery Fund: <a href="#">How to create sustainable urban greenspace in your area</a></p> <p>Nature Towns and Cities: <a href="#">(website)</a></p>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
U1.2	<p><b>Retrofit small/micro areas of habitat within the built/public realm of towns and cities, particularly in areas of 'nature deficit' and where it will contribute to climate adaptation and provide enhanced connectivity between existing green spaces.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>Green roofs and walls, tree/hedge planting, pollinator habitat (UK native wildflower planting), pocket parks, tiny/mini/Miyawaki forests, green bus-stops, rain gardens, roundabouts etc. These areas may or may not be accessible but will provide important stepping-stones of urban habitat for wildlife. Should be planned as wider approach to creating connected meaningful, habitat in urban areas. Take ecological advice if needed on location and design.</p> <p>Note: Urban greening factor policies within local plans may be helpful in delivering this measure.</p>	<p>Within smaller developments (residential and commercial); business/industrial zones; shared spaces (housing association land, hospitals, schools); public realm (bus tops, green routeways; within proposed urban 'ecological networks' if mapped by local authorities etc.</p>	<p>Mayor of London: <a href="#">Grey to Green – a guide to community-led depaving projects</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Brighton &amp; Hove Building Green: <a href="#">Hanningtons green wall, Brighton</a></p>
U1.3	<p><b>'Re-naturalise' stretches of urban rivers/streams to support biodiversity and natural processes, where this is feasible and aligns with flood risk approaches. Where appropriate, provide access along these stretches where possible to better connect people to urban rivers/streams.</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p>'De-culverting' where possible, in-channel enhancements, riparian habitat creation, flood plain connection/re-meandering (where there is space to do so), improvements to access (where possible) to promote local engagement and benefit.</p>	<p>Suitable areas identified in consultation with local authorities, catchment partnerships and Environment Agency.</p>	<p>The River Restoration Centre: <a href="#">River Restoration in Urban Areas (Factsheet)</a></p>



**Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery. These include:**

### WOODLAND

W2.2 Establish new orchards, including community orchards, with focus on maintaining locally distinctive varieties.

W3.1 Plant new street trees to deliver multiple benefits.

W3.3 Establish new areas of urban and peri-urban woodland which offer multiple benefits to residents, wildlife and landscape.

### HEDGEROWS

Hdg1.3 Create new hedgerows, including hedge trees where appropriate, to support habitat connectivity, enhance landscape character and deliver multiple benefits.

Hdg1.4 Create new hedgerows and enhance existing hedgerows within new development, creating important corridors for wildlife and wildlife permeable boundaries.

### RIVERS, STREAMS & AQUIFERS

R1.7 Create nature-based interception features (e.g. ponds, swales, wetlands) as part of a package of actions to prevent runoff from roads and highways entering water courses.

A1.1 Create high quality Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce storm overflows, support ground water quality and encourage groundwater recharge/infiltration where required.

### WETLANDS & STANDING WATER BODIES

SWB1.2 Create new ponds/pond networks (complexes) to provide freshwater habitat for wildlife and deliver wider environmental benefits.

Code	Enabling Measures
U1.4 (EM)	<p>Create an accurate data set of accessible natural greenspaces in the LNRS area down to town/parish scale, to inform planning and funding for investment in greenspaces.</p> <p><i>This will bring together GI mapping done at district scale and complement the basic but incomplete information on accessible natural greenspaces in Sussex contained within the Natural England GI Standards mapping tool.</i></p>
U1.5 (EM)	<p>Work with public and private sectors to identify opportunities for creation of new areas of urban habitat, providing guidance and advice on habitat creation, management and funding available.</p> <p><i>(This could range from landfill sites, brownfield sites, to small areas in business/industrial zones, cul de sacs etc. These are not necessarily accessible areas but help to create more and better connected habitat in urban areas). This exercise will help to release land for new accessible greenspaces, or retrofitting smaller areas of habitat into built/public realm. May be supported by local authority urban greening policies.</i></p>
U1.6 (EM)	<p>Develop projects to support wildflower propagation and distribution (e.g. via projects such as Changing Chalk Greening the Cities Project).</p> <p><b>Local example:</b> <a href="#">Changing Chalk – greening the cities – The Living Coast</a></p>



Code	Enabling Measures
U1.7 (EM)	<p>Adopt local plan policies to require developments to deliver high quality green infrastructure which benefits residents and nature.</p> <p><b>Further information and guidance:</b> <i>Building with nature standards: <a href="#">High Weald Housing Design Guide</a>, <a href="#">Natural England Green Infrastructure: planning and design guide</a></i></p>
U1.8 (EM)	<p>Promote the use of Community Land Trusts to secure new areas of land as community green assets.</p> <p><b>Further information and guidance:</b> <a href="#">Action in Rural Sussex</a></p>
U1.9 (EM)	<p>Promote guidance on recommended planting schemes for developers to ensure new planting within development supports local nature priorities.</p> <p><i>Link to High Weald guidance (once published)</i></p>
U1.10 (EM)	<p>Deliver training for local government.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For planners and development managers: planning for nature in urban areas (in developments/ local plans).</li> <li>• For parks and estate teams, neighbourhood services etc: managing land in local government ownership for nature.</li> </ul>
U1.11(EM)	<p>Develop guidance and support for local communities on managing land for nature and food growing.</p> <p><b>Further information and guidance:</b> <a href="#">Urban Farming Toolkit: A guide to growing to sell in the city</a> / <a href="#">Sustain, Food growing: Case studies</a>, <a href="#">Community Garden – Sufra NW London</a></p>

## Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
West European hedgehog	U1.1, U1.2

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Urban birds assemblage	U1.1, U1.2
Ponds for amphibians assemblage	U1.1



Robin & blue tit © Kev Kindred/unsplash.com

## URBAN NATURE

**Priority: U2****Enhance the value for nature of existing parks, buildings and other blue/green spaces****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 species-rich grassland, 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 East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.
- In our publicly owned green and blue spaces, their management (in-house and via contractors) is optimising wildlife benefits.

- 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.
- Species in urban areas are being supported through the provision of wilder, better connected and more natural spaces and vegetation.
- In addition, more buildings in urban areas are providing nesting habitat for birds, bats and other wildlife (for example, via provision of suitable nest boxes, swift bricks, bee houses etc as part of new developments and extensions); this is targeted where specific species can benefit most (e.g. swift populations in Brighton & Hove).
- Private businesses, e.g. golf courses, within urban, peri-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 and adjacent public spaces for nature, providing nest boxes, hand weeding pavements (thus removing the need for spraying with chemicals) etc.






- Community based organisations are being supported to manage local green spaces (recreation grounds, ponds, orchards, allotments, community gardens, burial grounds) for nature and wider benefits and feel part of a bigger movement for nature's recovery across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Innovation in the identification of green spaces as 'community assets' and the use of mechanisms such as Community Land Trusts and dedication of town/village greens is bringing more greenspaces into community management with a specific focus on delivering local benefits for nature and people.
- More educational projects are being created to help communities understand the importance and potential of the environment in urban areas (e.g. for their mental and physical health).




**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
U2.1	<p><b>Increase the area of habitat created and managed for nature within existing green spaces, such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments, golf courses, foreshore, public gardens, shared spaces (flats/housing association land), hospitals, prisons etc.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped – to those types of green spaces that are most likely to provide opportunities, see Part 4.</b></p> 	<p>Opportunities for creation or better management of habitats for nature exist in many types of green spaces. The list below provides some examples.</p> <p><b>Smaller grassed areas:</b> manage as natural green spaces with reduced mowing, where this does not impact negatively on visitor experience.</p> <p><b>Cemeteries and churchyards:</b> manage closer to natural green spaces through suitable mowing practices and other habitat enhancements, where this is supported by stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Allotments:</b> create new areas of habitat via hedgerows, small trees, wildflowers.</p> <p><b>Playing fields:</b> Sustainable Turf Management*; management of corners and edges for wildlife; establishment of hedges, boundary trees, long grass boundary strips, minimising use of chemicals etc.</p> <p><b>School grounds:</b> sensitive management and creation of new areas of habitat within grounds for the benefit of nature and pupils and linked to net zero and climate adaptation plans.</p> <p><b>Golf courses:</b> Sustainable Turf Management; innovative and diverse management techniques for tee, fairway, green and rough to reduce chemical use and support benefit for wildlife; creation of new areas of wildlife habitat, which link to habitat types beyond their boundaries. See specific measure for golf courses below.</p>	<p>Many types of urban greenspace have the potential to support more nature through additional habitat creation, whether in specific corners or areas which can be dedicated to new habitat, or through additional hedging, grass strips of other habitats that can be created along edges and boundaries.</p> <p>The potential is obviously greatest in larger green spaces, but opportunities should be sought at all scales. Some amenity spaces and open spaces are surfaced with artificial/hard surfaces (e.g. small play areas, artificial pitches) and may not offer any obvious opportunities.</p>	<p>Sussex Nature Partnership: <a href="#">Parks for nature and people: a toolkit for park managers (assessing benefits and potential of parks)</a></p> <p>Future Parks Accelerator: <a href="#">Resource hub</a></p> <p>Caring for God’s Acre – Management of burial grounds for nature: <a href="#">(website)</a></p> <p>Pitchcare: <a href="#">Sustainable turf management</a></p> <p>The Conservation Volunteers: <a href="#">The Urban Handbook.</a></p> <p>Weald to Waves: <a href="#">Gardens and Greenspaces.</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>The Aquifer Project: <a href="#">Wild Park Rainscape, Brighton</a></p> <p>Living Coast: <a href="#">Changing Chalk – Wilding Waterhall</a> (previously a golf course)</p>




Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
U2.1 cont.		<p><b>Foreshore:</b> management to expand/enhance fragile coastal habitats on the site (e.g. coastal vegetated shingle).</p> <p><b>Local Greenspace Designations:</b> some of these may be important for wildlife and could be good sites for community-based projects where landowner is willing (may be parish, district/borough and/or private landowner).</p> <p><b>All:</b> reduction in disturbance to wildlife and damage to fragile areas of habitat where necessary. This may involve a range of visitor management approaches such as ranger/warden activity; protection of specific areas via fencing, zoning etc. Education, awareness raising and interpretation is vital in all greenspaces as part of management for 'nature and people'.</p> <p><i>*Sustainable Turf Management increases the value of playing fields and other areas of managed turf for nature and reduces the impacts of its management on the wider environment (e.g. via reduced water and chemical use etc).</i></p>	Options for new habitat creation should be considered across the 'suite' of spaces owned and managed by a local authority, town or parish council, housing association etc. Some may hold more potential than others based on local engagement, the location of the space in relation to a wider ecological network and/or the opportunity to deliver wider environmental benefits on the site.	



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
U2.2	<p><b>Install features to support species within urban areas (buildings, greenspaces, roads etc). Where possible, create adjacent supporting habitat for the species where this would be helpful (will be species and location specific).</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p> 	<p><b>Roosting/nesting boxes</b> for bats and birds across urban areas, with particular focus on existing nesting and breeding sites for important urban species.</p> <p><b>Mammal ledges and wildlife kerbs</b> to support species movement in urban areas.</p> <p><b>‘Hedgehog’ holes</b> in fences/walls to support their movement.</p> <p><b>Amphibian ‘ladders’</b> for road drainage gully pots.</p> <p><b>Habitat for bees</b> (solitary and bumble) such as bee bricks and adjacent habitat (B-lines and pollinator gardens).</p>	<p>Widespread – but specific techniques may be targeted to support species populations in key locations.</p> <p>See Part 3 of this LNRS for more information.</p>	<p>Brighton &amp; Hove City Council: <a href="#">Guidance note for provision of swift boxes including swift bricks</a> in new development</p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Renaturing Seaford: <a href="#">Save Seaford’s Swifts</a></p>
U2.3	<p><b>Reduce and where possible eliminate chemical fertilisers and pesticide applications on publicly owned land (e.g. farms, golf courses, highways, verges and central reservations, parks and sports grounds).</b></p> <p>Unmapped</p>   	<p>This can be guided through the drafting and implementation of protocols within relevant local and national authorities.</p>	<p>Aspiration is for this to be widespread across all publicly owned land where possible.</p>	



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
U2.4	<p><b>Create and enhance habitats within golf courses and implement nature-friendly management practices, supporting biodiversity on-site and increasing connectivity with habitats beyond their boundaries.</b></p> <p>Mapped</p> 	<p>Many options depending on location and underlying soils/geology. Include innovative and diverse management techniques for tee, fairway, green and rough to reduce chemical use and support benefit for wildlife; habitat enhancement; habitat creation; pond creation; adjusted mowing to leave grassland habitat for wildlife; removal of invasive non-native species; planting of trees/shrubs to support wildlife; features such as bat/bird boxes; reduced use of chemical inputs.</p>	<p>All golf courses noting that these may be in urban, peri-urban or rural settings; create habitat on site which can increase connectivity to habitats beyond the boundaries of the course.</p>	<p>Golf Magic: <a href="#">Make your course a haven for wildlife says RSPB</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies</b></p> <p>South Downs National Park Authority: <a href="#">New initiative puts nature recovery into golf sector</a></p> <p>South Downs National Park Authority: <a href="#">Blog – Brighton golf course is above par for wildlife (Pyecombe Golf Club)</a></p>

Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery:

#### WOODLAND

W3.4 Bring existing urban woodlands into active management to enhance nature conservation, historic environment and access.

#### HEDGEROWS

Hdg1.1 Manage existing hedgerows to improve their structure, longevity and value for biodiversity.

#### WETLANDS & STANDING WATER BODIES

SWB1.1 Enhance and restore existing ponds and pond complexes to improve biodiversity and water quality. This includes restoration of degraded and lost (ghost) ponds, pond complexes, farm ponds, hammer ponds, dew ponds and urban ponds.



Code	Enabling Measures
U2.5 (EM)	Draft and implement 'on-site mowing plans' for existing parks and greenspaces to support improvement of grassland management for species diversity and additional wildlife benefits.
U2.6 (EM)	Adopt planning policies to avoid and reduce impact on species in urban and rural areas and support positive action where possible, e.g. policies to avoid and reduce light impacts on night flying bats, birds and other wildlife; installation of nest boxes for specific species (e.g. swift bricks) etc.
U2.7 (EM)	Promote wildlife friendly gardening across the LNRS area; including habitat creation in gardens (food, shelter and nesting sites), management for water (rain gardens, rainwater harvesting etc), reduced use of chemicals, peat and artificial turf.  <b>Further information and guidance:</b> <i>Weald to Waves: Gardens and greenspaces network</i>
U2.8 (EM)	Build capacity and support community groups/parish councils to create and enhance local green spaces for nature. This may include guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management of local green spaces for nature;</li> <li>• community engagement and communications when introducing new management for nature into parks and accessible greenspaces;</li> <li>• management of contractors/ model contracts for greenspace mowing and management for nature.</li> </ul>
U2.9 (EM)	Produce guidance and provide training for local authority and private sector contractors (on greenspace/grassland management for nature).

### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
West European hedgehog	U2.1, U2.2, U2.4
Stag beetle	U2.1, U2.2, U2.4
Lesser calamint	U2.1

Priority assemblages of species	Measures that would be beneficial
Urban birds assemblage	U2.1, U2.2, U2.3, U2.4
Ponds for amphibians assemblage	U2.1, U2.4



Stag beetle © iStock.com/chillingworths





# Nature Networks:

## Protected sites, wildlife corridors & more wildlife-rich habitat



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Adonis blue © Paul Marten/Sussex Wildlife Trust

All of the actions set about above, across different habitat types and scales, will contribute to nature's recovery in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS area.

Key to achieving the step-change required, will be to work strategically, spatially and with ambition to create a much more effective **network** of 'bigger, better, more and joined-up' wildlife rich spaces.

Several key interventions are needed to make this happen.

- Enhancement of our existing 'protected sites' – the core areas of wildlife habitat that form the basis of our nature network.
- The creation of new wildlife corridors to better connect habitats and protected sites across the landscape. These are required at all scales and can deliver multiple benefits for wildlife, people and the wider environment. Where full corridors are not feasible, smaller areas or 'stepping stones' of habitat will be beneficial and provide vital connectivity for species.
- The creation of more areas of wildlife-rich habitat. These might be areas of a single habitat type (delivered by the measures in the sections above) – or mosaics/mixtures of various habitat types together in one place. Examples include: 'messy' mixture of habitats created by re-introducing natural processes to a site; places where successional/transitional habitats are present and may change through time; projects/schemes delivering multiple habitat types across a site (e.g. mineral restoration projects; habitat banks etc).

## NATURE NETWORKS

# Priority: PS1

## Support the expansion and enhancement of a network of protected sites\*

### What does success in 10 years look like?

- The ecological function and resilience of our protected sites is improving by restoring and expanding their ecological size (creating more wildlife-rich habitat beyond their borders) and better connecting sites through the creation of significant landscape-scale habitat, and new 'stepping stones' and corridors of habitat. On-site improvements<sup>9</sup> are also taking place to increase the condition of quality of habitat in these core areas.

- Our Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves are being brought into management that supports improvements in habitat condition, guided by recommendations from the Local Wildlife Sites Initiative, where these are available.
- The impacts of pressures on protected sites which originate beyond their borders are being reduced through collective action of stakeholders. Whilst responsibility for this mostly lies outside the scope of the LNRS, the LNRS is driving action to create and improve habitat where this can support our protected sites (as noted above). It is also playing a role in improving the environmental quality affecting many of our key sites (particularly our water-dependent sites). For example, 'nature-based solutions' are being used in key areas of our catchments to support water quality and base flows of important wetland and coastal sites downstream.
- The key pressures on our most vulnerable protected sites are being addressed collaboratively and at a landscape-scale, particularly in areas at greatest risk. This is being informed by climate change risk assessments of SSSIs and any Protected Site Strategies that come forward within the timeframe of this LNRS<sup>10</sup>.

\* Protected sites include: 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).

<sup>9</sup> Habitat improvements within nationally designated sites are subject to legal agreements between landowners and Natural England. Measures to enhance habitats within high priority sites (i.e. those with international designations) have been mapped, but these sit alongside the legal requirements associated with these sites and do not override them, replace existing management agreements, or negate the need for any requisite consents or approvals.







<sup>10</sup> Natural England is driving these processes. At time of writing, no Climate Change Risk Assessments of SSSIs were yet complete and there is only one Protected Site Strategy (pilot project) in preparation which is in West Sussex (Kingley Vale). It is anticipated that much more information will therefore be available to inform the review of this LNRS.





**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
PS1.1	<b>Implement on-site management required to improve the ecological condition of Local Wildlife Sites particularly where this is known to be poor/failing.</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	Site/habitat dependent; management should be guided by ecological survey and management recommendations/management plans as prepared via the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative (LWSI) where available.	LWS in poor/failing condition as identified by the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative (LWSI).	Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative: ( <a href="#">website</a> )
PS1.2	<b>Create new areas of habitat on land adjacent to protected sites, thus expanding the total area of connected wildlife habitat in and around protected sites.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	Habitat creation – related to habitats within the protected sites which would benefit from increased contiguous area created beyond boundary.	Particularly important for protected sites which are of small size, in poor condition and/or are isolated from a network of adjacent habitats; strategic areas for SSSIs/NNRs can be agreed through discussion with Natural England, landowners and nature delivery organisations.  Note: it may not be possible to create more habitat immediately adjacent to sites in some cases due to existing land uses (e.g. urban areas).	<a href="#">Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative</a>  Natural England Blog: ‘Protected Site Strategies’ (Once these have been developed for SSSI/NNRs)  <b>Local case study:</b> ‘New Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve (NNR) – details to be announced’
PS1.3	<b>Implement sensitive land use in areas adjacent to existing protected sites to reduce pressures on the sites and their habitats/species.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>  	Adoption of land use practices (e.g. soil management, reduced use of chemicals, grazing regime etc) to reduce pressures on adjacent protected sites.  <i>A list of techniques is not identified here as these will be specific to the location, existing land use and sensitivity of the adjacent protected site.</i>	Farmland where measures could be introduced to support habitat condition/enhancement within sites.  Targeting may involve failing sites where there is farmland around it. SSSI Impact Risk zones may be helpful spatial areas to use for targeting this measure around SSSIs/NNRs.  This approach may form part of a landscape scale approach to increasing condition and resilience of protected sites (see enabling measure PS 1.9 below).	Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative: ( <a href="#">website – for land adjacent to Local Wildlife Sites</a> )  Natural England Blog: ‘Protected Site Strategies’ (Once these have been developed for SSSI/NNRs)



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
PS1.4	<p><b>Create new ‘stepping stones’ of habitat in critical areas of fragmentation between existing protected sites.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	Habitat restoration or creation; techniques will depend on habitats involved.	<p>Reduce fragmentation, promote more connectivity between sites, reduce isolation of some species and facilitate their movement. Location and type of habitat created also informed by underlying soil/ geology and/or existing habitat on the site.</p> <p>Priority given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of heathland stepping stones between key heathland protected sites;</li> <li>• Areas of restored species-rich grassland between key grassland protected sites. New areas of habitat may be chalk, acid or neutral grassland depending on underlying geology and soil and site suitability;</li> <li>• New ‘urban connections’ of wildlife rich habitat between key urban protected sites.</li> </ul>	<p>RSPB blog: <a href="#">Provide stepping stones for wildlife (urban areas)</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Pevensey Levels Wetland Restoration Project</a></p>
PS1.5	<p><b>Create upstream habitats to support the water flows and water quality of downstream protected wetland sites, thus strengthening the future resilience of these sites to the impacts of climate change.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>     	Habitat creation to create nature-based solutions to water quality and flow pressures. Suitable habitat types will be site dependent but may include woodland, wetland, grassland or habitat mosaics.	Locate in areas upstream of the wetland protected sites most vulnerable to low flows, diffuse pollution, high nutrient flows into low nutrient ecosystems.	

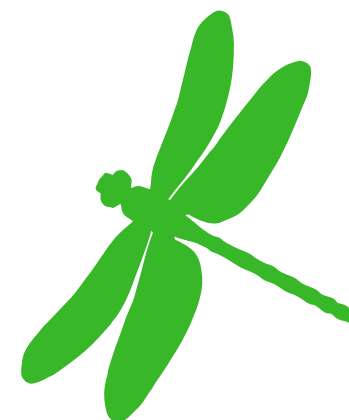


Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
PS1.6	<p><b>Create new ‘alternative accessible greenspaces’ and/or recreational opportunities outside protected sites to relieve visitor pressure on these sites particularly where this is needed to protect and enhance habitats and/or species populations within these sites.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p>  	<p>Habitat creation; creation of additional accessible green spaces.</p> <p>This should be delivered/ designed to also provide additional habitat (which is more resilient to visitor pressure/ disturbance) thus creating habitat as well as helping to draw visitor pressure away from fragile sites.</p>	<p>Locate in areas where the new greenspace will effectively draw visitors away from the protected site (for residential use, it may therefore need to be close to residents to make it attractive to them rather than closer to the protected site).</p>	<p>Ashdown Forest: <a href="#">Creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) to protect fragile heathland of the Ashdown Forest from visitor pressure</a></p>

### Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

This priority will overlap extensively with other measures for specific habitats that are required within and around protected sites to support their improvement or expansion. In particular see the following sections: [Coastal Habitats](#); [Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub](#); [Species rich-grassland](#); [Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops](#); [Rivers, Streams & Aquifers](#); [Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies](#).

See also other measures within this section e.g. those relating to creation and enhancement of wildlife corridors and creation of new areas of wildlife-rich habitat.



Code	Enabling Measures
<b>PS1.7 (EM)</b>	<p>Identify most urgent upstream invasive species issues for wetland protected sites and agree approach to management/control at sub-catchment level.</p> <p><i>Strategy in place for Ouse and Adur; develop similar strategy for other catchments.</i></p>
<b>PS1.8 (EM)</b>	<p>Identify vulnerability of protected sites to climate change and adaptation measures required in response. Build these into future Protected Site Strategies and next LNRS.</p>
<b>PS1.9 (EM)</b>	<p>Develop a landscape scale recovery approach for targeted protected sites, where this large-scale approach is required to improve condition of the sites and increase their resilience.</p> <p><i>This would involve landowners and other delivery organisations identifying actions they can deliver at scale to help reduce pressures on a protected site and support recovery of habitats and species in and around the site.</i></p> <p>Development of a Protected Site Strategy could form part of this.</p>

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>PS1.10 (EM)</b>	<p>Continue to survey and provide management recommendations for Local Wildlife Sites via the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative (LWSI); identify a process for identification and designation of new LWS where this would be appropriate. Support an adequately funded LWSI to enable this to happen.</p>
<b>PS1.11 (EM)</b>	<p>Support local groups to prepare/deliver climate adaptation action plans for their areas where these will support resilience of protected sites at most risk from the impacts of climate change.</p>



📷 The Cockshut Stream Restoration Project has improved flood management and carbon storage at the site near Lewes, while also allowing the stream to flow naturally.

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## NATURE NETWORKS

**Priority: Cor1****Enable landscape 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?**

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Farmer and landowner-led landscape scale nature recovery initiatives (such as the [Weald to Waves Corridor](#), the creation of a new National Nature Reserve in East Sussex (details to be announced), farm cluster initiatives and other landscape scale approaches) have been enabled and supported and are delivering joined-up nature-recovery projects and actions on the ground. These are playing a vital role in supporting nature, improving habitat connectivity, enhancing landscape character and delivering wider environmental benefits across the LNRS area.

- Publicly owned areas of land are part of large-scale nature recovery initiatives, working with private landowners to deliver multiple benefits for nature and people.
- 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 and improve habitat connectivity.
- Where Landscape Recovery bids have been developed between farmers, landowners and other partners but have been unsuccessful in receiving funding (e.g. Brighton-Lewes Downs, Ashdown Forest), Arms-Length Bodies, Protected Landscapes, conservation organisations and others continue to support the development of these initiatives towards a funding solution.
- District-scale approaches, where local government and other organisations can play a role in supporting and enabling nature recovery at a larger scale are emerging (such as High Weald Deer Project) and are playing an important role in coordinating delivery at a sub-county scale.

**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	Further info/guidance
<b>Cor1</b>	This is an enabling priority and will be delivered on the ground through implementation of a range of other core measures (set out in other sections) and the enabling measures listed below that will be vital to encouraging and supporting a collaborative approach to delivery.	<b>Local case study examples:</b> <a href="#">Weald to Waves</a> – creation of a 100mile corridor for nature across Sussex <a href="#">Larger Ashdown Landscape Recovery Project</a>

### Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

No specific measures listed. Rather, this priority will overlap extensively with other measures for specific habitats that are required within landscape scale corridors and initiatives.

In particular, see the following sections: **Coastal Habitats; Farmed Landscape & Soils; Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub; Species rich-grassland; Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops; Rivers, Streams & Aquifers; Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies.**

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>Cor1.1 (EM)</b>	Beyond preparation of the LNRS, continue to identify target areas for collaborative action and funding (based on existing bids, farm clusters, district scale approaches, landowner interest). Link to specific habitat or species requirements at landscape scale and delivery of wider environmental benefits.
<b>Cor1.2 (EM)</b>	Provide facilitation and coordinated advice for landowners in these target areas. <i>This was identified as a priority enabling measure by stakeholders during the LNRS preparation.</i>
<b>Cor1.3 (EM)</b>	Collate local data being generated by landscape-scale projects to identify impact, progress and learning.
<b>Cor1.4 (EM)</b>	Support smarter use/sharing of skills, equipment/machinery and volunteers across nature-delivery sector to support these initiatives.



## NATURE NETWORKS

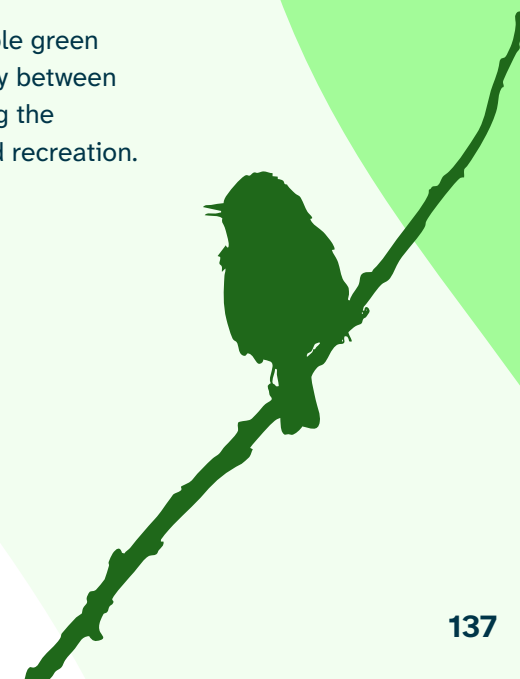
**Priority: Cor2**

**Safeguard and enhance the value of existing green and blue corridors for nature and create new corridors and stepping stones of habitat where this will improve connectivity between habitats 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 via a range of mechanisms including the planning system, best practice management and landowner commitment and action.
- Opportunities are being taken to create and enhance habitats along existing corridors thus enhancing their ecological function and resilience, particularly where they are providing species with a vital movement corridor.
  - 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 when opportunity arises. 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.






**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Cor2.1	<p><b>Enhance existing essential corridors used by priority species and those species especially vulnerable to climate change, creating and improving habitat within the corridor.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Sympathetic management of existing habitat and new habitat creation; delivered through land-owner collaboration along corridor length to retain/enhance required habitat and support species recovery.</p>	<p>Corridors of specific importance for key species where data is available to inform this.</p> <p>Data on species movement and existing habitat connectivity data is vital to identify key corridors for enhancement. Work such as that being done by <a href="#">Weald to Waves to model 'habitat connectivity'</a> will be helpful in this.</p>	
Cor2.2	<p><b>Create new wildlife corridors to reduce habitat fragmentation, support specific species and (where possible) deliver wider environmental benefits and public access.</b></p> <p><i>(District/sub-county scale)</i></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p> 	<p>Creation and enhancement of habitats suitable for the location; design and locate where possible to deliver other environmental benefits required in that location.</p> <p>May be via creation of corridors or stepping stones of habitat.</p>	<p>Locate where these would deliver greater connectivity linkages between habitats and protected sites.</p> <p>Opportunities should be taken to create these corridors in urban/peri-urban areas as a way of better connecting urban and rural areas; opportunities should also be taken within the planning and delivery of new urban extensions to ensure the creation of linked networks of green/open spaces and corridors which provide benefits for nature and people.</p> <p>These may be identified in local plans and Green Infrastructure strategies by district/unitary councils or through initiatives designed at district scale to support nature's recovery.</p>	



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Cor2.3	<p><b>Create and enhance community-scale green/blue corridors (at neighbourhood/parish or community level) through coordinated activity at a local scale.</b></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>This can include gardens/verges, permeable boundaries (e.g. hedges or holes in fences), creation of new habitat in a local area to create linkages; on-going management of these corridors to maintain and enhance value for wildlife.</p>	<p>Within areas identified locally as potential local corridors (e.g. by parish councils, local community groups and within neighbourhood plans); a measure intended to be driven by local groups and parish councils.</p>	<p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust: <a href="#">Deneway's Wild Future</a> (Brighton &amp; Hove)</p> <p>Froglife: <a href="#">Discovering Dewponds Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridors</a> (Moulescoomb &amp; Bevendean, Coldean and Hollingbury and Hollingdean, Brighton &amp; Hove)</p>



**Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will therefore contribute to its delivery. These include:**

#### URBAN NATURE

U1.2 Retrofit small/micro areas of habitat within the built/public realm of towns and cities, particularly in areas of 'nature deficit' and where it will contribute to climate adaptation and provide enhanced connectivity between existing green spaces.

U1.3 'Re-naturalise' stretches of urban rivers/streams to support biodiversity and natural processes, where this is feasible and aligns with flood risk approaches. Provide access along these stretches where possible to better connect people to urban rivers/streams.

U2.1 Increase the area of habitat created and managed for nature within existing green spaces, such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments, golf courses, public gardens, shared spaces (flats/housing association land), hospitals, prisons etc.

#### NATURE NETWORKS

PS1.4 Create new 'stepping stones' of habitat in critical areas of fragmentation between existing protected sites.

Measures within priority **Cor3** are also relevant as these relate to enhancement of existing transport, walking and cycling corridors in particular (e.g. verges). Measures seeking to expand and connect **specific habitat types** or support specific **species** may also help to enhance existing corridors or create new ones. See sections: [Coastal Habitats](#); [Farmed Landscape & Soils](#); [Woodland](#); [Hedgerows & Scrub](#); [Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops](#); [Freshwater](#); [Urban Nature](#).

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>Cor2.4 (EM)</b>	Adopt planning policies to create and connect green and blue corridors via development/planning; where possible, secure protection of important green/blue corridors for wildlife within local planning policy (e.g. Chichester District Council).
<b>Cor2.5 (EM)</b>	Develop guidance and support for parish councils, community groups and residents to support creation of local/ community scale corridors.

#### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Hazel dormouse	Cor2.1, Cor2.2
Pine marten	Cor2.1, Cor2.2
West European hedgehog	Cor2.1, Cor2.2, Cor2.3
Bechstein's bat	Cor2.1, Cor2.2
Grey long-eared bat	Cor2.1, Cor2.2





## NATURE NETWORKS

**Priority: Cor3****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. The significant policy change and cross-departmental cooperation required within local government and transport authorities to make this happen is taking place.
- A greater number of our road verges are being managed to improve biodiversity; all of our 'notable' and designated verges in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are being monitored and are 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 the East Sussex and Brighton Hove LNRS area, are being enhanced as natural corridors, with suitable habitat management and creation to support their wildlife rich banks, verges, hedges and trees.







© Ben Kimpton

- Abandoned sunken lanes are being protected from anti-social activity such as dumping, fly-tipping, and loss through appropriation into neighbouring properties.
- Bridleways, cycle paths, 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 Trails found in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove (i.e. South Downs Way and the King Charles III England Coastal Path).



**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Cor3.1	<b>Create strategic road/rail crossings for wildlife.</b> <b>Unmapped</b> 	Green bridges/underpasses and other features to assist wildlife crossing.	At key locations where infrastructure severs key ecological networks (e.g. A23, A24, A27). <i>Note: measure specifically for Highways England and Network Rail to deliver.</i> <i>No green bridge projects yet in East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove but examples elsewhere in England.</i>	Construction Management. <a href="#">Blog – National Highways unveils new green bridges designs</a> BBC Countryfile. <a href="#">A417 Missing Link project in Gloucestershire</a>
Cor3.2	<b>Create and enhance habitats along major road corridors (including roundabouts) and the railway network (trackside vegetation and stations) as part of sustainable management of transport corridors.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>    	Habitat creation; improved verge management along highway corridors e.g. development of a more nuanced verge cutting regime that enables cuttings to be removed (e.g. on verges currently declining due to a cut-and-leave regime).	Corridors/verges along <b>major</b> road network and railway network; areas identified by Highways authorities and network rail as opportunities for habitat creation.	Wildlife Trusts: <a href="#">National Highways and Wildlife Trusts Networks for nature programme.</a>
Cor3.3	<b>Protect from damage/loss and enhance habitats along designated verges and other recognised verges of high value for wildlife.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	Implementing appropriate cutting regimes, avoiding smothering with chip piles or grass cuttings and ditch dredging and refraining from planting non-native species; no use of pesticides and herbicides etc.	All designated verges and identified verges of high wildlife quality. <a href="#">East Sussex County Council</a> has identified two types of designated verges (Wildlife Verges and Meadow Verges). Brighton & Hove City Council have also identified a number of verges valued for nature and being managed to enhance this: <a href="#">Wilder Verges</a> .	High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Roadside verges</a> and <a href="#">Managing roadside verges for biodiversity – a new approach</a> Plantlife: <a href="#">Road Verges</a> and <a href="#">The Good Verge Guide 2021</a> <b>Local case study example.</b> Brighton & Hove City Council: <a href="#">Wilder Verges Project</a> Renaturing Seaford: <a href="#">wilder verges</a>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Cor3.4	<b>Enhance habitats along historic routeways within the East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove LNRS area to protect and enhance their value for wildlife, landscape and heritage.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>  	Enhance the condition of the complex mosaic of small-scale habitats along routeways; suitable mowing regimes to protect fragile verge habitats; sympathetic tree management; no use of pesticides/herbicides on verges particularly where these are important for biodiversity.	All identified historic routeways e.g. drove routes, byways, sunken lanes, rural lanes. Within the High Weald National Landscape, historic routeways are a noted priority for protection and enhancement.	High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Routeways</a> and <a href="#">High Weald Management Plan</a> (section on routeways – p28)
Cor3.5	<b>Enhance verges of local community interest for wildlife to improve their value for nature.</b> <b>Unmapped</b>  	This can include creation of new species – rich pockets of grassland along verges to support pollinators (e.g. Bee Banks/ Brighton Wilder Verges); appropriate cut-and-collect regime; no use of pesticides/herbicides etc.	Verges identified by local communities/parishes or in neighbourhood plans as of value and interest for wildlife locally or those where communities are keen to support verge management for wildlife.	High Weald National Landscape: <a href="#">Roadside verges</a>  Plantlife: <a href="#">Managing grassland road verges</a>



Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
Cor3.6	<p><b>Create and enhance habitats along ‘active travel’ corridors e.g. footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways and national trail networks.</b></p> <p><b>Mapped</b></p>  	<p>Habitat creation and enhancement, suitable for the location.</p> <p>This may require more joined up approach to investment in these corridors with environmental improvements integrated into workplans for footpaths, trails and local authority Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans where possible.</p>	<p>Could be applied along many active transport corridors particularly off-road sections which may hold more opportunity for habitat creation/enhancement alongside the route; may include specific targeted work where this will link to adjacent habitat of value or support specific species.</p> <p>If targeted to lengths of these corridors where there is little existing habitat, these works could help support habitat connectivity and creation of a more complete ‘green corridor’ for users.</p> <p>Specific opportunities include National trails (which have resources to support habitat creation along their routes), long distance cycle routes (such as <a href="#">Avenue Verte</a> where there is ambition to enhance the route and create more offroad sections) and routes flagged for enhancement within local authority Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), where habitat creation could form part of the approach.</p>	<p>National Trails: <a href="#">Improving habitats alongside National Trails</a></p> <p>Sustrans (blog). <a href="#">How we are making space for nature on the National Cycle Network</a></p> <p>East Sussex County Council: <a href="#">Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</a></p> <p>Brighton &amp; Hove CC: <a href="#">Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Wealden District Council: <a href="#">Improvements to Cuckoo Trail</a></p> <p>Hastings Borough Council: <a href="#">Public Realm and Green Connections proposal</a></p>



**Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will therefore contribute to its delivery. These include:**

#### URBAN NATURE

U1.2 Retrofit small/micro areas of habitat within the **built/public realm** of towns and cities, particularly in areas of ‘nature deficit’ and where it will contribute to climate adaptation and provide enhanced connectivity between existing green spaces.

U1.3 ‘Re-naturalise’ stretches of urban rivers/streams to support biodiversity and natural processes, where this is feasible and aligns with flood risk approaches. Provide access along these stretches where possible to better connect people to urban rivers/streams.

U2.1 Increase the area of habitat created and managed for nature within existing green spaces, such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments, golf courses, public gardens, shared spaces (flats/housing association land), hospitals, prisons etc.

#### NATURE NETWORKS

PS 1.4 Create new ‘stepping stones’ of habitat in critical areas of fragmentation between existing protected sites.

The measures within **Cor2** may also be relevant and overlap if they are implemented within a transport corridor. Measures seeking to expand and connect **specific habitat types** or support specific **species** may also help to enhance existing transport corridors. See sections: [Coastal Habitats](#); [Farmed Landscape & Soils](#); [Woodland, Hedgerows & Scrub](#); [Heathland](#); [Freshwater](#); [Urban Nature](#).

Code	Enabling Measures
<b>Cor3.7 (EM)</b>	Produce and disseminate guidance on different types of verge management for contractors; review implementation and effectiveness in maintaining/enhancing verge habitats.
<b>Cor3.8 (EM)</b>	Establish mowing/collection equipment sharing and purchase schemes for local authorities/ parish councils/ community groups where required.
<b>Cor3.9 (EM)</b>	Training on traditional skills for community groups and contractors: e.g. grassland/verge management, hedge laying etc.

#### Priority species that would benefit from these measures

Priority species	Measures that would be beneficial
Hazel dormouse	Cor3.1, Cor3.2, Cor3.4, Cor3.6
Pine marten	Cor3.1, Cor3.2, Cor3.4, Cor3.6
West European hedgehog	Cor3.1, Cor3.2, Cor3.3, Cor3.4, Cor3.5, Cor3.6
Grey long-eared bat	Cor3.4
Glow-worm	Cor3.3
Spiked rampion	Cor3.3, Cor3.4

## NATURE NETWORKS

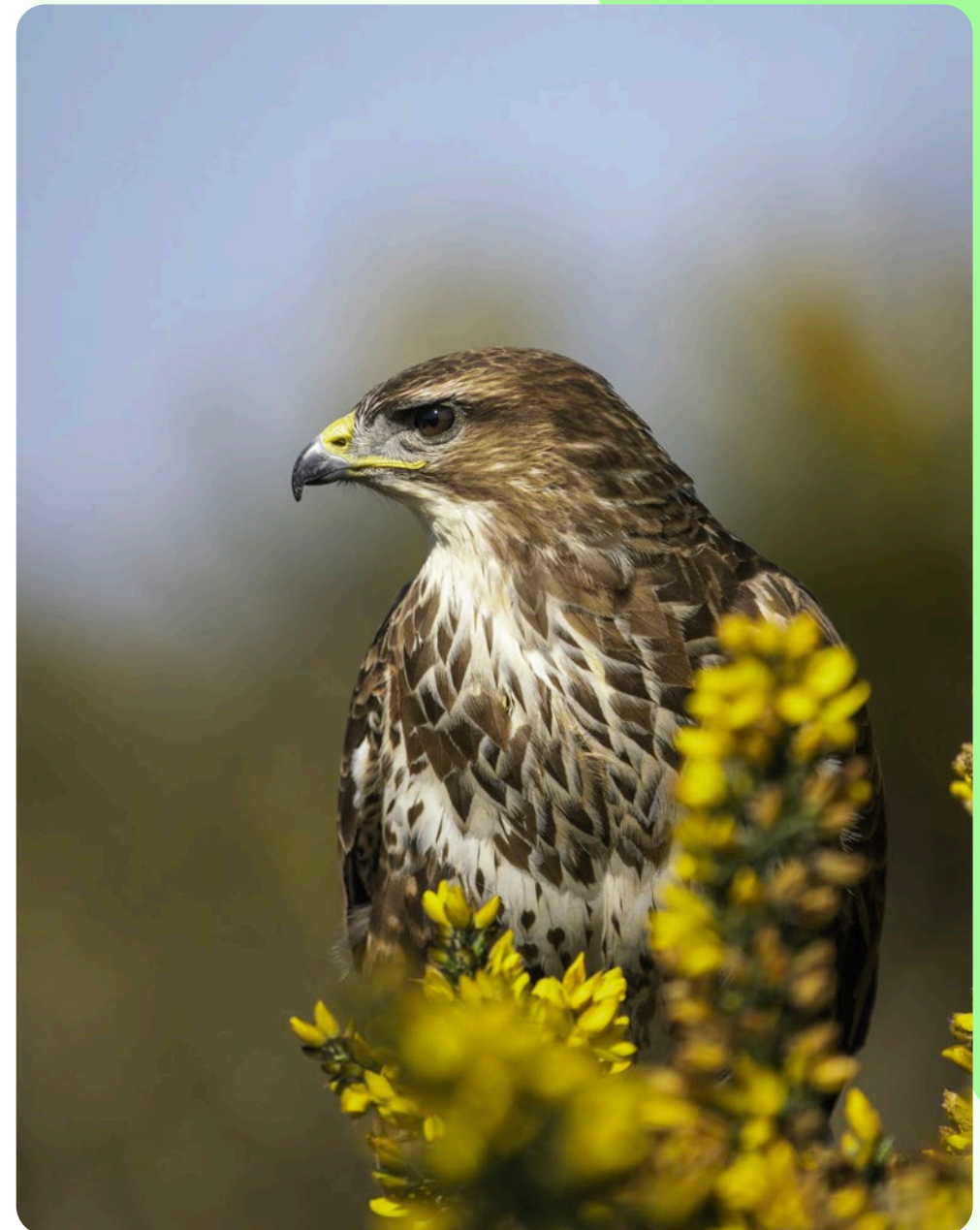
### Priority: WRH1

**Create new areas of wildlife-rich habitats (mosaics and mixed habitats) to complement those created under habitat-specific priorities above**

**What does success in 10 years look like?**

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- Projects and schemes at a range of scales (from local to more ambitious, larger scale projects) are creating areas of new wildlife habitat made up of a mixture/mosaic of habitat types suitable for the site.
- These may be in strategically important locations and delivered through partnership working, or in areas where opportunity arises for habitat creation on private land or publicly owned land.
- Projects include opportunities to restore ex-mineral sites to create areas of valuable habitat, habitat banks and other sites with long-term commitment to the creation and management of habitat.



Common buzzard © iStock.com/Carl mckie





**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
WRH1.1	<b>Restore existing ex-mineral sites to create new areas of high-quality habitats suitable for the site.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	Habitat creation and on-going maintenance as an integral part of the plans for site restoration.	Sites identified by minerals authority as suitable for restoration to habitat with particular focus on those identified for restoration projects and funding.	<a href="#">Nature after Minerals</a>
WRH1.2	<b>Establish habitat banks in strategically beneficial locations ensuring long-term commitment to the creation of high-quality habitats.</b> <b>Mapped</b> 	Formal habitat bank projects to deliver habitat creation for funding via the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) process.	Strategically beneficial locations include sites within proposed habitat corridors, buffers to protected sites and BOAs and/or in areas where they will deliver wider environmental benefits and/or access to nature.	<b>Local case study example.</b> A number of habitat banks are being created within East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Those officially registered with Natural England can be viewed on the <a href="https://www.gov.uk">gov.uk</a> website.
WRH1.3	<b>Deliver habitat creation and enhancement projects involving multiple habitats/ habitat mosaics.</b> <b>Mapped</b>  <i>This is designed to capture those projects which cannot be captured under habitat specific measures above.</i>	Delivery of habitat enhancement and/or creation projects involving multiple habitats on the site.	Areas brought forward for projects. Preferably in locations of strategic benefit for nature’s recovery (e.g. within proposed habitat corridors, buffers to protected sites, BOAs) and/or in areas where they will deliver wider environmental benefits and/or access to nature.	

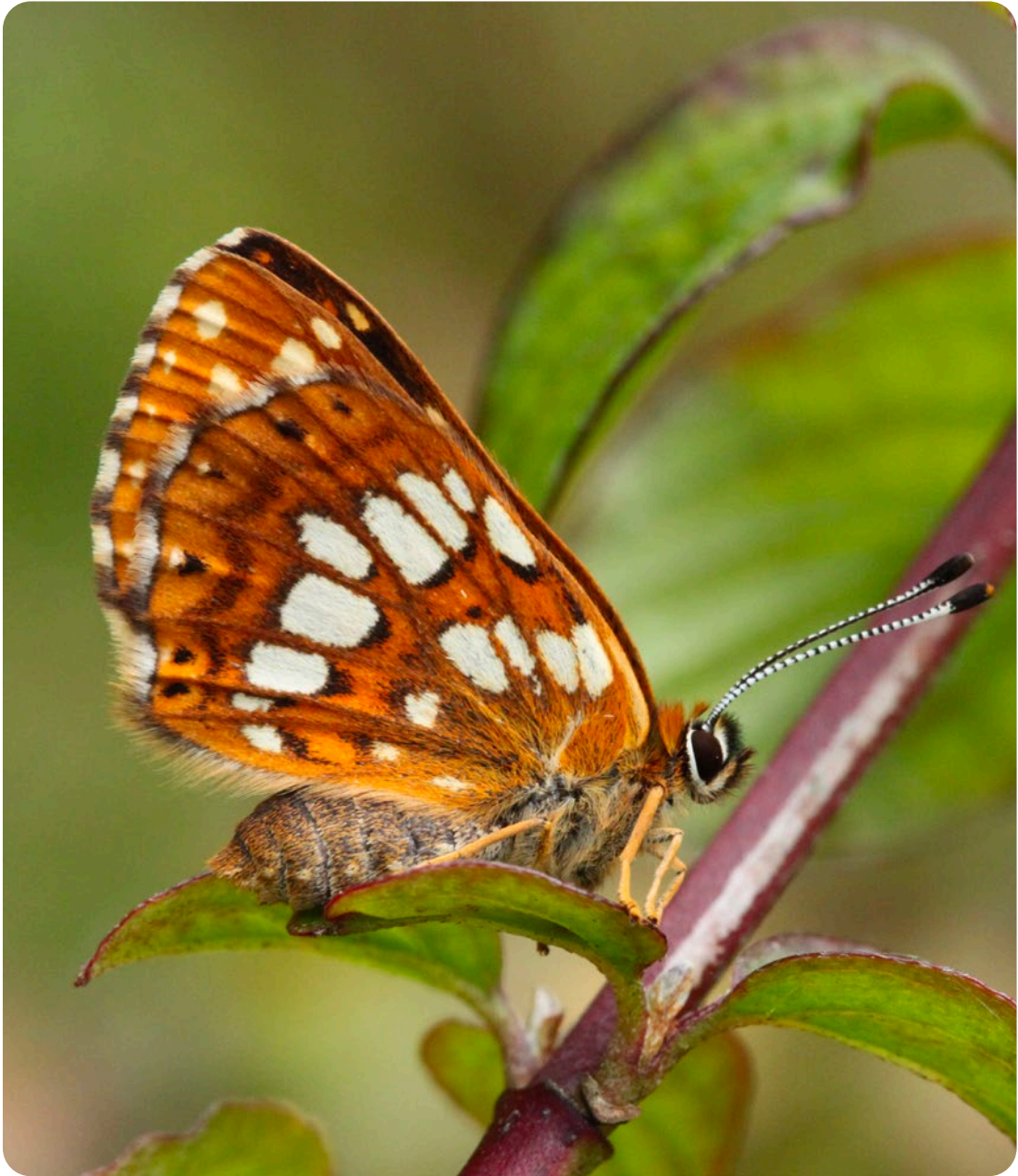
Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will therefore contribute to its delivery. These include:

**NATURE NETWORKS**

PS1.4 Create new ‘stepping stones’ of habitat in critical areas of fragmentation between existing protected sites.

Many of the measures in the other sections above will contribute directly to enhancement and creation of Nature Networks. See measures in all other sections for specific habitats of interest.

Code	Enabling Measures
WRH1.4 (EM)	Create a Sussex-wide dataset/mapping platform to collate information on nature recovery projects being implemented across stakeholder groups. This will contribute to monitoring nature recovery activity and progress across the West Sussex and East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategies.



📷 Duke of burgundy butterfly © Ben Rainbow







# Nature, Health & Wellbeing



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## NATURE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**Priority: NH1****Create new areas of natural greenspace designed and located to deliver benefits for health and wellbeing while enhancing biodiversity**

This priority complements the general presumption under U1.1 that creation of new green spaces will be targeted in areas where local people are currently under-served in relation to 'nature nearby' and where there is known health and income inequality – but is more specific and relates to bespoke creation and design of natural greenspaces to deliver health benefits.

**What does success in 10 years look like?**


- This 'asset-based' approach is creating places, specifically designed to enhance biodiversity alongside accessibility and delivery of benefits for health and wellbeing. They are located and designed using health-information and best practice for the design of 'healthy places'. This includes understanding how to design places to support health in the face of a changing climate.
- Places are also being designed to support nature but also to anticipate the impacts of climate change on health, using nature as part of the solution (e.g. tree planting to provide urban cooling).

- 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. Funding for creation of these new health 'assets' thus flows from across sectors and via partnership working.
- New development, particularly large urban extensions, demonstrates good practice in the provision of greenspace which will support health and wellbeing of residents.
- Green and blue spaces, particularly in urban areas, are being valued and supported 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.
- 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 East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are receiving benefits for their health and wellbeing.



**Core Measures** – Measures identifying the ‘action on the ground’ required to deliver this priority:

*Note: these are in addition to measures within U1 and U2 which will increase the value of green spaces for nature and people.*

Code	Measures	How	Where	Further info/guidance
NH1.1	<p><b>Create new areas of natural greenspace designed specifically to deliver health and wellbeing benefits.</b></p> <p><i>Examples include therapeutic gardens and green spaces in hospitals, clinics, schools, community gardens, areas for community food growing, parks etc.</i></p> <p><b>Unmapped</b></p> 	<p>Creation and enhancement of greenspaces specifically designed to deliver benefits to mental and physical health; within these spaces, provision of infrastructure such as accessible pathways, quiet spaces etc to enhance accessibility and provide a range of health benefits.</p>	<p>These are in addition to general increases in quality of existing green spaces and creation of new greenspaces, which can be designed to deliver multiple benefits including health and wellbeing.</p> <p>These are areas designed specifically to deliver benefits to health and may be linked to green social prescribing activities or the needs of specific users of these spaces. e.g. hospitals, surgeries, schools, community gardens etc.</p>	<p>The Living Coast: <a href="#">Things to do: health and wellbeing</a></p> <p>Lambeth GP Food Coop: <a href="#">Community led health cooperative working with NHS partners</a></p> <p>Local Government Association: <a href="#">How the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington are using Green Spaces to deliver better health outcomes for residents</a></p> <p>Islington Council: <a href="#">Appendix 1 – Parks for Health Strategy Document.pdf (islington.gov.uk)</a></p> <p><b>Local case studies:</b></p> <p>Sussex Nature Partnership: <a href="#">Parks and greenspaces project – Health Park Audits</a></p> <p>Surrey and Sussex Health Care NHS Trust: <a href="#">New woodland project</a></p>

Other core measures overlap directly with this priority and will contribute to its delivery.

As noted above, this complements measures within Urban Nature, designed more broadly to create and/or enhance more natural accessible greenspace in urban environments where these can deliver multiple benefits for people and nature.

URBAN NATURE

U1.1 Create new accessible natural greenspaces in urban areas, designed and located to deliver multiple benefits for people and nature.

U2.1 Increase the area of habitat created and managed for nature within **existing** green spaces, such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments, golf courses, public gardens, shared spaces (flats/housing association land), hospitals, prisons etc.



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Code	Enabling Measures
NH1.2 (EM)	Produce /disseminate guidance and examples of best practice to support design and management of green spaces for nature and health.
NH1.3 (EM)	Support cross sectoral work to increase access to nature for health and wellbeing benefits via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• access to ‘nature in everyday life’</li><li>• nature-based health promotion</li><li>• green care.</li></ul> <b>Further information and guidance:</b> Sussex Nature Partnership (2024). Nature and Health: shared outcomes for a collaborative approach in Sussex.
NH1.4 (EM)	Where needed (and where possible), negotiate new access arrangements to existing nature-rich spaces particularly in areas of low provision and where it may be difficult to establish new public parks/greenspaces.





# Section 5.

## Local Habitat Map

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The intention of this map is to identify areas already important for biodiversity within the LNRS area and those areas that could become important, if the measures within the LNRS are implemented in a targeted way.

The Local Habitat Map has three, inter-related parts:

- A map of 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' (APIB map);
- A map identifying where measures can best be delivered (Measures map);
- A map of 'Areas that could become of importance for biodiversity' (ACIB map).

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## 5.1 Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)

Statutory guidance strictly defines what should be included in the APIB as the following:

- All national conservation sites;
- All local nature reserves;
- All existing local wildlife sites and areas of irreplaceable habitat.

The statutory guidance is clear that Responsible Authorities should not map any other areas as being of particular importance for biodiversity. This is not to suggest that other areas are not important, but to help establish a nationally consistent baseline and to align well with local planning policy and avoid duplicating with the identification of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

**Our APIB covers 42,518 ha which is 23.5% of the LNRS area.**

We have 13,024ha of priority habitats that lie outside of the APIB as they are not formally designated as protected sites. This equates to 7.2% of the LNRS area. Some of this may comprise irreplaceable habitat as we do not know its full extent. In recognition of this

richness of biodiversity, and to ensure that our first port of call is to look after what we have and to make it better, many of our measures relate to enhancing the condition of our priority habitats.

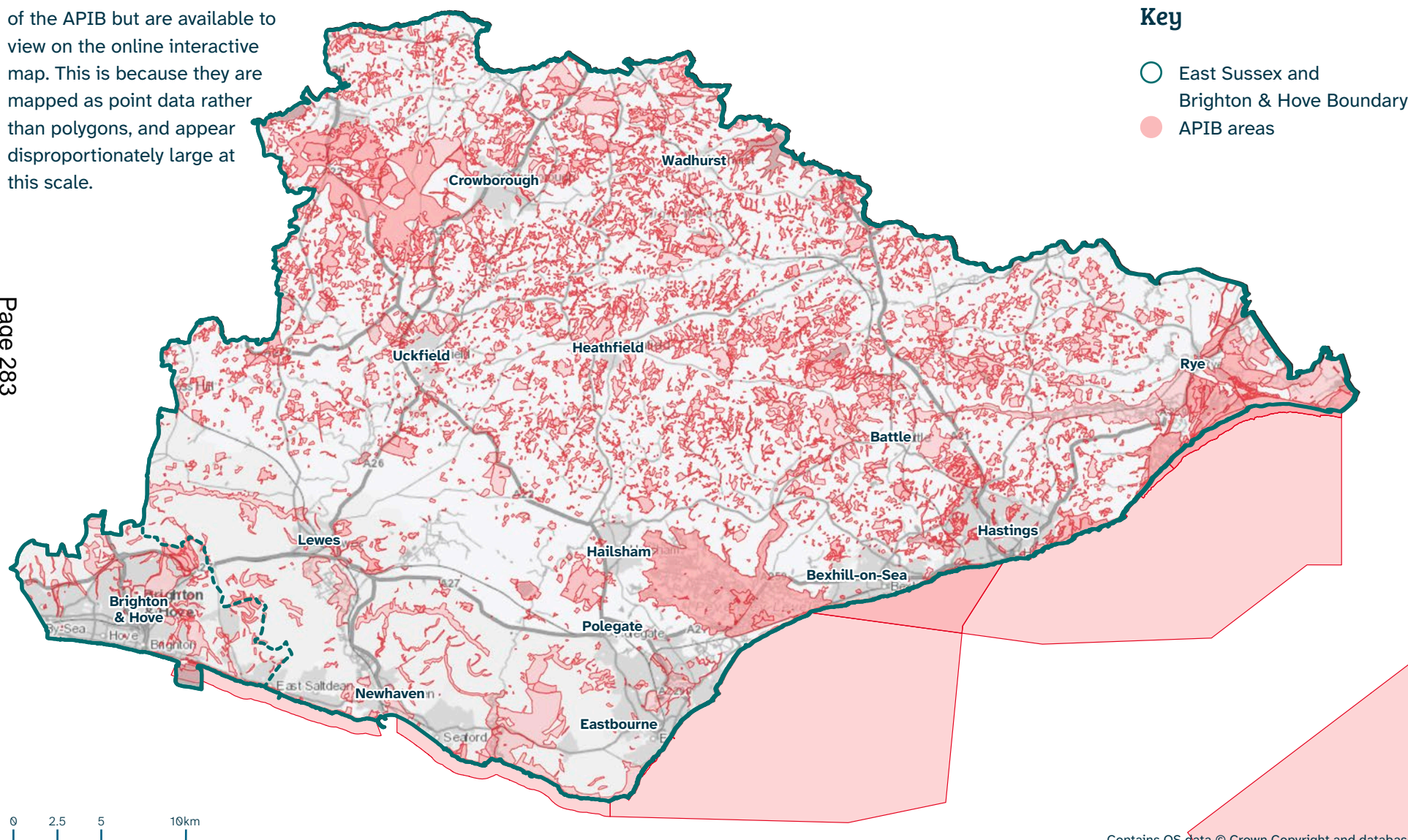
Much of our LNRS area is also already under positive management for wildlife, both inside and outside protected sites, either through its ownership and management by environmental organisations such as the National Trust (1,843ha), RSPB (284ha), Sussex Wildlife Trust (1,120ha) or the Woodland Trust (484ha), or through Environmental Stewardship agreements (22,189ha). East Sussex County Council has also designated 47ha as Wildlife Verges, with one of these supporting more than 85% of the UK population of the nationally rare spiked rampion.





## Map 1. Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

Ancient and veteran trees are not shown on this static version of the APIB but are available to view on the online interactive map. This is because they are mapped as point data rather than polygons, and appear disproportionately large at this scale.





## 5.2 The Measures Map

The Statement of Biodiversity Priorities sets out the measures (actions) that if carried out can help to contribute to achievement of the priorities for the LNRS. The Measures Map identifies the **locations where these could be carried out to deliver the greatest benefit to biodiversity and/or the wider environment**, based on stakeholder judgement and best available datasets. Creating this map involved identifying where measures could help to create 'bigger, better, more and joined-up' areas of wildlife-rich habitat and/or help to act as nature-based solutions to issues such as flood risk reduction, improving water quality and so on.

The Priorities & Measures tables in the section above indicate whether a measure is mapped or not.

A **Mapped Measure** is a measure that has been mapped in a located area.

A **Non-Mapped Measure** is a measure that has not been mapped – and this may be for several reasons:

- The measure may be beneficial across the whole LNRS area (so therefore it is not possible to target it to where it would make the most difference); Examples include deer management and measures to enhance wildlife habitat on farmed land;
- The measure is not about direct action for habitat creation/enhancement activity;
- There is insufficient data to map the measure (or mapping cannot be done to a level of accuracy or reliability that is useful or meaningful).

**Just over 40% of measures for this LNRS have been mapped.**

**Areas on the measures map cover 63,102ha, which is 34.9% of the LNRS land area.**

Statutory guidance specifies that areas included within the measures map are considered strategically significant areas and are eligible for biodiversity net gain uplift (via the BNG metric).

All measures included within the LNRS are important in helping to achieve the stated ambitions and priorities within the document. Just because a measure is not mapped does not mean that it is less important as part of the overall strategy for nature's recovery. Where measures are mapped, there will be areas of the map they do not cover. However, there may still be very specific local opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation that are known to landowners and others in these areas. In these cases, it is hoped that the principles, priorities and measures can guide action.

The process of mapping measures included iterative analysis and feedback, using a range of datasets to inform priority locations for potential measures to be carried out. The methodology for mapping each measure is described in Part 4.

The Measures Map is colour coded and for ease of reference is presented to identify measures for each main habitat group, before these are presented as an overall measures map.

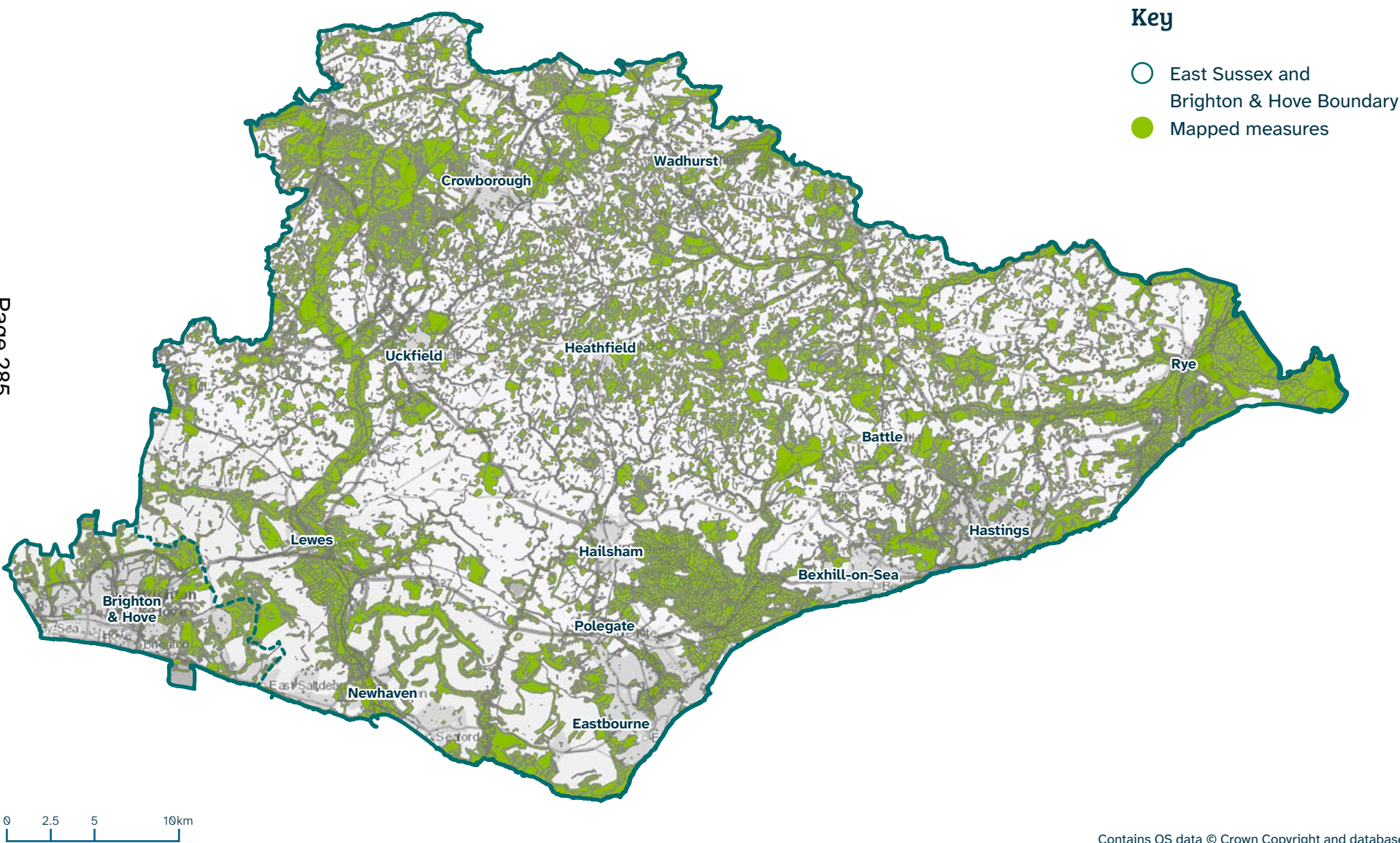
The various habitat layers of the Measures Map are best viewed on the interactive online map.

**Note:** some of these measures overlap, which simply means that there may be more than one action on the ground in these areas which would confer benefit for biodiversity and/or deliver wider environmental benefits. These overlaps have been checked carefully to identify any measures which should have priority over others or to remove those that may conflict with others or be better implemented elsewhere. As such, we believe that the overlaps that remain provide landowners with the flexibility to choose those which best fit with other plans for their land or surrounding habitats.

**Disclaimer:** *The Measures Map is a guide and show suggested measures for nature's recovery in an area. It is important to undertake site specific investigations and seek expert advice and the necessary permissions before starting work on the ground. The Measures Map should not be treated as definitive but as a tool to help plan and coordinate action for nature's recovery.*



Map 2. All Mapped Measures



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**Note: Measures mapped to land included on the APIB**

Some of these measures are mapped onto land that appears on the APIB and as such indicate action that could be taken to deliver benefit for biodiversity and/or the wider environment on areas already identified as of particular importance for biodiversity. This is important for Local Wildlife Sites and areas of irreplaceable habitat which are not covered by statutory protections and management agreements (such as exist for SSSIs and NNRs) and is intended to help target action in these sites and habitats where it may be needed most.

Defra guidance for the preparation of an LNRS advises that no measures should be mapped onto 'national conservation sites' (SSSIs, SACs/SPAs, NNRs, Ramsar Sites) unless there is no duplication or conflict with the management agreement for each site. As there are 65 SSSIs alone in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, it was not possible to check the Measures Map against each management agreement separately. However, one of our key principles is to look after what we have and make it better, and the potential measures mapping has been designed to deliver a

coherent network for nature recovery across the Strategy area. As such, some of our measures lie within national conservation sites and present future considerations for these sites. We have agreed with Natural England that measures to **enhance habitats** (rather than for habitat creation) can be mapped within high priority sites, e.g. those with international designations. These measures sit alongside the legal requirements associated with these sites and do not override them or replace existing management associated with the designation, nor do they negate the need for any requisite consents or approvals. It is essential that the existing designated features and the legal processes and guidance are checked and followed prior to delivery of the suggested measure. How potential measures may be applied to national conservation sites in the future will be part of an ongoing point of discussion during the Strategy's delivery, monitoring and review process.

Measures which are mapped on land not included in the APIB are captured on the third part of the Local Habitat Map, the ACIB (Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity) – see over.





## 5.3 Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)

Measures that are mapped onto land **outside the APIB** are together identified on the third map within the Local Habitat Map – the map of **Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)**. In essence, the ACIB identifies where and how habitats can be enhanced or created to create a more joined-up and resilient ecological network of habitats between and around the core sites and irreplaceable habitats mapped on the APIB. The ACIB does not overlap with the APIB.

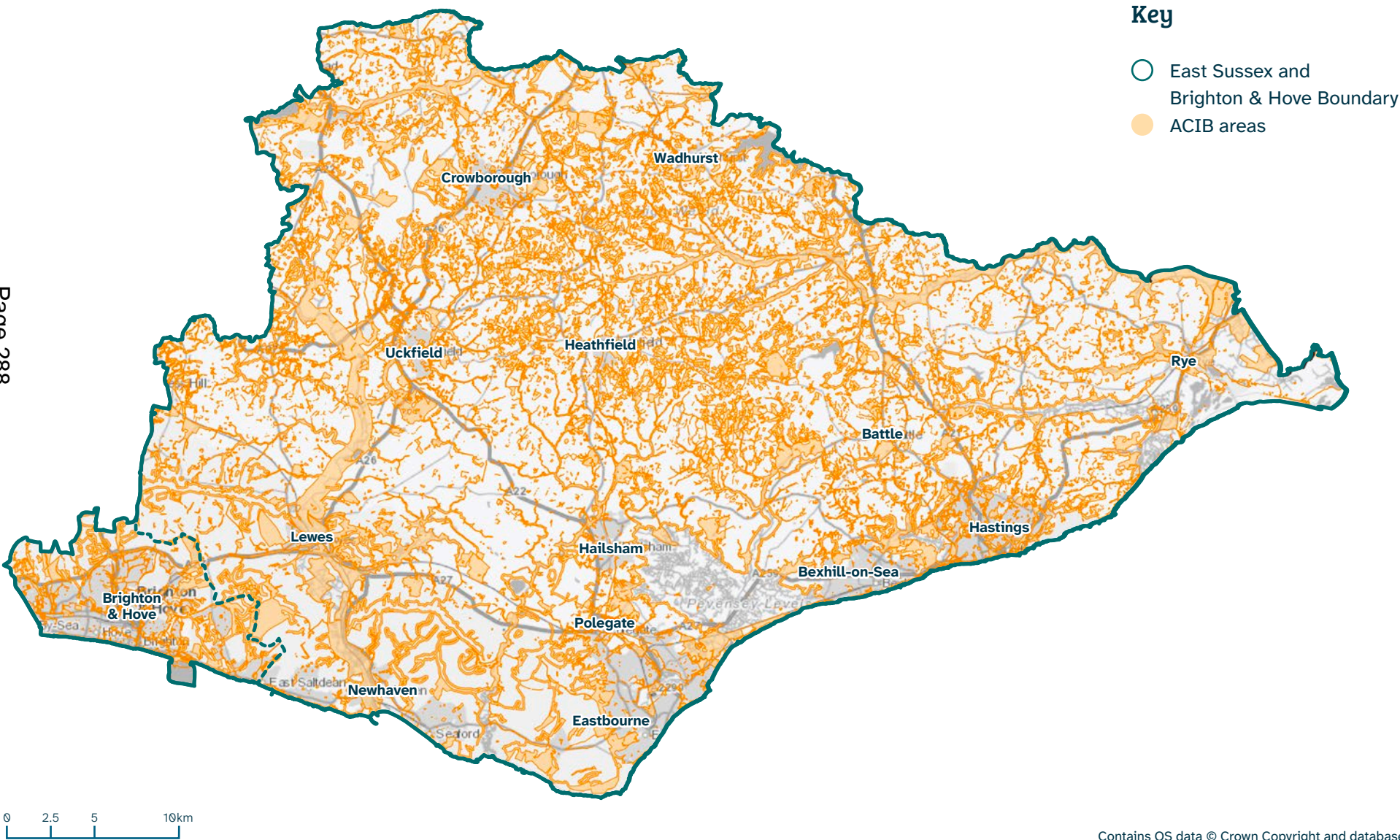
The ACIB for the LNRS area covers 39,837 which is 22.02% of the land area.

Together the APIB and ACIB cover **82,355ha, 46%** of the land cover of the LNRS area.

It is important to note that the ACIB is an interpretation of where action for nature could have the most benefit for nature and the wider environment, based on best available data and stakeholder input. Inclusion on this map does not automatically guarantee that it is possible to enhance/create habitat in these areas. Any potential habitat creation or enhancement proposals will need thorough investigation and consent before they take place. Any efforts to create or enhance space for nature outside these areas is also valuable and should be encouraged.



Map 3. Map of Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)



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## Section 6.

### How to use this LNRS

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📷 Barn owl

© iStock.com/M-Reinhardt



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)



**Large or small, every action to help nature is essential. This LNRS has been designed to inspire and enable everyone – organisations, partnerships, groups and individuals – to do more for wildlife and the natural environment of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, depending on their resources and interests.**

We hope that it does this by:

- Covering every scale of activity within its practical set of measures – there is something for everyone to take forward;
- Providing a single set of priorities and actions for nature's recovery for us to rally behind, seek funding for and work together to deliver on the ground;  
Giving funders, investors, landowners and delivery partners confidence in the actions and locations that will deliver the greatest benefit for nature;
- Serving as an important benchmark for our 'state of nature' against which we can measure future trends and the effectiveness of our actions;
- Acting as a guide for any interested organisation, community group or individual (at whatever scale) to understand how their actions could make an important contribution to a county-wide ambition for nature.

The following sections provide additional suggestions for its use by specific users or groups who may have their own very particular ways of supporting nature's recovery and may want to know more about how the LNRS can assist in this.

## LNRS and Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has a very specific link to the LNRS, and this is of relevance to local planning authorities, developers and land managers.

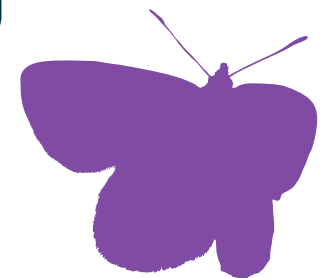
If an area is mapped under a potential measure within a LNRS, and it is delivering an intervention consistent with this, it can be identified within the statutory BNG metric as **high strategic significance**. Areas outside of the LNRS area are classed as low strategic significance.

This mechanism within the metric is intended to encourage a local market and incentivise BNG provision within the LNRS area. Where high strategic significance is applicable, habitats are given a 15% higher unit value, making it both financially desirable to create or purchase BNG units in these areas. This is of relevance for both landowners seeking to create BNG on their land, and developers seeking to purchase it.

Further information can be found here:

[The Statutory Biodiversity Metric page 27](#)

[Incorporating Local Nature Recovery Strategies when planning for Biodiversity Net Gain – Environment](#)



## 6.1 Landowners and Managers

Approximately two thirds of the land in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is agricultural which makes farmers vital stewards of our environment. Many of our landowners and managers have been making space for nature for years, even generations, and some are now leading the way by creating demonstration projects for a sustainable, wildlife-rich future. However, we also recognise the significant challenges faced by the sector which may provide barriers to action, particularly for smaller farmers and tenant farmers.

Farmland is home to some of our most important wildlife habitats: hedgerows, field margins, ponds and grassland. These offer vital food sources and shelter for birds, insects, small mammals and other wildlife. This strategy offers 10 measures for farmland and soil specifically, but as the farmed landscape in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove contains a range of other habitat types and covers such a large percentage of its total area, many of the other habitat measures will also be relevant.

To help make measures viable for landowners and managers, they have been aligned where possible (and at time of publishing) to Environmental Land Management Scheme options.

This strategy aims to guide decisions with nature in mind, particularly for land less suited to food production. Its recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive, and landowners and land managers do not need to make any changes based on what is mapped or published in this LNRS.

### Landowners and managers can use this LNRS to:

- Identify a range of actions, case studies and further guidance to improve or create habitats, manage soil or provide wider environmental benefits on their land.
- Support applications for funding – whether via Biodiversity Net Gain, government schemes (such as Environmental Land Management Schemes, protected landscape schemes (FiPL), woodland creation or management grants) or private investment in biodiversity, carbon, or nutrient offsetting opportunities.
- Identify, using the maps, where the best opportunities for actions for nature are located and what the most appropriate action to take would be. Please note this does not rule out action in other areas but rather indicates where targeted action would best be located. Unmapped measures that are not targeted to specific locations should also be considered.
- Recognise where there may be opportunities across wider spatial areas, such as between neighbours or within farm clusters, to deliver actions at scale.

📷 Martin Hole, member of Pevensey Farmers, shares actions for nature taken by the cluster in the internationally important wetlands of the Pevensey Levels. © D Alcroft



## 6.2 Local Authorities

Local authorities have a pivotal role to play in nature recovery as planning authorities, policy makers and land managers.

As planning authorities responsible for the creation of Local Plans, they can use the data and information within the LNRS to support the evidence base for their Local Plan, and the priorities, measures and mapping to better understand how to balance the needs of nature with other demands within the planning process. The LNRS also contains measures, both core and enabling, which indicate how more support for nature can be included within local plan policies and within the design and delivery of new development.

As providers of important services such as flood risk management and public health, and with an interest in net zero and climate adaptation, Local Authorities can use the LNRS to understand how and where nature-based solutions can be used to best effect to provide benefits for nature and people. The restoration of minerals and waste sites to create new areas of habitat can also be linked much more strategically to the priorities for nature's recovery set out within the LNRS.

By managing their own land to help deliver measures within the LNRS, local authorities can make a direct contribution to nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Local authorities in England must consider and report upon what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity under the 'biodiversity duty' (Environment Act 2021). More specifically, local planning authorities and neighbourhood development plans must have regard to this Local Nature Recovery Strategy in their policies (The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023).

### Local authorities can use this LNRS to:

- Inform and evidence local plans and policies;
- Inform the selection of development sites, local development boundaries and strategic housing land availability assessments (SHLAA);
- Embed greater links to nature and nature's recovery within their own strategies and management of land;
- Explore opportunities to deliver offsite Biodiversity Net Gain on their own land;
- Identify how best to support and work with communities interested in delivering more nature in their local area.

 Lewes Town Council formally agrees to Lewes Swift Supporters' proposals to declare the town as swift-friendly. Audrey Jarvis of Lewes Swift Supporters seen here with the Mayor of Lewes, Councillor Imogen Makepeace. © Nick Jarvis





## 6.3 Protected Landscapes

A large proportion of the land area of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS sits within a protected landscape (South Downs National Park and High Weald National Landscape). Protected Landscapes are making increasing contributions to nature's recovery and the Defra guidance expects them to be particularly suitable places for 'areas that could become of importance for biodiversity' to be located. Effort was made throughout the preparation of this LNRS to reflect the priorities of the two protected landscapes within this document to ensure that it is aligned with and can support their efforts to support nature's recovery within their boundaries.

### Protected Landscapes authorities/ teams can use this LNRS to:

- Support their efforts to drive the recovery of nature within protected landscape boundaries – sitting alongside and informing the Management Plans for these areas.
- Provide additional information to support their own evidence base, on where action to support nature within their areas might deliver the greatest benefits. This will include the Local Plan for the South Downs National Park, and supporting evidence, prepared by the South Downs National Park Authority.
- Inspire the creation of projects or initiatives to support nature's recovery, within the wider context of the LNRS area and its overall priorities.



📷 Ditchling Beacon © iStock.com/CompellingPhotography

## 6.4 Developers

Through Biodiversity Net Gain, developers will be required to ensure that developments leave nature in a better state than before. This may be through including meaningful habitat creation within a development (on-site net gain) or purchasing off-site net gain from a suitable site.

Beyond what is mandatory, developers can go further and work with local planning authorities to create new developments, whatever the scale, that support nature. This can be done by including habitats within their design and ensuring that these retain and enhance connections between habitats across the sites. Including natural greenspaces, tree corridors and features like wildflower plots will create habitats for wildlife, while also improving air quality and promoting better health and wellbeing for residents.

### Developers can use this LNRS to:

- Better understand the location of any new/proposed development in relation to its wider environment, habitats and species and reflect this in the design and delivery of the development on-site.
- Help plan suitable habitat creation as part of the development, whether required as compensation or via Biodiversity Net Gain.

📷 University of Brighton's Falmer campus has green eco-roofs on several buildings, which contribute to the campus's commitment to sustainability through features like pollution absorption, reduced rainwater runoff, and improved building insulation.

© iStock.com/coldsnowstorm



## 6.5 Environmental Sector

This LNRS has been developed collaboratively with many of the individuals and organisations that make up the environmental sector in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Their expert knowledge of our habitats and species has informed the description of the LNRS area, and their practical experience of delivering on the ground has shaped the measures and mapping.

This sector plays a vital role in conserving, restoring and championing the rich natural heritage and biodiversity of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. It is also a very busy sector. Long serving organisations have been joined by new entities, novel partnerships and projects have emerged and funding and policy changes have created opportunities. In addition, greater awareness of issues has galvanised the public and communities. We are incredibly fortunate that so much is happening on the ground, but its complexity can also lead to confusion and duplicated efforts.

In acting as a container for what's going on and giving us a unique view across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, this LNRS can help to align efforts, providing a wider context and a mechanism through which to coordinate and direct action at all scales.

### The environmental sector can use this LNRS to:

- Benchmark future trends and the effectiveness of its actions;
- Support funding applications from a range of public, private and voluntary sector funding sources;
- Give funders, investors, landowners and delivery partners confidence in the actions and locations that will deliver the greatest benefit for nature;
- Inform their own priorities, actions and strategies (these in turn will inform the next iteration of this LNRS);
- Coordinate action and the development of collaborative projects by showing where the sector can and needs to work together better;
- Inform their work with communities, businesses, local authorities and landowners;
- Support educational programmes and awareness raising.



📷 Young Carers activity day in the woods, part of the Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project.  
© James Ratchford/WTML



## 6.6 The Public and Local Communities

Everyone has the power to make a difference for nature. Hyper-local action is thriving across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, and many of our local communities are among the strongest advocates for our habitats and species.

This strategy is designed to guide individuals and groups by highlighting the opportunities available with a particular focus on practical, on-the-ground actions that can drive nature's recovery.

It specifically highlights the importance of urban nature and seeks to encourage actions that individuals, groups and local authorities can take to bring more nature into our villages, towns and cities.

### **The public and communities can use this LNRS to:**

- Understand what the priorities for nature are in their local area;
- Find actions within the measures they could take forward, either as new projects or to expand on existing activities, as individuals or as groups;
- Understand how their local natural environment fits within the broader network of habitats and important areas for nature;
- Explore how their actions could make an important contribution to a broader county-wide ambition for nature;
- Inspire others in their local community to get involved in local initiatives that support nature's recovery.

## 6.7 Businesses and Investors

All businesses can take action to embed nature-friendly practices into their operations and corporate plans, and to invest in nature's recovery. Those with land can also identify priority habitats, species, and recovery opportunities on this land that align with local conservation objectives and will help to make a contribution to the ambitions for nature set out in the LNRS.

### **Businesses can use this LNRS to:**

- Inform their own corporate plans for their contribution to nature recovery;
- Create or enhance green spaces on their premises;
- Understand how their activities fit within the local environmental context;
- Identify opportunities for collaboration – such as staff volunteering schemes or local community nature-based projects or initiatives;
- Water companies can use it to deploy resources for nature-based solutions where they will have the most benefit for the water environment, nature and people.

### **Investors can use this LNRS to:**

- Have confidence in the actions and locations that would deliver the greatest benefits for nature.



## 6.8 Institutions

Organisations and institutions like the NHS, local schools and universities are often significant landowners and managers, with large estates and campuses which could become assets for nature and people to enjoy.

For these organisations promoting the health benefits of spending time in nature and integrating nature in estates can help to boost the wellbeing of staff, patients and students, improve recovery times and learning outcomes, and provide wider health and wellbeing benefits.

This LNRS includes a specific priority around health, nature and wellbeing focused on the creation of new areas of natural greenspace with health and wellbeing in mind, designed to help people while also helping biodiversity.

### **The NHS, schools and other local institutions can use this LNRS to:**

- Inspire and inform the creation or transformation of greenspaces or gardens on their premises, to provide health and wellbeing benefits (e.g. therapeutic or sensory gardens);
- Build and inspire nature-based educational or health programmes;
- Inform changes in the management of their own estate to benefit nature;
- Engage local communities with action for nature.

## 6.9 Arms-Length Bodies

Arms-Length Bodies such as Natural England, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission have played a vital role in developing and guiding this strategy. Together, these bodies have roles in advising landowners on how to manage land, regulating pressures on the natural environment and overseeing public funding for nature.

### **Arms-Length Bodies can this LNRS to:**

- Inform management and advisory work on protected sites within the context of the wider network of habitats identified within the LNRS;
- Target nature recovery projects, funding and initiatives where they will have the most impact for nature or for wider environmental benefits;
- Target the use of nature-based solutions;
- Target nature-based approaches to dealing with the impacts of climate change, pollution and water quality where these are needed most to support nature and the wider environment.



# Section 7.

## Looking ahead

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📷 Fox  
© iStock.com/Clark Warren





## 7.1 Enablers for delivery

Following publication of the LNRS, thoughts will turn to delivery and how this ambitious strategy for nature's recovery in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove can be translated into action. Significant interest and commitment to creating this Strategy has been shown across many different stakeholder groups and it is hoped that it will support many in their own efforts to deliver more nature on the ground. However, if progress is to be made on a meaningful scale, several 'enabling' factors have to be in place.

### Partnership working

No one organisation or single entity (be it government, a business or non-governmental organisation) can significantly improve the state of nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove on its own. Collaboration amongst and between different stakeholder groups including government bodies, environmental organisations, farmers, community groups and businesses is essential to amplify nature recovery efforts. Good collaboration, for example, ensures knowledge and best practice is shared, efforts are not duplicated, that the needs and rights of everyone are considered, and that the project can be managed sustainably over the long term.

In Part 1 of this LNRS we shared the many existing landscape-scale partnerships and projects that are already delivering for nature and stated that these will be our delivery framework. We are fortunate that we have so many demonstrations of collaborative working in our LNRS area, however good collaboration over years needs commitment and energy from all parties to be sustained. More can also be done to improve coordination, funding, and develop a shared vision and communication. Given the scale of the challenge in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, maintaining existing collaborations, joining them up, and developing new ways to work together will be necessary.



📷 Planting new hedgerows © CPRE Sussex

## Funding

Delivering the priorities in this strategy will require funding.

Public funding for nature has traditionally included government grants for landowners and managers such as the [Environmental Land Management \(ELM\)](#) scheme and (at time of publishing) [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) which both incentivise habitat restoration. Other sources of funding include charities and foundations which provide funds and grants for specific projects. The private sector, meanwhile, can finance recovery through mechanisms such as Biodiversity Net Gain, carbon offsetting and other green finance initiatives, or through the use of nature-based solutions which many of our water companies do currently.

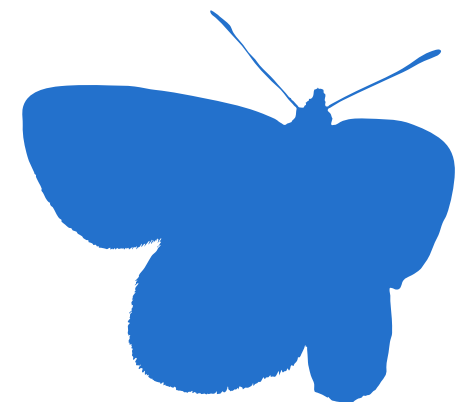
However, while there are numerous potential sources of income, these are often patchy and short term (many funds and grants only provide money for a set number of years) or volatile (emerging nature-based investment markets for the private sector have struggled with uncertain returns, standardisation and appetite). Public funding itself is tied to government budgets and policy cycles, which can shift with elections. Recent changes to ELMs have highlighted the unpredictability of public funding and the impact this has had on landowners and managers who need to ensure that what's good for nature also makes sense financially.

While we hope that the evidence presented in this strategy will support some funding bids and give confidence to investors regarding some nature recovery actions and locations, there is no guarantee that this is the case, and funding generally remains a key challenge.

## Supportive Policy Framework

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are potentially powerful place-based tools designed to agree and identify the priorities and actions for nature in each LNRS area. While local in scale, they are part of a national effort to drive the recovery of biodiversity and stem from national legislation and policy.

For the strategies to be effective, though, and not just aspirational, they must sit within a strong, supportive national and local policy framework. Policies should promote nature-friendly action, and to ensure that the strategies have reach and influence, access to funding and support for implementation is essential. Without this, there is a risk that despite the effort and consensus that these documents represent, they will 'sit on the shelf', failing to have the impact they are intended to have.



## Individual action, but as part of a wider coordinated system

We all have a responsibility to do more for nature, and every person can make a difference, no matter how small. In our surveys we heard from local people across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove who have made space for nature in their gardens and local areas by, for example, planting wildflowers or native shrubs, creating a wildlife pond, leaving wood piles for insects or putting up nesting boxes. Other respondents mentioned taking part in citizen science including butterfly or bird counts and water testing.

These actions are fantastic, but they are also better when part of something bigger. Small efforts, when joined up, create a **visible movement** that can shift public opinion, influence policy, and attract media attention. Coordination ensures the **right actions are being done in the right places**, informed by data, local knowledge, and shared priorities. When individuals work as part of a larger plan or partnership, it becomes easier to attract funding and pool resources. The success of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove LNRS will depend on helping to better connect individuals to a wider, more connected network of people and organisations working together to support nature's recovery.



📷 Goldfinch on a bird feeder © iStock.com/bearacreative



## 7.2 Next Steps

Once this Local Nature Recovery Strategy is published, the Responsible Authority (ESCC) will develop an agreed delivery plan that turns ambition into action and helps to drive nature's recovery forward.

In collaboration with the West Sussex Responsible Authority, Brighton & Hove City Council and with support from our key delivery partners in Sussex, Defra and Natural England, ESCC will align resources and develop a structure to guide a new delivery role for the LNRS.

### Our delivery role will be to:

- Convene and lead a partnership to guide the delivery of the LNRS, with the Sussex Nature Partnership at its heart;
- Strengthen links within the Responsible Authority and with Supporting Authorities, to embed the LNRS in Spatial Development Strategies, Local Growth Plans, public health initiatives and climate resilience and adaptation programmes;
- Identify, develop and publicise high-impact projects that advance LNRS priorities and showcase best practice;
- Track activities and projects delivering LNRS priorities and sharing progress with Natural England.

As a Responsible Authority for this LNRS, ESCC is committed to a bold, long-term vision for nature's recovery. Our close collaboration with West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council alongside other local partners will ensure this strategy isn't just words on a page but a catalyst for on-the-ground change.

Updates and detailed next steps will be shared in the months ahead, as we move from publication of the LNRS towards its delivery.











# Sussex Nature Recovery

A collective blueprint for targeted action

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East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 1 – Context & Description of  
Strategy Area



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and the  
Local Habitat Map



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 3 – Priority Species



West Sussex, East Sussex and  
Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 4 – Technical Methods

View all the documents at:

[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)

Draft Published October 2025







**Sussex  
Nature Recovery**  
A collective blueprint for targeted action



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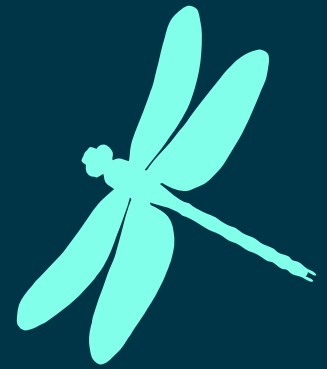
# East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 3 – Priority Species

Draft for consultation

Appendix 3





#### Cover image

 Adonis blue

© Paul Marten/Sussex Wildlife Trust

#### Illustrations

© Sussex Wildlife Trust & iStock.com

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# Section 1.

## About the LNRS

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## 1.1 Preface

This document is one of four that comprises the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and is Part 3 of its Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial plans for nature introduced by the Environment Act 2021. 48 strategies are being developed across England. Each covers a county (or equivalent) area and is led by a 'Responsible Authority' (RA), which in this instance is East Sussex County Council (ESCC).

Local Nature Recovery Strategies aim to develop and agree the priorities for nature's recovery in collaboration with local stakeholders including residents, farmers, community groups, organisations and businesses. They provide a set of practical actions that can deliver the priorities and map where actions to create or enhance habitats could be implemented to deliver the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. As documents that have been developed through collaboration and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, they can be used to help target investment and action where it is needed most to support nature's recovery across each LNRS area.

## 1.2 The other parts of this LNRS

Part 1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS provides important background for the contents of the rest of the strategy:

- A summary of how we developed this Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- An overview of the important habitats and species in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, their extent, condition and the pressures they face;
- A snapshot of the views of local people, expressed through our surveys;
- What is already happening – some of the organisations, partnerships, projects and groups that are working for nature in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Part 2 sets out the **priorities** for nature's recovery for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and the action (or '**measure**') for each that will be needed to deliver these priorities. As required by LNRS government guidance, they focus primarily on **habitats**.

Part 4 provides additional technical detail about how we developed this strategy.



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 1 – Context & Description of Strategy Area



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and the Local Habitat Map



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 3 – Priority Species



West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part 4 – Technical Methods

# Section 2.

## Introduction

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📷 Lesser spotted woodpecker  
© iStock.com/tuomovaa





This section complements the habitat priorities in Part 2 and sets out the **priority species** for nature's recovery for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and the actions (or '**measures**') for each that will be needed to deliver these priorities.

As for habitat priorities, our approach was guided by a set of broad **principles** (Part 2). These principles illustrate that success will require tackling this challenge as a complex problem that requires actions by different stakeholders at different scales and through varying techniques. They reflect the understanding and expertise of stakeholders across our LNRS area of the different elements that need to be in place if we are to achieve real progress over the years ahead.

The document sets out the need for species recovery, and details the process followed in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, which was broadly in line with non-statutory advice provided by Defra.

It then lists the **priority species** that have been shortlisted for the LNRS area, and how some have been grouped into **priority species assemblages**<sup>9</sup>. It then sets out the measures required to support their recovery.



📷 Parrot waxcap © Neil Fletcher/Sussex Wildlife Trust

Words underlined in purple with a diamond symbol <sup>9</sup> are defined in the [Glossary](#)

# Section 3.

## Species Recovery

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📷 Lapwing  
© iStock.com/CreativeNature\_nl

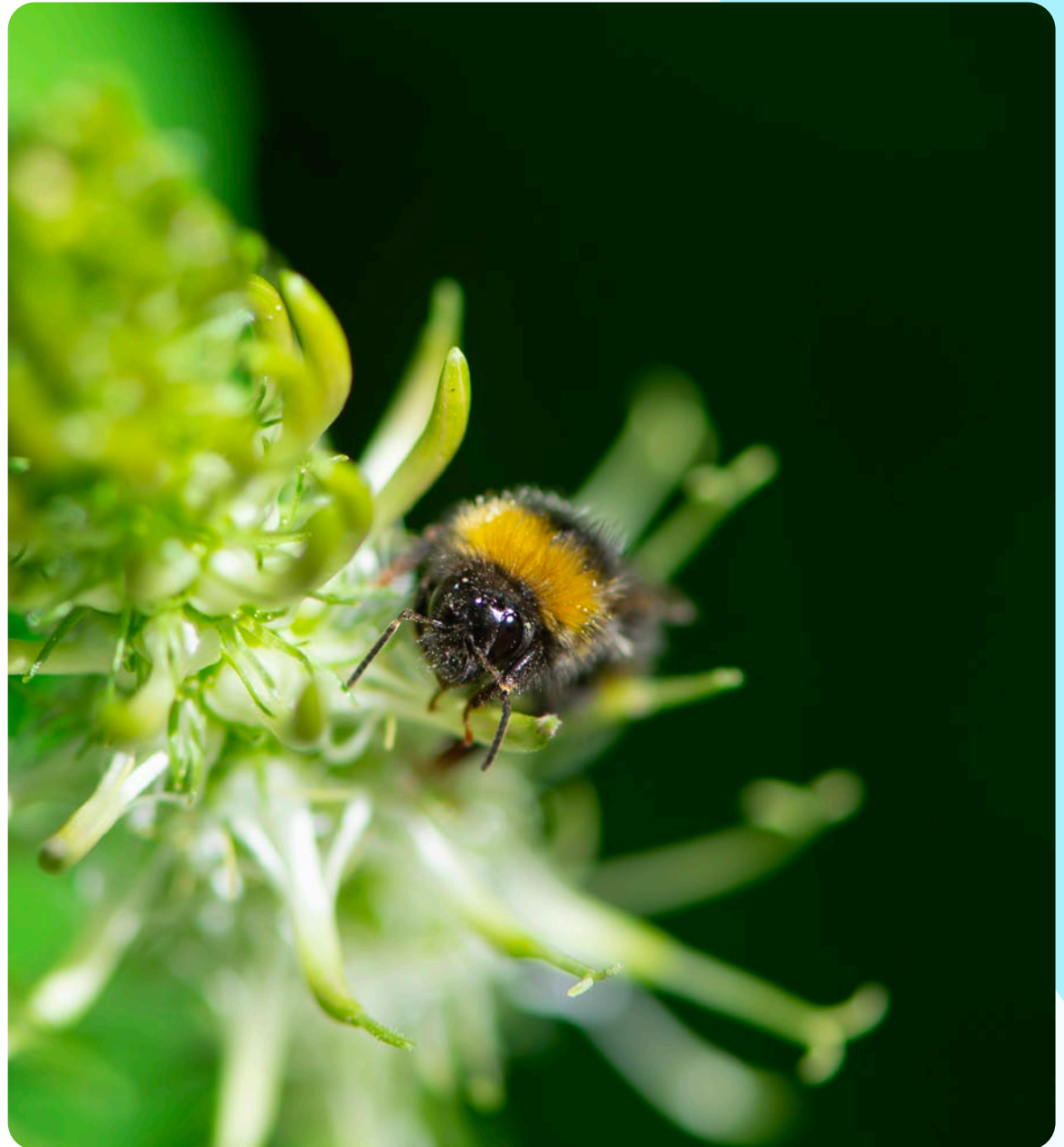




Species abundance and diversity serve as crucial indicators of the health of the natural environment. The government has set legally binding targets to:

- Halt the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030;
- Increase species abundance by the end of 2042 so that it is greater than in 2022 and at least 10% greater than in 2030;
- Reduce the risk of species extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species extinction in 2022.

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LNRS is a new tool for driving the national ambition to increase species abundance and reduce risk of species extinction, by planning for more, bigger, better and joined-up habitat to support species recovery and resilience.



📷 Bumblebee on spiked rampion © iStock.com/Tanja Nik



# Section 4.

## Prioritisation Process

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📷 Bearded tit, Pett Level  
© iStock.com/suerob



## 4.1 Creation of Species Longlist

The first step in the process was to create a “species longlist”. The list was selected against nationally set criteria.

- Any native species which have been assessed as Red List *Threatened* or *Near Threatened* against International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria at GB scale.
- Any native species which have not been formally assessed against IUCN Red List criteria but where strong evidence is provided to show that they would meet the criteria for Threatened status in GB.
- Any native species considered to be nationally extinct that re-establish themselves or are rediscovered.
- Any native species which the government’s nature advisor, Natural England, suggest as suitable candidates for conservation translocations or any native species already subject to translocation efforts that, on Natural England’s advice, need to be scaled up to maximise success.
- Other species of local significance which have not yet been Red List assessed or lack approved Red Lists but for which there is strong evidence to show (or in the absence of this, authoritative expert opinion) that they would meet criteria for Threatened Status.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List is an inventory of the global conservation status and extinction risk of species. Many, but not all, species groups have Red Lists, which assign the following classes to species depending on factors including rate of decline, population size, area of distribution and degree of fragmentation.

- **Extinct:** There is no reasonable doubt that the last individual of the species has died.
- **Extinct in the Wild:** The species only exists in captivity or naturalised populations outside its original range.
- **Critically Endangered:** The species faces an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
- **Endangered:** The species faces a very high risk of extinction in the wild.
- **Vulnerable:** The species faces a high risk of extinction in the wild.
- **Near Threatened:** The species is close to qualifying for a threatened category or is likely to qualify in the near future.
- **Least Concern:** The species faces a low risk of extinction in the wild.
- **Data Deficient:** There is inadequate information to assess the species’ extinction risk.
- **Not Evaluated:** The species has not yet been evaluated for its extinction risk.

The species longlist was sorted into taxa<sup>9</sup> and shared with County Recorders and local experts. County Recorders are skilled and dedicated volunteers, each one an expert in their own particular field, with a primary role to verify the accuracy of species records received. Some species were added if the area is considered to be particularly important for them, and/or if there is not currently a red list for that group. This resulted in a 'definitive longlist' for the LNRS area.

Meetings were held between January to June 2024 with local organisations, and local representatives from national organisations<sup>1</sup>, who have been involved in species prioritisation exercises. This was to understand what has already been done with respect to species recovery across Sussex to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure locally important species were included in the longlist.

The resultant longlist was created by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (Sussex BRC) by searching for species that fit the nationally set criteria listed above within local records. The date of the most recent record and the number of records was collated for these species and the lists were organised into taxa (species groups) and shared with the County Recorders in July 2024. This review provided an opportunity to add species to the longlist where they were felt to be of local significance (as above), and to gain expert opinion on and justification for which of the species should be included in the longlist. The resultant longlist included 877 species.

<sup>1</sup> Organisations involved included Buglife, Sussex BRC, South Downs National Park Authority, Environment Agency, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, High Weald National Landscape, Forestry Commission, Weald to Waves, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Species Recovery Trust, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council.



📷 Turtle dove © iStock.com/CreativeNature\_nl



## 4.2 Prioritisation to Shortlist





The next stage was to create a “shortlist” containing those individual species that the LNRS will focus on supporting. Some of these species share similar habitat management requirements, and these were grouped into assemblages.




There are County Records for the majority of the taxa, and species atlases for Sussex have recently been published for flora, birds, Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies), Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) and bees. Feedback from the County Records, alongside the best available information on species ecological needs, national distribution, local distribution and abundance from Sussex BRC and species atlases, was used to assign species to one of the categories to G in Table 1.



Common toad © iStock.com/MikeLane45

Table 1. Species advice: identifying species which LNRS can best support.

Category	Description	Benefit from LNRS?	Suitable priority species?
 <b>A: Needs more/bigger/better-connected habitat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species likely to markedly benefit from general creation, expansion and improved connectivity of good quality habitats in the strategy area and do not need to be singled out for specific LNRS measures.</li> <li>Species with high recovery potential that do not require specific or targeted recovery measures.</li> </ul>	Yes	Probably not
 <b>B: Needs targeted habitat management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species with specific requirements for habitat quality, structure, conditions or processes above and beyond category A.</li> <li>Species may require specific configurations or complexes or connected or nearby habitat(s), either at site level or across large areas/multiple sites. This may include habitat connectivity measures for species needing support to track climate change.</li> <li>Causes of decline can be addressed with new or improved management practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
 <b>C: Needs improvement in environmental quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species primarily limited by one or more pressures beyond site level that can be mitigated at LNRS scale or wider scales through collaboration with neighbouring RAs.</li> <li>E.g. better catchment water quality, improved spatial planning or air pollution sources, mitigation of recreational disturbance.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
 <b>D: Needs bespoke conservation action/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species requiring additional, tailored measures which can be spatially indicated on the local habitat map.</li> <li>Species may need multiple coordinated actions to bring about recovery, including combinations of local actions and national actions, where LNRS could address the former.</li> <li>Examples of bespoke, spatially targetable local actions include conservation translocations (such as assisted colonisation for climate change adaptation), control of invasive species, and localised surveys.</li> <li><b>NB</b> Species requiring bespoke measures which cannot be mapped should be assigned to category E.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes

Category	Description	Benefit from LNRS?	Suitable priority species?
 <b>E: Needs better evidence base/on-the-ground action not a priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species for which there is insufficient evidence or understanding regarding drivers of decline, required recovery actions, and range/population levels.</li> <li>Species for which the current priority is other than on-the-ground actions, e.g. research of ex-situ action.</li> </ul>	Unknown	No
 <b>F: Needs action outside England</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species with low (or very low) recovery potential due to factors constraining recovery beyond English borders.</li> <li>Evidence shows that action in England is highly unlikely to improve species' prospects.</li> <li>This category is likely to apply only to migratory species (e.g. Afro-Palearctic migratory birds affected by hunting).</li> </ul>	No	No
 <b>G: Vagrants/occasional visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species currently outside their normal breeding or wintering range or normal migration route, without an extant populations in the strategy area, and which are not suitable for conservation translocation.</li> </ul>	No	No





East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is a well recorded county, as demonstrated by there being over 12 million species records in the database held by Sussex BRC. As such, for the majority of species groups, the balance of probability is that if there have been no records for the past 20 years, the species is unlikely to be present in most cases. Species for which the most recent records were from 2004 or earlier were therefore excluded from the shortlist (effectively assigned category E on the grounds of needing a better evidence base). However, this date cut-off was not applied to lichens (as there has not been a dedicated County Recorder for the group for some years, and it may therefore have been under-recorded) or to fungi (as the fruiting bodies can lie dormant for several years).

Species which are present but which do not require targeted action over and above that proposed for habitats or are widespread were assigned to category A on the grounds that they would likely benefit from general habitat improvements. In other words, they are supported by other LNRS measures.

If species were considered to meet the criteria for categories B to D, they were provisionally shortlisted, with this categorisation further refined through consideration of additional criteria provided in the advice, listed in Table 2. These included whether species were considered iconic of the strategy area, where East Sussex is a stronghold, or whether their recovery locally would contribute to recovery at a national level.

Some species, often urban, which did not meet the national criteria of being 'near threatened' or above were included where there was strong support for them from the public surveys, e.g. glow-worm; these species meet the additional criteria set out in the Species Advice which recognises that some species can be a great hook for wider public and stakeholder engagement with the LNRS, and that Responsible Authorities may wish to consider the depth of

public interest in species and the opportunities this presents for encouraging broad local participation in the LNRS process. It is important to note that most national criteria focus on rarity and species in semi-natural habitats, whereas urban habitats have a differing range of iconic, indicator, classic and often much-loved species. Urban areas are also where there is most development and thus loss of wildlife.

Some species assigned to categories B to D in Table 1 would benefit from similar management measures, and were therefore grouped together into assemblages, with measures developed for them.

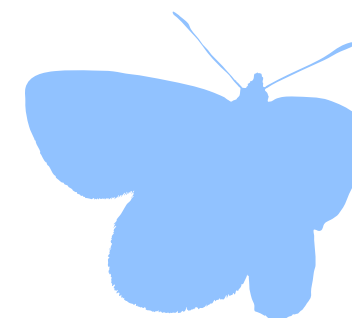


📷 Brown long-eared bat © iStock.com/Gucio\_55

**Table 2. Species advice: additional criteria.**

Para 4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local significance</li> <li>• Not red listed but expert opinion would meet 'threatened'</li> <li>• Candidates for conservation translocation</li> <li>• Iconic/local champion species</li> <li>• Flagship/indicator for wider ecosystem improvement</li> </ul>
Para 2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public interest/local participation</li> </ul>
Para 6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemblages (groups of species that share similar habitat management requirements)</li> </ul>
Para 6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgency</li> <li>• Deliverability – how feasible is it to deliver</li> <li>• Contributions to national species recovery – is species of national/international significance? <i>Should</i> prioritise species/assemblages which are only found in strategy area (local interpretation – stronghold)</li> <li>• Cross-boundary considerations – any opportunities to join up recovery plans across boundaries?</li> <li>• Maximising benefits – would recovery bring about other benefits? Keystone species<sup>9</sup>/assemblages.</li> <li>• Pre-existing initiatives.</li> </ul>

Justification for categorisation, along with measures for shortlisted species and assemblages was again shared with County Recorders and local species experts to ensure it was robust. The lists and measures were also reviewed by the Working Group, Supporting Authorities, the Technical Review Panel, and other individuals/organisations with species expertise.



📷 Female hedgehog with hoglets © iStock.com/slowmotiongli



## Section 5.

### Priority Species

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📷 Torpid dormouse in nest  
© Kate Ryland





The list of Priority Species was developed as a result of months of data collation and review, working with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, local and national experts and County Recorders, key partners delivering species recovery programmes and national species organisations. The process of prioritisation was led by government advice and local expertise, but also drew on the many responses to our public surveys to better understand which species are most highly valued by the local community.

The LNRS Priority Species list contains the individual species and assemblages (groups of species that share similar management requirements) that the LNRS will focus on supporting. Of the 877 species on the longlist, 160 were shortlisted, demonstrating the richness of biodiversity in the LNRS area.

Some species were shortlisted as indicators of healthy ecosystems. For example, the **hazel dormouse** is considered a flagship species; where they occur, the habitat is usually very suitable for a wide range of other species. They are also important bioindicators<sup>2</sup> as they are particularly sensitive to habitat and population fragmentation, so their presence is an indicator of habitat integrity and sustainable populations of other sensitive species<sup>2</sup>. They are normally found in highly diverse deciduous woodland, and are also frequently found in species-rich hedgerow and scrub.

Similarly, the **water vole** is a flagship species<sup>3</sup> for rivers and wetland; protecting, restoring and enhancing the habitats they rely on will also be helping a wealth of other wetland species. The water vole has experienced one of the fastest declines of any native mammal in the 20th century. Our populations are critically low and it is estimated

that we have lost over 90% in the last 30 years. The only remaining large populations in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are on Pett and Rye Levels<sup>3</sup>.

The **Adonis blue butterfly** is a downland specialist and is one of the most characteristic species of unimproved chalk grassland in southern England. The caterpillars are entirely dependent on horseshoe vetch which is common in well grazed, species-rich chalk turf on south-facing slopes of the South Downs<sup>4</sup>. It has undergone a major decline through its entire range, but despite its restricted distribution, it can be seen in large numbers on good sites.



Water vole © iStock.com/Rachel Bennett

<sup>2</sup> Bright, P., P. Morris & T. Mitchell-Jones, 2006. *The dormouse conservation handbook*. 2nd edition.

<sup>3</sup> [Water Vole | Sussex Wildlife Trust](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Sussex Butterfly Conservation : Species](#)

Most of our priority species have been shortlisted because East Sussex and Brighton & Hove is particularly important for them locally, nationally or even internationally. For example, the **marsh mallow moth** is restricted to just a few locations in Britain, with one of the only UK populations lying on the East Sussex/Kent border. The chalk cliffs at Splash Point in Seaford are home to the largest **kittiwake** colony between Devon and Northumberland. The UK population fell by 55% between 1986 and 2011, but although the East Sussex population is less than 0.5% of the national population, the number of breeding pairs here has not declined in the same way as colonies in northern England. Ashdown Forest is internationally important for its breeding populations of **nightjar** and **Dartford warbler**.

Of our 160 Priority Species, 125 were grouped into 19 assemblages, leaving 35 species which require their own bespoke measures. 391 species were 'scoped out', either because they are no longer likely to be present, or there is insufficient evidence or understanding of their decline, required actions or range and population levels, or because they are relatively common and widespread and are not a priority for on-the-ground action. 326 species were not shortlisted as, although important locally, they will be well supported by habitat measures within the wider LNRS. These species, and the measures that will support them, can be seen in [Appendix 3A](#) along with the full long list with justification for their categorisation.

All Priority Species are listed in Table 3, followed by measures for the individual species and species assemblages. The lists are broadly in taxonomic order, from the most to the least complex organisms, animals and then plants, and then alphabetically by common name.

Despite our best efforts, some of our most important species have already been lost. Park Corner Heath, a small area of heath, woodland and scrub about six miles north west of Hailsham, was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1953 to protect the **Lewes wave moth** *Scopular immorata*. Outside the UK, it is found in Europe and Asia, but this was its only known site in Britain. Unfortunately, it has not been recorded since 1961 and it is now believed to be extinct. The site still supports an outstanding assemblage of moths and a varied butterfly fauna, and it, along with the adjacent Rowland Wood, is now actively managed by Sussex Butterfly Conservation. The same site also held the last native Sussex population of **small pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies**. Following a cold, wet winter in 2012, the species declined to extinction, but a reintroduction programme in 2017 and active management with fritillaries at the forefront of decision-making, means the species is now doing well here<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> [Sussex Butterfly Conservation : Other Pages](#)

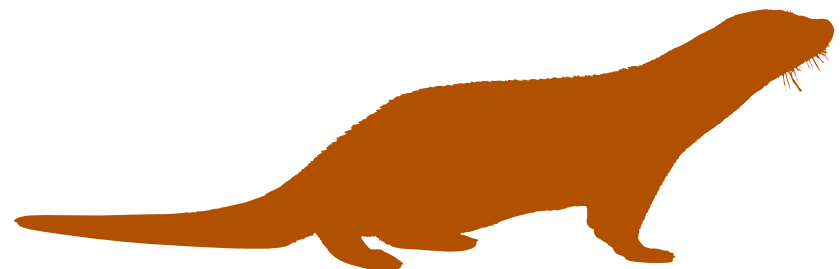


Table 3. Priority species for the East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove LNRS area.

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Mammals (excluding bats)	Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>	
	European otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Streams and rivers
	European water vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	
	Hazel dormouse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	
	Pine marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	
	West European hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	
Bats	Bechstein's bat	<i>Myotis bechsteineii</i>	
	Grey long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	
Birds	Bearded tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	Reedbed and river birds
	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Reedbed and river birds
	Corn bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Farmland birds
	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Farmland birds
	Dartford warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>	Heathland birds
	Eurasian honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Woodland birds
	Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Cliff nesting birds
	Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Farmland birds

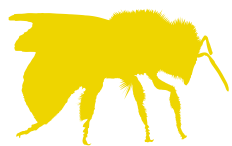


Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Birds	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Woodland birds
	House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Urban birds
	Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Cliff nesting birds
	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Breeding waders – wet grassland and heathland
	Lesser spotted woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor comminutus</i>	Woodland birds
	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Farmland birds
	Little tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Shorebirds – breeding and migrating/winter
	Marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Reedbed and river birds
	Marsh tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	Woodland birds
	Mediterranean gull	<i>Ichthyaeus melanocephalus</i>	Shore birds – breeding and migrating/winter
	Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Woodland birds
	Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Heathland birds
	Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>	Breeding waders – wet grassland and heathland
	Ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Shore birds – breeding and migrating/winter
	Sandwich tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	Shore birds – breeding and migrating/winter
	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Farmland birds



Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Birds	Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Woodland birds
	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Urban birds
	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	Farmland birds
	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Urban birds
	Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Heathland birds
	Tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Farmland birds
	Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Farmland birds
	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Farmland birds
Amphibians & reptiles	Common toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	Ponds for amphibians
	Great crested newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Ponds for amphibians
Fish	Brown/Sea trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Streams and rivers
	European eel	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	Streams and rivers
Crustaceans	White-clawed crayfish	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Spiders	A spider	<i>Lathys stigmatisata</i>	Shingle and sand dunes
	A spider	<i>Micaria albobittata</i>	
	A spider	<i>Neon pictus</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	A spider	<i>Pellenes tripunctatus</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	A spider	<i>Phaeocedus braccatus</i>	Chalk grassland
	A spider	<i>Trichopterna cito</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	A spider	<i>Trochosa robusta</i>	
	Fen raft spider	<i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>	
	Golden lantern-spider	<i>Agroeca cuprea</i>	Shingle and sand dune
Ants, bees & wasps	Brown-banded carder bee	<i>Bombus humilis</i>	Chalk grassland
	Downland furrow bee	<i>Halictus eurygnathus</i>	Chalk grassland
	Heath potter wasp	<i>Eumenes coarctatus</i>	
	Moss carder bee	<i>Bombus muscorum</i>	Chalk grassland
	Oak mining bee	<i>Andrena ferox</i>	
	Potter flower bee	<i>Anthophora retusa</i>	
	Red-shanked carder bee	<i>Bombus ruderalis</i>	Chalk grassland
	Sea aster bee	<i>Colletes halophilus</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh





Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Beetles	A beetle	<i>Geotrupes mutator</i>	
	Glow-worm	<i>Lampyris noctiluca</i>	
	Mediterranean oil beetle	<i>Meloe mediterraneus</i>	
	Six-spotted pot beetle	<i>Cryptocephalus sexpunctatus</i>	
	Southern oyster mushroom beetle	<i>Triplax lacordairii</i>	
	Stag beetle	<i>Lucanus cervus</i>	
Butterflies & moths	Adonis blue	<i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>	Chalk grassland
	Chalk hill blue	<i>Polyommatus coridon</i>	Chalk grassland
	Chalk-hill lance-wing	<i>Epermenia insecurella</i>	Chalk grassland
	Common fan-foot	<i>Pechipogo strigilata</i>	Open deciduous woodland
	Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>	Chalk grassland
	Marsh mallow moth	<i>Hydraecia osseola</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Silver spotted skipper	<i>Hesperia comma</i>	
	Small blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	Chalk grassland
	Small pearl-bordered fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>	
	Sussex emerald	<i>Thalera fimbrialis</i>	Shingle and sand dune
Crickets & grasshoppers	Wart-biter	<i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>	

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Dragonflies & damselflies	Emerald damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	
Flies	A true fly	<i>Miltogramma germari</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Large plain stiletto	<i>Thereva cinifera</i>	
True Bugs	A planthopper	<i>Tettigometra impressopunctata</i>	Chalk grassland
	Pondweed leafhopper	<i>Erotettix cyane</i>	
Molluscs	A mollusc	<i>Euglesa pseudosphaerium</i>	Grazing marsh molluscs
	Carthusian snail	<i>Monacha (Monacha) cartusiana</i>	Chalk grassland
	Heath snail	<i>Helicella itala</i>	Chalk grassland
	Large-mouthed valve snail	<i>Valvata macrostoma</i>	Grazing marsh molluscs
	Ramshorn snail	<i>Anisus (Disculifer) vorticulus</i>	Grazing marsh molluscs
	The shining ram's-horn	<i>Segmentina nitida</i>	Grazing marsh molluscs
Higher Plants	Annual knawel	<i>Scleranthus annuus</i>	Rare arable plants
	Basil thyme	<i>Clinopodium acinos</i>	Chalk grassland
	Bird's-nest orchid	<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	Open deciduous woodland
	Borrer's saltmarsh-grass	<i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Burnt orchid	<i>Neotinea ustulata</i>	Chalk grassland
	Chalk milkwort	<i>Polygala calcarea</i>	Chalk grassland



Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Higher Plants	Corn buttercup	<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>	Rare arable plants
	Deptford pink	<i>Dianthus armeria</i>	Chalk grassland
	Early gentian	<i>Gentianella anglica</i>	Chalk grassland
	Field fleawort	<i>Tephrosia integrifolia</i>	Chalk grassland
	Field gentian	<i>Gentianella campestris</i>	
	Field gromwell	<i>Lithospermum arvense</i>	Rare arable plants
	Frog orchid	<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Chalk grassland
	Frosted orache	<i>Atriplex laciniata</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Heath lobelia	<i>Lobelia urens</i>	
	Lesser calamint	<i>Clinopodium calamintha</i>	
	Lesser marshwort	<i>Apium inundatum</i>	
	Little-robin	<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Marsh clubmoss	<i>Lycopodiella inundata</i>	
	Moon carrot	<i>Seseli libanotis</i>	Chalk grassland
	Musk orchid	<i>Herminium monorchis</i>	Chalk grassland
	Parsley water-dropwort	<i>Oenanthe lachenalii</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Pheasant's-eye	<i>Adonis annua</i>	Rare arable plants





Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Higher Plants	Prickly poppy	<i>Papaver argemone</i>	Rare arable plants
	Red star-thistle	<i>Centaurea calcitrapa</i>	
	Round-headed rampion	<i>Phyteuma orbiculare</i>	Chalk grassland
	Saltmarsh goosefoot	<i>Oxybasis chenopodioides</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Saltwort	<i>Salsola kali</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Sea barley	<i>Hordeum marinum</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Sea bindweed	<i>Calystegia soldanella</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Sea clover	<i>Trifolium squamosum</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Sea sandwort	<i>Honckenya peploides</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Sea kale	<i>Crambe maritima</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Shepherd's needle	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Rare arable plants
	Slender hare's-ear	<i>Bupleurum tenuissimum</i>	Coastal grazing marsh and upper saltmarsh
	Spiked rampion	<i>Phyteuma spicatum</i>	
	Stinking hawk's-beard	<i>Crepis foetida</i>	Shingle and sand dune
	Upright chickweed	<i>Moenchia erecta</i>	
	Wall germander	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Chalk grassland
	White helleborine	<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	Open deciduous woodland



Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Mosses	Curly beardless-moss	<i>Weissia condensa</i>	Chalk grassland
	Ribbonwort	<i>Pallavicinia lyellii</i>	Sandstone outcrops
	Round-leaved feather-moss	<i>Rhynchostegium rotundifolium</i>	
	Slender thread-moss	<i>Orthodontium gracile</i>	Sandstone outcrops
	Sterile beardless-moss	<i>Weissia sterilis</i>	Chalk grassland
Stoneworts	Bristly stonewort	<i>Chara hispida</i>	
Lichens	Lemon tart lichen	<i>Lecanora sublivescens</i>	Open parkland mature and veteran tree lichens
	Oak rim lichen	<i>Lecanora quercicola</i>	Open parkland mature and veteran tree lichens
	Scaly-breck lichen	<i>Squamarina lentigera</i>	Chalk grassland
Fungi	Bilious bolete	<i>Rubroboletus legaliae</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi
	Bitter tooth	<i>Hydnellum scabrosum</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi
	Blushing waxcap	<i>Neohygrocybe ovina</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Citrine waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe citrinovirens</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Crimson waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe punicea</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Date waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe spadicea</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Dingy waxcap	<i>Neohygrocybe ingrata</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Felted pinkgill	<i>Entoloma griseocyaneum</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Assemblage
Fungi	Glistening waxcap	<i>Gloioxanthomyces vitellinus</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Golden-gilled bolete	<i>Phylloporus pelletieri</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi
	Jubilee waxcap	<i>Gliophorus reginae</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Lilac pinkgill	<i>Entoloma porphyrophaeum</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Mealy pinkgill	<i>Entoloma prunuloides</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Nitrous waxcap	<i>Neohygrocybe nitrata</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Pale bolete	<i>Butyriboletus fechtneri</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi
	Pink waxcap	<i>Porpolomopsis calyptriformis</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Rosewood brittlegill	<i>Russula melitodes</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi
	Splendid waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe splendidissima</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Toasted waxcap	<i>Cuphophyllus colemannianus</i>	Waxcap grassland fungi
	Umbrella polypore	<i>Polyporus umbellatus</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi
	Zoned tooth	<i>Hydnellum concrescens</i>	Deciduous woodland and wood pasture fungi





## Section 6.

# Priority Species Measures

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📷 Emerald damselfly

© Ben Rainbow



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)

# Abbreviations

The abbreviations used at the start of the information section summarise any conservation status, and are as follows:

- **Legal Protection** Under international and/or national conventions/legislation.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List (Great Britain):

- **EX** Extinct
- **EW** Extinct in the Wild
- **CR** Critically Endangered
- **EN** Endangered
- **VU** Vulnerable
- **NT** Near Threatened
- **LC** Least Concern
- **R** Rare (pre 1994 Red List)
- **NR** Nationally Rare, occurring in 15 or fewer hectads (10km x 10km square) in Great Britain (GB) or England (England).
- **NR (marine)** Nationally Rare marine species, occurring in eight or fewer hectads in Great Britain.
- **NS** Nationally scarce, recorded in 16-100 hectads but not included in one of the Red List Categories.
- **BoCC Red, Amber or Green** Birds of Conservation Concern.
- **S41** Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.
- **Sussex Rare** Species assessed as being particularly rare in Sussex by local species experts.

Some measures, although critical, cannot be addressed directly by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as they related to supporting mechanisms, processes and functions. These ‘enabling measures’ are shown in italics.

Note: the Threatened Species Recovery Actions 2025 baseline has recently been published and includes additional measures for some priority species.



📷 Grayling © Derek Middleton/Sussex Wildlife Trust

## 6.1 Individual Species Measures

Species	Information	Measures
<b>Beaver</b> <i>Castor fiber</i>	<p>EN.</p> <p>Critically endangered in England. Used to be widespread in Britain but hunted to extinction. Important components of river and wetland ecosystems. Candidate for local conservation introductions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the condition of riparian habitats in the strategy area to support the future establishment of a beaver population and their natural spread.</li> <li>2. <i>Collaborate with beaver management groups to foster a positive, cooperative relationship between landowners and beavers, ensuring coexistence and the maximisation of ecological and natural water management benefits. This may include educational workshops, practical support and guidance on sustainable management strategies.</i></li> </ol>
<b>European water vole</b> <i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, EN, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Found throughout Britain. Long term decline, disappearing from 94% of former sites. Populations in Sussex critically low; estimated that over 90% lost in last 30 years.</p> <p>Found in Pett and Rye Levels.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eradication of non-native American mink;</li> <li>2. Improve habitat networks and connectivity around key populations;</li> <li>3. Create suitable habitat on edges of floodplains to provide refuge habitat during floods;</li> <li>4. Bank side management – increase the occurrence of bank side trees/hedges/reeds/scrub patches along linear watercourse to provide seasonal food and refuge habitat, plus sensitive, graded cuts on bankside vegetation to encourage female dispersal;</li> <li>5. <i>Pollution control;</i></li> <li>6. Create non-linear wetlands (vertical habitats such as reedbeds, fens etc);</li> <li>7. <i>Increase survey effort in non-linear sites which are particularly important in winter.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Helping-water-voles-on-your-land.pdf</a></p>
<b>Hazel dormouse</b> <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	<p>Legal protection, VU, S41.</p> <p>Occurs mainly in southern England, especially Devon, Sussex and Kent.</p> <p>East Sussex is a stronghold for the species.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create structural diversity and increase light levels in woodland, e.g. through active coppicing, creating glades and opening up rides.</li> <li>2. Cut hedgerows (where connected to woodland sites/other suitable habitat) on three-year cycle, alternating sides.</li> </ol> <p><a href="#">managing-woodlands-for-dormice-final.pdf</a></p>



Species	Information	Measures
<b>Pine marten</b> <i>Martes martes</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41.</p> <p>Once widespread across the UK, hunting and woodland clearance meant the species restricted to Scottish Highlands and pockets of Wales and northern England by the 20th century. Population is spreading across Scotland but remains very rare in England and Wales.</p> <p>Sussex Wildlife Trust working in partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust and Wildwood Trust to assess the feasibility of restoring them to the South East.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create, improve and connect woodland habitats to support future establishment of a pine marten population and its natural spread.</li> <li>2. <i>Provide training and guidance to landowners, farmers, gamekeepers and hunters to raise awareness of effective predator-proofing of game or poultry pens, and the risks of incidental trapping and killing during control of other species (i.e. fox, grey squirrel control) in areas where the species is present, and where potential reintroductions may occur.</i></li> </ol>
<b>West European hedgehog</b> <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	<p>S41, VU.</p> <p>Widespread but has undergone significant decline. Scored highly in public consultations – champion species for urban habitats and gardens.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve connectivity between gardens by creating access points at the bottom of fences, or planting hedgerows as boundaries.</li> <li>2. Create wildlife friendly gardens, e.g. by planting shrubs and hedges, encouraging insets with wildflowers and scrub habitat, creating compost, log and leaf piles.</li> <li>3. Install hedgehog houses.</li> <li>4. <i>Research rural hedgehog populations.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Develop planning guidance for East Sussex to encourage access fences or penetrable boundaries within new development.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Helping Hedgehogs</a></p> <p><a href="#">Top 10 Tips for a hedgehog-friendly garden</a></p> <p><a href="#">Help a hedgehog   The Wildlife Trusts</a></p> <p><a href="#">Hedgehogs In Your Garden   RSPCA – RSPCA – rspca.org.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">Britain's National Hedgehog Conservation Strategy – Hedgehog Street</a></p>



Species	Information	Measures
<b>Bechstein's bat</b> <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41,</p> <p>Very rare species, only found in southern Wales and parts of southern England. The UK is at the northernmost edge of its distribution range.</p> <p>Relatively few confirmed records in East Sussex but distribution has widened in more recent years.</p> <p>Woodland management is key.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor and protect (e.g. through raising awareness with landowners) all existing confirmed roost sites, retain as many potential roost sites as practically possible, and ensure a succession or continuity of potential roost sites for the future.</li> <li>2. <i>Promote and advise woodland owners and managers on management of roost trees and ensuring successional trees for future roost provision within range. As Bechstein's bat maternity colonies heavily rely on woodpecker hole roosts, woodpecker ecology also needs to be considered. This would include leaving/creating areas of rough grassland within which green woodpeckers can forage for ants.</i></li> <li>3. Create a good network of habitats for roosting, feeding and commuting, avoiding isolating any areas currently used for feeding and ensure good connectivity between sites.</li> <li>4. <i>Reduce pesticide use within foraging areas to improve insect diversity.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Woodland specialists – Bats and woodland – Bat Conservation Trust</a></p>
<b>Grey long-eared bat</b> <i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	<p>Legal protection, EN.</p> <p>Southern European species, with distribution extending to southern England. In England, restricted to a few colonies in Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Dorset, Devon and Somerset.</p> <p>Key species: Records for this species have increased over recent years in East Sussex.</p> <p>Grassland meadows and woodland edge for foraging, roosts in buildings.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor and protect (e.g. through raising awareness with landowners) known roost sites, retain as many potential roost sites as practically possible, and ensure a succession or continuity of potential roost sites for the future.</li> <li>2. Create a good network of habitats for roosting, feeding and commuting, avoiding isolating any areas currently used for feeding and ensure good connectivity between sites.</li> <li>3. <i>Reduce pesticide use within foraging areas to improve insect diversity.</i></li> </ol>

Species	Information	Measures
<b>White-clawed crayfish</b> <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, EN, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Only freshwater crayfish in Britain. Under threat and declining throughout European range. In lowland England, tends to be confined to clean, base-rich watercourses.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey to know current distribution.</li> <li>2. Investigate and correct sources of poor water quality or water resource issues and enhancement of habitat, e.g.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reduce risk of pollution through reduction in chemical use and creation of buffer zones.</li> <li>b. Maintain water levels and ensure stable flow regime with pools and glides.</li> <li>c. Maintain/create variety of refuges within channel, e.g. cobbles and boulders, submerged tree roots, soft banks.</li> <li>d. Maintain stands of submerged vegetation and ensure habitat not dominated by algae such as blanket weed.</li> <li>e. Maintain areas of undercut, vertical bank, with overhanging vegetation.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Consider the establishment of ark sites to maintain the population.</li> <li>4. <i>Follow CHECK-CLEAN-DRY principles if entering watercourses to limit transfer of crayfish plague.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Inform landowners, developers and other stakeholders of presence.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Ark sites for crayfish. Buglife.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Check Clean Dry » NNSS</a></p>
<b>A spider</b> <i>Micaria albobittata</i>	<p>VU, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Common on hot hillsides near the coast. Mainly occurs in stony areas or on steep slopes unsuitable for cultivation. Most records Dorset and South Devon. The single recent Sussex site (Hastings/St Leonards) is regionally important as the only one on the South East English coast – all others are further west.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain open grassland and prevent growth of scrub.</li> <li>2. <i>Targeted re-survey of all former and nearby sites, using standardised methodology to assess current status.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Autecological study to characterise microhabitat requirements, elucidate relationship with ants, and inform coastal grassland management.</i></li> </ol>





Species	Information	Measures
<b>A spider</b> <i>Trochosa robusta</i>	<p>VU, NR.</p> <p>Only recorded from southern half of England. Mainly stony chalk grassland, especially on cliff-tops and under-cliff. This already VU species is in clear decline and expected to be EN or CR when next reviewed. The 1997 record from Hastings Country Park is important in this context and deserves dedicated resurvey.</p> <p>Hastings Country Park, Ditchling Beacon.</p>	<p>Targeted survey of all recorded, nearby and apparently suitable sites, using standardised methodology to assess current status.</p>
<b>Fen raft spider</b> <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, VU, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Only known from three locations in Britain: Pevensey Levels supports largest population in UK. Interest feature of SSSI and Ramsar.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey Pevensey Levels population to inform appropriate management.</li> <li>2. Manage and maintain water levels.</li> <li>3. Seek opportunities in the vicinity of all populations to aid spread by improving connectivity and extent of suitable wetland habitat.</li> </ol>
<b>Heath potter wasp</b> <i>Eumenes coarctatus</i>	<p>Sussex Rare.</p> <p>South Devon to East Sussex and north to Buckinghamshire. Very localised.</p> <p>Heathland with patches of exposed clay and sources of water.</p>	<p>Manage heathland to maintain sources of water and patches of exposed wet clay for construction of nest pots.</p>
<b>Oak mining bee</b> <i>Andrena ferox</i>	<p>S41, EN.</p> <p>Rarely encountered and confined to scattered sites in South England.</p> <p>Mature and open leaved woodland with a high proportion of oak.</p> <p>Recorded at Hastings, Flat Roper Wood, Great Dixter.</p>	<p>Ensure high proportion of oak in broadleaved woodland.</p> <p><a href="#">Woodland Wildlife Toolkit</a> &gt; Woodland and shrub canopy invertebrate assemblage.</p>

Species	Information	Measures
<b>Potter flower bee</b> <i>Anthophora retusa</i>	S41, EN, Sussex Rare. Formerly widespread, now restricted to East Sussex, Dorset, Isle of Wight and Hampshire. Rapid and largely unexplained decline in Britain.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain habitat of sandy deposits above chalk, with species-rich clifftop grassland.</li> <li>2. <i>Survey and monitor known populations.</i></li> </ol>
<b>A beetle</b> <i>Geotrupes mutator</i>	NT, NR, Sussex Rare. Uncommon and declining with thin scattering of records in England and Wales, usually in horse and cattle pasture. Requires large areas of unimproved grassland with grazing animals to provide it with a supply of dung.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake conservation grazing with horse/cattle in suitable grassland habitats.</li> <li>2. Implement year round low intensity cattle, sheep or horse grazing at sites across the key landscapes. Do not use endectocides. In winter livestock should not be fed in silage, maize or soya since this affects the quality of the dung and its nutritional value to coprophagous invertebrate larvae.</li> <li>3. <i>Targeted non-lethal monitoring to assess population trends in response to amended livestock management techniques.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Glow-worm</b> <i>Lampyris noctiluca</i>	LC. Iconic species. Well distributed and relatively common in East Sussex, although concern that it is declining and it has been lost from some sites. Found in low growing vegetation, often at the base of hedgerows, in grasslands and woodland edges. Hides away in crevices under stones or bark during the day.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain dark corridors at and adjoining known sites.</li> <li>2. Avoid strimming vegetation at the base of hedgerows during mating season (June to July).</li> </ol>
<b>Mediterranean oil beetle</b> <i>Meloe mediterraneus</i>	VU, Sussex Rare. East Sussex is one of only two locations in UK where the species is found (the other being South Devon). Until recently presumed extinct. Found on coastal grassland.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain, enhance and expand flower-rich coastal grasslands with abundant solitary mining bees.</li> <li>2. <i>Targeted survey of sites with suitable habitat.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Raise awareness among the public of this species.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Mediterranean Oil Beetle – Bug Directory – Buglife</a></p>



Species	Information	Measures
<b>Six-spotted pot beetle</b> <i>Cryptocephalus sexpunctatus</i>	<p>S41, EN, NR.</p> <p>Broadleaf woodland species associated with a range of woody species such as hazel, aspen, and oak. Larvae possibly myrmecophilous. Adults require warm, sheltered glades and rides in woodland and neglect of woodlands will be threat.</p> <p>Woodland and calcareous grassland with dense scrub.</p> <p>Iconic species recorded at Flatropers Wood.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued management of ancient woodlands to ensure presence of open space.</li> <li>2. Maintain grassland management with structural diversity including hawthorn and hazel scrub.</li> <li>3. <i>Targeted survey of sites with potentially suitable habitat.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Southern oyster mushroom beetle</b> <i>Triplax lacordairii</i>	<p>R.</p> <p>Associated with oyster mushroom species, <i>Pleurotus</i> spp. Growing on dead and decaying beech.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Management to ensure suitable growth of oyster mushroom needed.</li> <li>2. Ensure that fallen and standing deadwood retained, particularly that with bark attached.</li> </ol> <p><a href="#">The Species</a>   <a href="#">The Species Recovery Trust</a>   <a href="#">southern oyster mushroom beetle</a></p>
<b>Stag beetle</b> <i>Lucanus cervus</i>	<p>Legal protection, NS, S41, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Large and iconic species that is locally distributed in East Sussex the majority of records located to the west of a line between Crowborough and Ringmer, and particularly around the Ringmer area. Larvae take three to four years to fully develop.</p>	<p>Ensure undisturbed deadwood is available for larvae in suburban parks and gardens as well as in woodlands in wider countryside.</p> <p><a href="#">Woodland Wildlife Toolkit</a> &gt; Stag Beetle</p> <p><a href="#">Stag beetle facts</a> – <a href="#">People's Trust for Endangered Species</a></p>





Species	Information	Measures
<b>Small pearl-bordered Fritillary</b> <i>Boloria selene</i>	<p>S41, NT, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Extinct as a native. Strongholds throughout much of Scotland and Wales and in north-western and south-western counties of England, with scattered colonies elsewhere. Found in discrete colonies. Most English colonies found in open areas within deciduous woodland, with damp areas preferred. Relatively sedentary with limited capacity for colonising new areas.</p> <p>Very restricted range in East Sussex and species restoration project in place.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coppice woodlands to create coupes and glades.</li> <li>2. Maintain well-established humid field layer with abundant <i>Viola</i> spp.</li> <li>3. Manage water levels to prevent habitat drying out.</li> </ol>
<b>Wart-biter cricket</b> <i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, EN, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Extremely localised in GB and restricted to southern England where only found at six sites, three of which were reintroduction sites. Four sites in East Sussex. Chalk grassland.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Survey suitable locations.</i></li> <li>2. Ensure heterogenous habitat structure with mosaic of vegetation classes, flower-rich sward and areas of bare ground.</li> <li>3. Manage scrub through periodic clearance and appropriate grazing regime.</li> <li>4. Avoid grazing April to September when nymphs or adults likely to be present.</li> </ol> <p><u><a href="#">Decticus verrucivorus</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">Wart-biter Bush-cricket – Bug Directory – Buglife</a></u></p>
<b>Emerald damselfly</b> <i>Lestes sponsa</i>	<p>LC.</p> <p>Declining nationally. The status of this species in East Sussex is uncertain but perhaps declining and it should be placed on the ‘concern list’.</p> <p>Needs shallow standing water (bog pools, ponds and ditches).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Annual counts from selected sites.</i></li> <li>2. Create shallow ponds with vegetation that retain water late in season.</li> </ol>



Species	Information	Measures
<b>Large plain stiletto</b> <i>Thereva cinifera</i>	NT, NR.  Currently known from only a few southern sites. Pett Levels population associated with rabbit disturbed sandy-gravelly ground on coastal floodplain grazing marsh beside sea wall.	Create and maintain patches of disturbed bare ground within coastal floodplain grazing marsh.
<b>Pondweed leafhopper</b> <i>Erotettix cyane</i>	S41, Sussex Rare.  Only found at six ponds in South East England at only three sites: two in Sussex, one in Surrey.  Exclusively found in ponds on only food plant, broad-leaved pondweed <i>Potamogeton natans</i> .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain and monitor known pond sites.</li> <li>2. Ensure surrounding land management maintains high water quality.</li> <li>3. <i>Autecological research to establish life history features.</i></li> <li>4. Pond creation and/or restoration (including inoculation of new ponds with pondweed where necessary) in vicinity of known sites to facilitate natural dispersal and spreading of risk.</li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Pondweed Leafhopper – Species Directory – Freshwater Habitats Trust</a>  <a href="#">UKBAP species</a></p>
<b>Field gentian</b> <i>Gentianella campestris</i>	S41, VU (GB), EN (England), Sussex Rare.  Widespread but localised throughout Scotland, North Wales, North and West Ireland and northern England, but very rare in England south of Pennines. Rare in East Sussex and declining.  Found on chalk heath and chalk grassland.  Target species for Species Recovery Trust.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation and maintenance of short sward grassland, with relatively heavy cattle/pony grazing.</li> <li>2. Carry out heather/bracken management from November.</li> <li>3. <i>Support Species Recovery Trust project.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Gentianella campestris</a></p>
<b>Heath lobelia</b> <i>Lobelia urens</i>	S41, VU (GB), VU (England), NR, Sussex Rare.  Native in extreme south of Britain where it is rare and at northern European limit. Found at only seven sites across south of England from Cornwall to Sussex.  Rare in East Sussex, found only at Flimwell.  Target species for Species Recovery Trust.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create small areas of bare ground at known sites to trigger dormant seeds through scrub removal and cattle grazing.</li> <li>2. Heavy cutting and grazing interspersed with relaxation of management.</li> <li>3. <i>Support the work of the Species Recovery Trust.</i></li> </ol> <p><a href="#">Lobelia urens</a></p>

Species	Information	Measures
<b>Lesser calamint</b> <i>Clinopodium calamintha</i>	<p>NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Core British range in eastern England, but with outliers as far west as Forest of Dean. Rare in East Sussex. Best population is at Hastings Castle where the main threat is human activity.</p> <p>Found on dry banks and rocky places.</p>	<p><i>Manage human disturbance through education.</i></p>
<b>Lesser marshwort</b> <i>Apium inundatum</i>	<p>VU, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Rare in Sussex. Although never common, formerly known from number of ponds on Wealden commons scattered across Sussex. Decreasing.</p> <p>Found in shallow ditches and ponds. Recorded at Chailey, Tarring Neville, Pevensey Levels.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain and safeguard small farm ponds and grazed commons.</li> <li>2. Create new small ponds in suitable locations.</li> </ol>
<b>Marsh clubmoss</b> <i>Lycopodiella inundata</i>	<p>S41, EN, NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Main populations found in southern England, in the New Forest, and on heaths in Hampshire and Surrey. Rare in East Sussex.</p> <p>Recorded at Isle of Thorns. Found on damp heathland, bare peaty soil.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Protect known site through education and raised awareness.</i></li> <li>2. Maintain managed heath and hydrology.</li> <li>3. Create areas of bare exposed peat to boost regeneration.</li> <li>4. Expand habitat to improve connectivity.</li> <li>5. Investigate selective reintroductions to suitable sites close to existing sites where conditions are suitable (reintroductions are being explored by the Species Recovery Trust in collaboration with Natural England).</li> </ol>
<b>Red star-thistle</b> <i>Centaurea calcitrapa</i>	<p>EN, NR, S41.</p> <p>Rare in British Isles (BI), established only in Kent and Sussex. Archaeophyte<sup>o</sup>, listed by National Biodiversity Network (NBN) as non-native, although considered to be native in Sussex. Very locally abundant in horse-grazed grassland and open downland, forming extensive dense patches at Mile Oak. Doing OK at known sites.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Monitor known sites.</i></li> <li>2. Encourage appropriate management (horse grazing) within and adjacent to known sites.</li> </ol>





Species	Information	Measures
<b>Spiked rampion</b> <i>Phyteuma spicatum</i>	<p>Legal protection, EN (GB), EN (England), NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>East Sussex is the only area in the British Isles where found as a native. Confined to 8 sites, one of which holds c. 85% of the UK population.</p> <p>Open woodland, wood margins, by rides and streams, hedge banks and road verges.</p> <p>Species Recovery Trust target species.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor known sites.</li> <li>2. Manage roadside and woodland sites to reduce competition from bracken and shading from trees and shrubs, and that plants are protected from grazing where deer are an issue.</li> <li>3. Reintroductions to suitable sites close to existing sites where conditions are suitable (further introductions are already planned by the Species Recovery Trust).</li> <li>4. Undertake research into germination, seedling establishment and longevity.</li> </ol> <p><a href="#">The Species</a>   <a href="#">The Species Recovery Trust</a>   <a href="#">spiked rampion</a></p>
<b>Upright chickweed</b> <i>Moenchia erecta</i>	<p>VU.</p> <p>Occasional in Britain, predominantly in southern England and Wales. Rare in East Sussex. Formerly locally common on downland.</p> <p>Found on heathland, acid grassland, coastal sand. Records from Camber and Beddingham.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain short grazed or mown turf with some disturbance to maintain open areas.</li> <li>2. Remove scrub.</li> </ol>
<b>Round-leaved feather-moss</b> <i>Rhynchostegium rotundifolium</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Very rare in Britain. Known only from two sites in calcareous districts.</p> <p>Woodland/hedgerows.</p>	<p>Manage bramble and ivy.</p>
<b>Bristly stonewort</b> <i>Chara hispida</i>	<p>Not red listed but rare in the South East and very rare in Sussex. Another species which lives in its chalky water with other special things. It and its habitat need help.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearance to reduce eutrophication and competition.</li> <li>2. Remove/prevent introduction of carp into known/potential sites.</li> <li>3. Create suitable new water bodies.</li> </ol>

## 6.2 Assemblage Measures

### Coastal Habitats

#### Breeding and Migrating/Wintering Shore Birds Assemblage

##### Measures:

- *Protect from disturbance and predators through education, fencing etc. Wardening is key.*
- Create network of new breeding areas including use of mesh-sided rafts, shingle islands, and scrapes and pools to benefit species all year.
- Support and allow shingle/sand habitats to renaturalise to create shingle features.
- Potential for some managed realignment and creation of new saltmarsh.
- *Monitor populations.*

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Little tern</b> <i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Legal protection, BoCC Amber. Scarce breeding summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant. Only breeds at Rye Harbour and declining. Concerted effort required to reverse decline.
<b>Mediterranean gull</b> <i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	Legal protection, Notable Bird, BoCC Amber. Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant; scarce breeder. Colony at Rye Harbour is one of three main breeding sites in UK.
<b>Ringed plover</b> <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	BoCC Red. Scarce breeder; fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor. Breeding pairs restricted to short stretches of coast, almost always on shingle beaches.
<b>Sandwich tern</b> <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	BoCC Amber. Fairly common although localised breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant; very scarce winter visitor. Breeding restricted to Rye Harbour.



Cliff nesting birds

Measures:

- Annual productivity and population monitoring.
- Protection of breeding colonies from disturbance through e.g. wardening, awareness raising etc.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Fulmar</b> <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	BoCC Amber. Scarce breeding species and passage migrant. Would likely benefit from habitat measures.
<b>Kittiwake</b> <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	BoCC Red. Common but very localised breeding species; fairly common or common winter visitor and passage migrant. Rare away from coast. Breeding colony at Seafood Head is iconic and is towards southern edge of range. Number of breeding birds has not declined in the same way as northern colonies.

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Kittiwake © iStock.com/birdsonline



## Coastal Grazing Marsh & Upper Saltmarsh Assemblage

### Measures:

- Maintain existing habitat inside and peripheral to protected sites and expand through positive management where possible.<sup>6</sup>
- Work with natural processes and allow space to roll back saltmarsh due to sea level rise increase. Identify managed realignment sites.
- Where appropriate, light grazing, aiming for low levels of disturbance/trampling, which could damage the flora and fauna and contribute to erosion.
- Expand areas of grazing marsh by re-introducing appropriate water level management on improved grassland and arable land. Target to ensure the expansion and linkage of existing sites and to promote functioning coastal floodplains.
- Encourage expansion of marsh mallow *Althaea officinalis* along drainage ditches from current range.
- Raise awareness to adaptation and resilience ([Tools and guidance](#) | [Estuarine & Coastal Sciences Association](#)).

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Borrer's saltmarsh-grass</b> <i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>	S41, NT, NS, Sussex Rare. Local and decreasing on coasts in south and south-east British Isles. Rare in East Sussex. Shingle, tidal river banks and other brackish habitats. Ouse Valley.
<b>Marsh mallow moth</b> <i>Hydraecia osseola</i>	S41, R. Restricted in Britain to a few scattered locations in Kent and East Sussex. One of the only UK populations is on Sussex/Kent border feeds on <i>Althaea officinalis</i> growing along drainage ditches. Iconic.
<b>Parsley water-dropwort</b> <i>Oenanthe lachenalia</i>	NT. Distributed widely around the coastline of GB. Declining in inland sites. Occasional, local in East Sussex. Appears to have decreased in Rye area. New populations on Pevensey Levels. Damp coastal grassland and marsh, rarely inland grassland and fen.

<sup>6</sup> Note: relevant consents/assents from e.g. Natural England will be needed for work impacting protected sites.



Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Saltmarsh goosefoot</b> <i>Chenopodium (Oxybasis) chenopodioides</i>	NS, Sussex Rare. In mainland Britain, may now occur only in Thames Estuary, Kent and Sussex. Rare in Sussex.
<b>Sea aster bee</b> <i>Colletes halophilus</i>	S41, Notable A, Sussex Rare. Common in East Anglia and Thames estuary, occurs more sporadically along south coast of England. Strong evidence that it is expanding its range. Only known from four locations in county: Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Hastings, Norman's Bay & Cuckmere. Dependent on sea aster.
<b>Sea barley</b> <i>Hordeum marinum</i>	S41, VU, NS, Sussex Rare. Recorded around coast primarily in southern England and South Wales. Has decreased in Britain, particularly from The Wash northwards. Scarce, local in East Sussex. Occurs along Ouse Valley in number of locations south of Lewes and locally frequent in Rye area. Found on coastal grassland, shingle, tidal rivers.
<b>Sea clover</b> <i>Trifolium squamosum</i>	NS, Sussex Rare. Records predominantly restricted to southern England and Wales. Scarce, local in East Sussex. Coastal – open brackish grassland; sand and shingle; seawalls and banks; tidal riverbanks. Ouse and Cuckmere Valleys.
<b>Slender hare's-ear</b> <i>Bupleurum tenuissimum</i>	S41, VU (GB), VU (England), NS, Sussex Rare. Vulnerable nationally, scarce in East Sussex. Saltmarsh. Ouse Valley, the Midrips.

## Shingle and Sand Dune Assemblage

### Measures:

- Maintain existing habitat inside and peripheral to protected sites and have regard to these species in the consideration of any coastal defence works.<sup>7</sup>
- Expand existing populations where possible by managing habitat adjacent to known locations.
- Manage and where possible eradicate invasive non-native species.
- Educate to minimise disturbance from trampling and recreational pressures.
- *Safeguard sparsely vegetated shingle from loss and damage and support coastal processes that support this habitat.*
- *Develop local policies to prevent further development of and encroachment on coastal sites.*
- [Coastal vegetated shingle – Buglife](#)

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>A spider</b> <i>Pellenes tripunctatus</i>	VU, NR. Restricted to coastal shingle sites.
<b>A true fly</b> <i>Miltogramma germari</i>	R. Frequents sandy, coastal habitats – associated with a number of solitary bee species whose burrows are also used by the larvae of this species – a <a href="#">kleptoparasite</a> <sup>9</sup> of the bees' food stores. Coastal Dunes.
<b>Frosted orache</b> <i>Atriplex laciniata</i>	Sussex Rare. Not listed nationally but scarce in Sussex. Numbers can vary according to the movement of sand and shingle and could re-appear at former sites in the future.
<b>Golden lantern spider</b> <i>Agroeca cuprea</i>	S41, NT, NR. Known from only three locations nationally since 1992. Dune sites threatened by development etc. Camber Sands, Rye Harbour.

<sup>7</sup> Note: relevant consents/assents from e.g. Natural England will be needed for work impacting protected sites.





Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Little-robin</b> <i>Geranium purpureum</i>	NR, NS, Sussex Rare. Confined to southern coasts in British Isles. Long known in Sussex but always rare.
<b>Saltwort</b> <i>Salsola kali</i>	VU. Widespread around coasts of British Isles. Had declined since 1960s with considerable loss in some areas, often due to recreational pressure. Rare in East Sussex.
<b>Sea bindweed</b> <i>Calystegia soldanella</i>	VU, Sussex Rare. Scarce, very locally frequent in East Sussex on coastal dunes and shingle.
<b>Sea sandwort</b> <i>Honckenia peploides</i>	Widely recorded from most of coastline of British Isles. Rare in East Sussex and has declined in historic sites.
<b>Sea-kale</b> <i>Cramé maritima</i>	Locally common in Sussex, likely reflecting the fact that Sussex is a stronghold for the habitat. Useful as a habitat indicator. Considered iconic.
<b>Stinking hawksbeard</b> <i>Crepis foetida</i>	Archaeophyte. Now only known from one natural site (Kent) and two established populations nearby. Re-introduced at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve where it is part of an ongoing programme.
<b>Sussex emerald moth</b> <i>Thalera fimbrialis</i>	Occasional immigrant but resident at Rye Harbour. Requires management for <i>Daucus carota</i> in coastal habitats. Iconic.

## Farmed Landscape & Soils

### Farmland Birds

#### Measures:

- Aim for a range of different crops and habitats including fallow areas throughout the year and retain areas of stubble.
- Create and manage set aside areas that could support a mosaic of scrub, species-rich grassland, rough grassland, beetle banks, some bare ground and ponds or small wader scrapes to provide water and muddy edges.
- Create flower rich arable margins.
- Manage hay meadows to produce a range of seeds for seed eating species.
- Create areas of scrub and avoid cutting all hedgerows annually to allow them to develop.
- For stone-curlew, create 1 ha to 5ha uncropped fallow plots with 30% bare ground. Retain plot until crop is harvested from late July. Monitor breeding while protecting nests and chicks.

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Corn bunting</b> <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	S41, BoCC Red. Fairly common resident. Focus of conservation projects. <a href="#">Corn Bunting conservation – Advice for Farmers</a>
<b>Cuckoo</b> <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	S41, BoCC Red. Fairly common but declining summer visitor. Reasons for national decline poorly understood.
<b>Grey partridge</b> <i>Perdix perdix</i>	S41, BoCC Red. Scarce resident; much declined but benefiting locally through conservation effort. <a href="#">Grey Partridge – advice for Farmers</a>
<b>Linnet</b> <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	BoCC Red. Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. East Sussex is an important UK county for breeding, second only to Kent, and appears to be holding its own in the face of national declines. Stronghold for the species and considered iconic.



Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Skylark</b> <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	<p>BoCC Red.</p> <p>Slight increase in range but population decline. Populations in non-agricultural habitats seem to have held up. Very common but declining resident in East Sussex and probably common passage migrant and winter visitor.</p>
<b>Stone-curlew</b> <i>Burhinus oedichnemus</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, BoCC Amber.</p> <p>Scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Also found on chalky downland and grassy heaths.</p>
<b>Tree sparrow</b> <i>Passer montanus</i>	<p>S41, BoCC Red.</p> <p>Much declined and now very scarce resident; scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.</p> <p>Across East Sussex, breeding restricted to Rye Bay, Pevensey Levels and Brede Valley.</p>
<b>Turtle dove</b> <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	<p>S41, BoCC Red.</p> <p>Red. Scarce and declining summer visitor and passage migrant. Breeding has drastically declined. Sussex holds c. 4.5% of the national population.</p> <p>Remaining stronghold around Rye Bay plus cluster in and around Ashdown Forest.</p> <p><a href="#">Providing feeding resources for turtle doves</a></p>
<b>Yellowhammer</b> <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	<p>BoCC Red.</p> <p>Common resident. Declined, and dependent on management of arable margins and heathland.</p>



Skylark © iStock.com/MikeLane45



## Rare Arable Plants Assemblage

### Measures:

- Low-input arable management, adjacent to or on known sites.
- Cultivate margins in the spring between February and April or in the autumn between September and November.
- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures or pesticides except for herbicides to weed-wipe or spot-treat for the control of injurious weeds or invasive non-natives.
- [Managing Arable Farm Land – Plantlife](#)

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Annual knawel</b> <i>Scleranthus annuus</i>	S41, EN (GB), EN (England). Generally lowland, has declined significantly throughout its range. Rare in East Sussex.
<b>Corn buttercup</b> <i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>	S41, CR (GB), EN (England), Sussex Rare. Archaeophyte. Formerly widespread across lowland England and Wales, extending to Scotland. Found in arable and disturbed ground. Population declined by more than 80% across core range during 20th century. Rare in East Sussex and declining, as elsewhere in British Isles.
<b>Field gromwell</b> <i>Lithospermum arvense</i>	EN (GB), EN (England), Sussex Rare. Archaeophyte. Arable weed in Britain since Bronze Age, declined substantially since 1960s. Rare in East Sussex. Has decreased greatly although can appear in large numbers.
<b>Prickly poppy</b> <i>Papaver argemone</i>	VU (GB), EN (England). Archaeophyte. Southern and central England and southern Scotland. Occasional, very locally frequent in East Sussex.
<b>Shepherd's-needle</b> <i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	S41, CR (GB), EN (England), Sussex Rare. Archaeophyte. Once an abundant arable weed, but now on the verge of extinction. Rare in East Sussex.



## Species-rich Grasslands

### Breeding Waders – Wet Grassland & Heathland Assemblage

#### Measures:

- Restore and expand areas of wet meadow, heathland, mire and saltmarsh.
- Manage water levels appropriately.
- Graze (ideally cattle) to provide a mosaic of suitable sward heights for nesting and feeding.
- Minimise grazing during the breeding season to reduce chance of trampling from livestock.
- Create small wader scrapes, hollows and pools to provide muddy areas for feeding.
- Consider use of predator fencing to protect nests and chicks.
- *Minimise disturbance from human activity during breeding season.*

Species	Category	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	B	<p>S41, BoCC Red.</p> <p>Scarce or fairly common resident and very common winter visitor. Coastal wetlands, rivers valleys and levels are core breeding areas, but pairs scattered across High Weald. Target conservation work has brought increases in breeding pairs, but recovery likely to be slow. Wintering birds spread more widely over Downs and along the coast than breeders but river valleys and wetlands are still key areas.</p> <p><a href="#">Lapwing – advice for Farmers</a></p>
<b>Redshank</b> <i>Tringa totanus</i>	B	<p>BoCC Amber.</p> <p>Scarce resident; common winter visitor and autumn passage migrant; fairly common spring migrant. Breeding pairs declined more steeply in East Sussex than nationally. Wintering numbers declining but not as fast as nationally.</p> <p><a href="#">Redshank conservation – advice for farmers</a></p>

## Chalk Grassland Assemblage

### Measures:

- Grazing with sheep or cattle between mid-July and April to maintain structural diversity with mixture of short turf, longer vegetation, small areas of scattered scrub and some bare ground.
- Create structural diversity across the chalk landscape to support the different successional stages of chalk grassland and the species they support.
- Avoid use of fertilisers to keep nutrient levels low.
- If necessary (if grazing not possible), a late summer cut with removal of arisings and control scattered scrub with cutting between November and February as required.
- Safeguard existing sites and seek to expand habitat to improve connectivity.
- *Survey and monitor.*

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Adonis blue</b> <i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>	Legal protection, NT, Sussex Rare. Thermophilic <sup>9</sup> , requires short sward grassland with ants and horseshoe vetch. Iconic. <a href="#">c0874 Adonis Blue</a>
<b>A planthopper</b> <i>Tettigometra impressopunctata</i>	Sussex Rare. Scarce species restricted to high quality downland and calcareous dunes in southern England and Wales. Excellent indicator of high quality chalk grassland. Recorded at Malling Down.
<b>A spider</b> <i>Phaeocedus braccatus</i>	VU, NR, Sussex Rare. Confined to southern England. Very local but may be frequent at some sites on chalk grassland. The East Sussex population (Cuckmere to Malling Down) is the biggest cluster of hectads nationally and therefore important in this context.
<b>Basil thyme</b> <i>Clinopodium acinos</i>	S41, VU (GB), VU (England). Thinly scattered across southern, central and eastern England, becoming increasingly common in northern England. Occasional, local in East Sussex.





Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Brown-banded carder bee</b> <i>Bombus humilis</i>	<p>S41, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Intermittently present along south and west coasts of England and Wales. Significant decline during 20th Century, coinciding with loss of large areas of flower-rich grassland.</p> <p>Largely restricted to coast between Hastings and Camber plus chalk grassland of South Downs.</p>
<b>Burnt orchid</b> <i>Neotinea ustulata</i>	<p>S41, EN (GB), EN (England), NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Distributed throughout central and south Europe and southern Sweden in the north. Scarce in East Sussex, always local on downland, formerly more widespread. Good populations remain.</p>
<b>Carthusian snail</b> <i>Monacha (Monacha) cartusiana</i>	<p>NT, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>East Sussex supports some of the largest populations of this species in the UK (e.g. downland above Lewes [Southerham], River Ouse grass banks south of Lewes, dunes at Rye). When present on Downs is usually sign of old chalk grassland not invaded by succession scrub.</p>
<b>Chalk hill blue</b> <i>Polyommatus coridon</i>	<p>Legal protection, NT.</p> <p>More widespread than the other chalk grassland blues, larvae feed on horseshoe vetch. Iconic.</p>
<b>Chalk milkwort</b> <i>Polygala calcarea</i>	<p>Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Infrequent and local plant in Britain, restricted to southern England. Scarce, locally not infrequent in East Sussex. There has been a decline but still present in good quantity in some areas.</p>
<b>Chalk-hill lance-wing</b> <i>Epermenia insecurella</i>	<p>S41.</p> <p>Scarce species found only on eastern Downs in Sussex, nationally scarce. Larvae feed on bastard toadflax <i>Thesium humifusum</i>.</p>
<b>Curly beardless-moss</b> <i>Weissia condensa</i>	<p>S41, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Needs well grazed steep chalk grassland, with closely grazed turf and bare areas. South Downs considered within top five National Character Areas for this species.</p>
<b>Deptford pink</b> <i>Dianthus armeria</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, EN (GB), EN (England), NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Thinly scattered across southern England and rare in Wales and Ireland. Rare in East Sussex. Early records from Downs near Eastbourne and still occurs there sporadically.</p>

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Downland furrow bee</b> <i>Halictus eurygnathus</i>	<p>EN.</p> <p>Not known outside Sussex. On South Downs between Brighton, Lewes and Eastbourne. Strongly associated with greater knapweed.</p>
<b>Early gentian</b> <i>Gentianella anglica</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Endemic to the UK – found in central and southern England. Has declined markedly outside its core area in Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Wiltshire. Rare in East Sussex and always has been. Detailed surveys in 1994 found largest known population on British mainland, although numbers had declined in later years. Tendency for numbers to vary considerably therefore could persist.</p>
<b>Field fleawort</b> <i>Tephrosia integrifolia</i>	<p>VU, NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>In the British Isles, restricted to southern England with core areas in Sussex and Wiltshire Downs. Scarce in East Sussex. Most colonies small but there are some substantial populations remaining.</p> <p>Bullock Hill, Seven Sisters.</p>
<b>Frog orchid</b> <i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	<p>S41, RedList GB post2001 VU, RedList ENG post2001 VU.</p> <p>Vulnerable nationally and scarce in East Sussex. South Downs National Character Areas considered within the top five for this species.</p>
<b>Grayling</b> <i>Hipparchia semele</i>	<p>S41, VU, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Single population in East Sussex is only one in UK on chalk. In imminent danger of extinction. Collaborative project underway between Butterfly Conservation and South Downs National Park Authority to manage habitat around population aimed at expanding range – early signs are promising.</p>
<b>Heath snail</b> <i>Helicella itala</i>	<p>LC.</p> <p>Although only assessed as LC in the 2014 Red Data Book, states “Records imply distinct decline over recent decades. Loss of populations in southern and central England are a cause for concern.” In East Sussex the species is now very local and typically found on a few of the best chalk grassland sites where it indicates long-term sympathetic traditional management typically cattle grazing.</p> <p>An iconic species where habitat management and habitat connectivity are key issues; could be a candidate for selective re-introduction as long as the reasons for decline at the sites have been addressed.</p>



Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Moon carrot</b> <i>Seseli libanotis</i>	<p>NT (GB), NT (England), NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Rare in British Isles and recorded recently only in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and East Sussex. Rare in East Sussex.</p> <p>Seaford Head, Hope Gap. Cliff-tops and rough chalk grassland.</p>
<b>Moss carder bee</b> <i>Bombus muscorum</i>	<p>EN (European), S41.</p> <p>Widely distributed throughout Britain and Ireland but showing signs of continuing severe decline since 1970. In southern areas, largely retreated to coast.</p> <p>Coast between Pett and Camber, Pevensey Levels, eastern South Downs, vegetated shingle at Cuckmere, Newhaven.</p>
<b>Musk orchid</b> <i>Herminium monorchis</i>	<p>S41, VU (GB), EN (England), NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Considered Regionally Extinct in Wales, now restricted to southern areas of England and is assessed as Endangered due to substantial and continuing decline. Rare across Sussex and was feared extinct in East Sussex until re-recorded at Malling Down in 2013.</p>
<b>Red-shanked carder bee</b> <i>Bombus ruderarius</i>	<p>S41.</p> <p>Catastrophic decline in abundance and distribution throughout British Isles. Scarce and declining in East Sussex.</p>
<b>Round-headed rampion</b> <i>Phyteuma orbiculare</i>	<p>NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Occurs on downland in Wiltshire, Hampshire and Surrey, but nowhere so frequent as in Sussex – locally frequent in East Sussex. “Pride of Sussex”.</p>
<b>Scaly-breck lichen</b> <i>Squamaria lentigera</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, CR, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>In the UK, used to be found in East Sussex (Brighton &amp; Hove) and Isle of Wight but now confined to two sites in East Anglia. Given historic presence, worthy of inclusion.</p> <p>Requires targeted survey to establish presence and distribution.</p>



Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Silver-spotted skipper</b> <i>Hesperia comma</i>	<p>Legal protection, NT, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Found on the chalk of southern England, including the North and South Downs, the Chilterns, Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire. Abundance has increased. Needs unimproved open chalk grasslands with short, patchy swards. Prefers warm, south-facing slopes.</p> <p><a href="#">c0874 Silver-spotted Skipper</a></p>
<b>Small blue</b> <i>Cupido minimus</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, NT.</p> <p>Early successional member of chalk grassland assemblage – areas of hot bare chalk where kidney vetch is pioneer species required. Iconic.</p> <p><a href="#">Small Blue</a></p>
<b>Sterile beardless-moss</b> <i>Weissia sterilis</i>	<p>S41, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Needs well grazed steep chalk grassland, with closely grazed turf and bare areas. South Downs considered within top five National Character Areas for this species.</p>
<b>Wall germander</b> <i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	<p>Sometimes thought of as an introduction in the British Isles, now thought to be native in Sussex, with the Cuckmere colony being the only known surviving native population in the British Isles.</p> <p>Monitor population at Cuckmere.</p>



📷 Round-headed rampion © iStock.com/phalder

## Waxcap and Other Grassland Fungi Assemblage

### Measures:

- **Note:** East Sussex known to be important for waxcap grasslands, with sites often found in old cemeteries, on grazing pastures and in habitat mosaics including woodland and wood pasture and parkland. Often associated with ant hill grasslands as they both require long standing undisturbed and uncultivated land.
- Maintenance of existing habitat inside and peripheral to protected sites.<sup>8</sup>
- Traditional land management that created the necessary habitat for this species should be maintained and taken up at adjacent/nearby sites to expand habitat, including short-sward grazing or cutting and removing cut material, and no fertilisation, herbicides or ploughing.
- *Raise awareness with landowner/manager.*
- *Survey and monitor.*
- *Waxcaps and grassland fungi: A guide to identification and management. Plantlife.*

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Blushing waxcap</b> <i>Neohygrocybe ovina</i>	Sussex Rare.  European distribution. UK records predominantly from Wales, northern England and Scotland, with South East records from East and West Sussex.
<b>Citrine waxcap</b> <i>Hygrocybe citrinovirens</i>	Widespread but rare throughout Europe. Widely distributed across UK, although apparently absent from eastern England.
<b>Crimson waxcap</b> <i>Hygrocybe punicea</i>	Sussex Rare.  Widespread but generally rare throughout Europe. Similarly, widespread across UK. Considered rare in East Sussex and noted to be associated with alder.
<b>Date waxcap</b> <i>Hygrocybe spadicea</i>	S41, Sussex Rare.  Widespread but generally rare throughout Europe. UK records widespread but largely confined to the west, with East Sussex records apparent outliers.
<b>Dingy waxcap</b> <i>Neohygrocybe ingrata</i>	European distribution. Scattered records across UK in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. English records restricted to South East (East and West Sussex), west and North West England.

<sup>8</sup> Note: relevant consents/assents from e.g. Natural England will be needed for work impacting protected sites.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Felted pinkgill</b> <i>Entoloma griseocyaneum</i>	Sussex Rare. Rare but widespread in Europe. UK records scattered and widespread, although absent from East Anglia.
<b>Glistening waxcap</b> <i>Gloioxanthomyces vitellinus</i>	Rare but widespread in Europe. Widespread records across UK.
<b>Jubilee waxcap</b> <i>Gliophorus reginae</i>	Scarce and widely scattered across UK. Unknown whether significant population.
<b>Lilac pinkgill</b> <i>Entoloma porphyrophaeum</i>	Widespread across UK and recently recorded locally.
<b>Mealy pinkgill</b> <i>Entoloma prunuloides</i>	Sussex Rare. Uncommon in Britain and Ireland but widely distributed.
<b>Nitrous waxcap</b> <i>Neohygrocybe nitrata</i>	Widespread but generally rare throughout Europe. UK records widespread although apparently absent from eastern England and Midlands.
<b>Pink waxcap</b> <i>Porpolomopsis calyptriformis</i>	Sussex Rare. European distribution. Widespread across UK, rare in East Sussex. Sheffield Park.
<b>Splendid waxcap</b> <i>Hygrocybe splendidissima</i>	Widespread but generally rare throughout Europe, with largest populations in UK, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Norway.
<b>Toasted waxcap</b> <i>Cuphophyllus colemannianus</i>	Globally vulnerable because of threats to habitat. European distribution. Widespread across UK.





## Woodland, Hedgerow & Scrub

### Deciduous Woodland and Wood Pasture Fungi

#### Measures:

- Maintain woodland cover, reversing habitat fragmentation and expansion of existing habitat.
- Prioritise expansion/connection at known sites.
- Wood-banks and other earthworks should be retained and protected from damage.
- Retain deadwood within the site, both standing and fallen. Retain decaying wood of deciduous trees.
- Retain a conifer element in PAWs (plantations on ancient woodland sites) restoration.
- Sweet chestnut coppice with known toothed fungi communities should be retained and if possible managed along traditional methods of cutting on a 10 to 12-year rotation.
- Invasive rhododendron should be controlled or eliminated.
- *Reduce levels of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.*
- *Raise awareness with landowner/manager and avoid tree felling at known locations.*
- *Survey and monitor.*
- [Woodland Wildlife Toolkit](#) > Fungi.

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Bilious bolete</b> <i>Boletus (Rubroboletus) legaliae</i>	VU. Uncommon in southern England and Europe. Grows with oak and beech, often on neutral to acid soils. Unknown if a significant population, but shortlisted given recent record and extent of suitable habitat locally.
<b>Bitter tooth</b> <i>Hydnellum scabrosum</i>	S41. Relatively scarce with records confined to South East England and Scotland. Unknown if local population significant, but shortlisted given extent of suitable habitat.
<b>Golden-gilled bolete</b> <i>(Phylloporus pelletieri)</i>	S41, VU. Predominantly western European distribution. Scarce and scattered records in UK from southern England, Wales, northern England and Scotland. Associated with oak and chestnut mostly found on well-drained banks. Unknown if significant population. Wood pasture and parkland. Recorded at Sheffield Park.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Pale bolete</b> <i>Butyriboletus fechtneri</i>	EN. Formerly regarded as a <i>Boletus</i> but transferred to new genus in 2014. Native to Europe. Very few records on NBN, predominantly in southern England. Unknown if a significant population, but shortlisted given recent record and extent of suitable habitat locally.
<b>Rosewood brittlegill</b> <i>Russula melitodes</i>	Rare in UK, England records restricted to South East, London, and Midlands. Deciduous woodland, wood pasture and parkland.
<b>Umbrella polypore</b> <i>Polyporus umbellatus</i>	Scarce and scattered across UK. Rare in Sussex. Sheffield Park.
<b>Zoned tooth</b> <i>Hydnellum conrescens</i>	S41. Relatively widespread with records from across most of UK except for Midlands. Considered iconic in East Sussex.



📷 Umbrella polypore  
 (*Polyporus umbellatus*)  
 © iStock.com/tomasztc

## Open Parkland Mature and Veteran Tree Lichens

### Measures:

- Maintain open well-lit conditions around mature and veteran native trees in locations that support these species by thinning regeneration (whilst being mindful of the need to retain some younger trees) and controlling invasive species such as ivy, holly and rhododendron.
- Remove or reduce sources of locally generated atmospheric pollutants, e.g. by reducing high stocking levels and by limiting fertilising of grasslands.
- If possible, convert arable land adjacent to veteran trees to pasture.
- Create new pollards out of younger trees and maintain them by periodic recutting.
- Necessary tree surgery of veteran trees may be needed to improve the stability of the tree and prolong its life without damaging the lichen.
- *Monitor the habitat and species to ensure that the landowner is aware of the presence of these species.*
- *Survey suitable veteran trees.*
- [Woodland Wildlife Toolkit](#) > Lichens.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Lemon tart lichen</b> <i>Lecanora sublivescens</i>	<p>S41, NT, NS, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Rare in Britain and internationally rare. Primarily a southern species. Well-lit trunks of mature or veteran oak or occasionally ash in parklands and wood pasture. Insufficient evidence but given historic presence and extent of suitable habitat locally, would likely benefit from habitat improvements.</p> <p><a href="#">Lemon-tart-lichen-species-information-guide-final.v2.pdf</a></p>
<b>Oak rim lichen</b> <i>Lecanora quercicola</i>	<p>Rare in Britain. Primarily a southern species in GB. Well-lit trunks of mature or veteran oak trees. Insufficient evidence to assess local population but prioritised given historic presence and extent of suitable habitat locally.</p> <p><a href="#">Oak-rim-lichen-species-information-guide-final.V2.pdf</a></p>



## Open Deciduous Woodland Assemblage

### Measures:

- Coppice woodland to create open glades and rides with light shade.
- Ensure presence of beech with shady bare ground beneath. Plant young beech trees near existing populations and/or allow natural recolonisation.
- Avoid grazing.
- Maintain fallen dead wood.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Bird's-nest orchid</b> <i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	NT (GB), VU (England). Widespread across most of Europe. In British Isles, generally lowland and has decreased. Scarce in East Sussex. Some new sites have been found but overall decrease.
<b>Common fan-foot</b> <i>Pechipogo strigilata</i>	Scarce resident of ancient woodlands in East Sussex and in danger of extinction. Larvae feed on withered leaves on fallen branches, mainly <i>Quercus</i> . <a href="#">c0874 Barred Tooth-stripe</a>
<b>White helleborine</b> <i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	S41, VU (GB), VU (England). Scarce in East Sussex. At Friston Forest, spreading into new forestry compartments as beech plantation matures.



## Woodland Birds Assemblage

### Measures:

- Re-introduce coppicing, varying lengths of rotation to benefit different species, e.g. tree pipits like newly coppiced areas, whereas medium and long rotation will benefit other species. They should be reasonably sized blocks to create a coarse mosaic of larger patches of scrub and coppice for nightingale and other species.
- Create structural diversity by carrying out selective thinning to allow more light to reach the understorey, along with the widening of rides and creation of glades.
- Remove invasive woody species.
- Avoid heavy disturbance or a sudden/dramatic change in woodland structure.
- Improve connectivity in the wider landscape through creation of scrubby areas and hedgerows and soft edges between woodland and open habitats.
- *Control deer numbers.*
- *Monitor populations.*
- Retain deadwood where possible.
- *Tackle recreational disturbance and predation by domestic pets through e.g. the creation or improvement of footpaths, fencing, interpretation and education, defensive planting (using thorny species) etc.*
- [Woodland Wildlife Toolkit](#) > Birds.

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Eurasian honey-buzzard</b> <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Legal protection, BoCC Amber.  Very scarce breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. In 2011, estimated 12-15 breeding pairs across Sussex, making it one of the most important counties for the species in the UK. Provides excellent base for species to maintain robust population.  <a href="#">Honey-buzzard   BTO – British Trust for Ornithology</a>
<b>Hawfinch</b> <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	S41, BoCC Red.  Scarce breeding resident and in most years scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; occasionally more numerous.
<b>Lesser spotted woodpecker</b> <i>Dryobates minor comminutus</i>	S41, BoCC Red.  Scarce and declining resident.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Marsh tit</b> <i>Poecile palustris</i>	<p>S41, BoCC Red.</p> <p>Very common resident. Nationally, appears to be a stabilisation of the population, but unlikely they will regain former population levels in East Sussex.</p>
<b>Nightingale</b> <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	<p>BoCC Red.</p> <p>Fairly common summer visitor and infrequently seen passage migrant. East and West Sussex are important UK counties for breeding, second only to Kent. East Sussex appears to be holding its own in the face of national declines.</p> <p>Stronghold for the species and considered iconic.</p> <p>Specific habitat requirements: coppiced woodland; dense scrub/thickets; wetland.</p> <p><a href="#">conservation-advice-notes-001-nightingalesb.pdf</a></p>
<b>Spotted flycatcher</b> <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	<p>S41, BoCC Red.</p> <p>Fairly common but declining summer visitor; scarce passage migrant in spring and fairly common in autumn. Main problems for East Sussex (and UK) birds relate to wintering ground and migration route. However, woodland management would help maximise breeding success.</p>



Spotted flycatcher © iStock.com/birdsonline





## Lowland Heathland & Sandstone Outcrops

### Heathland Birds

#### Measures:

- Improve connectivity within the wider landscape by connecting open areas to wide rides within woodlands and scrubby edges to woodlands.
- Restore open habitats within woodlands, especially heathland, with scattered trees. Ideally these areas should be grazed to create structural diversity and encourage invertebrates.
- *Monitor populations especially those away from heathlands. These species breed in a range of habitats except for Dartford warbler which is primarily gorse and heathland, but some are found along the coast.*

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Dartford warbler</b> <i>Curruca undata</i>	Legal protection, NT, BoCC Amber. Scarce to fairly common but localised resident. At northern limit of its European and World range. Stronghold for species and considered iconic. Ashdown Forest SPA.
<b>Nightjar</b> <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Legal protection, S41, BoCC Amber. Fairly common but localised summer visitor rarely seen on migration. Heaths relatively small and fragmented, limiting nesting opportunities and increasing risk of disturbance. Stronghold for the species and considered iconic. Ashdown Forest SPA.
<b>Tree pipit</b> <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	S41, BoCC Red. Widespread distribution from Northern Spain and GB in west to Eastern Europe, Russia and Siberia in east. Fairly common but local summer visitor and fairly common passage migrant in East Sussex. Significant decline in breeding population.

## Sandstone Outcrops

### Measures:

- Monitor known populations.
- Manage vegetation to ensure populations do not become overgrown. In particular, remove coniferous species.
- Raise awareness amongst climbers and other recreational users.
- Raise awareness of the species with landowners/managers.
- [The High Weald Sandstone Project](#)

Species	Category	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Ribbonwort</b> <i>Pallavicinia lyellii</i>	B, 6.3	S41, Sussex Rare.  Two well-known sites where it has been monitored for many years and needs sensitive management. It disappeared many years ago from other sites. Good colonies at Harrisons Rocks and Philpots. Reports that Philpots is getting overgrown but Harrisons managed well.
<b>Slender thread-moss</b> <i>Orthodontium gracile</i>	B	S41, NR, Sussex Rare.  In the UK since 1970, recorded in East Sussex, Cheshire, mid-West Yorkshire and Midlothian. Recorded at Eridge Rocks and Butcher's Wood in 2013.



📷 Dartford warbler © iStock.com/Ian Newell



# Wetlands (Rivers, Streams & Aquifers + Wetlands & Standing Water Bodies)

## Amphibian Ponds Assemblage

### Measures:

- Restore ponds: de-silt, deepen, maintain water levels and improve water quality.
- Establish network of new ponds, with range of sizes and depths.
- Maintain/extend undisturbed semi-natural habitat surrounding pond.
- Avoid stocking with fish.
- *Establish toad crossing signage/patrols where roads cross migration routes.*
- Note: great crested newt conservation strategy in place through District Licencing.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Common toad</b> <i>Bufo bufo</i>	Legal protection, S41. Widespread in the UK but have declined by over 68% in last 30 years.
<b>Great crested newt</b> <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Legal protection, S41. Widespread but patchy distribution in the UK. East Sussex is a stronghold for the species. Qualifying feature of Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI, Ramsar and SAC. <a href="#">Newt Conservation Partnership</a>



Great crested newt © iStock.com/MikeLane45



## Grazing Marsh Molluscs

### Measures:

- Manage ditches to maintain high water quality and to reduce shade and vegetation cover.
- Maintain water levels in ditches across grazing marsh.
- Reduce grazing/provide buffer zones to reduce poaching and eutrophication.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>A mollusc</b> <i>Euglesa pseudosphaerium</i>	<p>LC, NS.</p> <p>Although only assessed as LC in the 2014 Red Data Book (RDB) this states, “<i>This species has a very local distribution within habitats that are vulnerable to inappropriate management, drainage and eutrophication hence susceptible to inappropriate management, drainage and local extinction. .... A candidate for Near Threatened</i>”.</p> <p>This is an iconic species indicative of the best flood plain and coastal grazing marshes and is one of the suite sometimes including <i>A. vorticulus</i>, <i>V. macrostoma</i> &amp; <i>S. nitida</i>.</p> <p>The large populations on Pevensey Levels and Lewes Brooks are not only of local but also national importance.</p>
<b>Large-mouthed valve snail</b> <i>Valvata macrostoma</i>	<p>S41, VU, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>Pevensey Levels (and associated ‘Eastbourne Levels’) probably support the most extensive populations of this snail in England and so are of national importance for the species. The species has become extinct on Lewes Brooks in last 20 years.</p> <p>Iconic species indicative of the best flood plain and coastal grazing marshes and it is one of a suite sometimes including <i>A. vorticulus</i>, <i>E. pseudosphaerium</i> &amp; <i>S. nitida</i>.</p>
<b>Ramshorn snail</b> <i>Anisus (Disculifer) vorticulus</i>	<p>Legal protection, S41, VU, NR, Sussex Rare.</p> <p>The Pevensey Levels are an SAC for populations of this snail there. An iconic highly protected snail found in best managed ditches together with other rare species typical of the best flood plain and coastal grazing marshes.</p> <p>An iconic highly protected snail indicative of a rare and threatened habitat.</p>
<b>The shining ram’s-horn</b> <i>Segmentina nitida</i>	<p>LC; NS, S41.</p> <p>Pevensey Levels and Lewes Brooks support large populations of this iconic species &amp; so are probably of national importance for the species. It is often associated of <i>Anisus vorticulus</i>, <i>Valvata macrostoma</i> and <i>Euglesa pseudosphaerium</i> and so typical of the best flood plain and coastal grazing marshes.</p>



## Reedbed and River Birds Assemblage

### Measures:

- General wetland and river improvements, including better water quality.
- Cut reedbeds in winter to ensure dominance of common reed.
- Rotational cutting, ideally on a four-year cycle to encourage structural diversity.
- Cut proportion of reeds around the margins in the summer (avoiding nesting birds) to encourage greater species diversity.
- Remove cuttings to prevent build up of litter and subsequent drying out of reedbed. Use to create habitat piles on fringes.
- Control scrub encroachment as required. Dig out bushes in wetter soils – added benefit of creating pools within reedbeds.
- NOTE: Wetland and reedbed management aimed at these species benefits other species including a range of invertebrates, fish, reptiles and mammals.

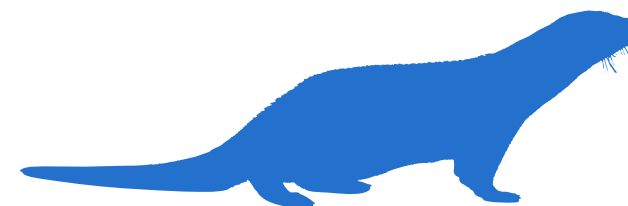
Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Bearded tit</b> <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	Legal protection.  Scarce breeding resident; very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Key breeding sites are Rye Harbour and Pett Level. Little chance of population growing without further reedbed creation and ongoing management of existing reedbeds is essential.
<b>Bittern</b> <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Legal protection, S41, BoCC Red.  Scarce winter visitor, rare outside winter months. Ongoing efforts at Rye Harbour to create nesting habitat.
<b>Marsh harrier</b> <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Legal protection, BoCC Amber.  Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; very scarce breeder since 2004.

## Streams & Rivers Assemblage

### Measures:

- Improve water quality and flow, with well-oxygenated water and clean gravels.
- Riparian tree planting where appropriate to increase shading of river channels and counter the effects of increased temperatures, but not where it shades out macrophytes.
- Establish passes to overcome or remove barriers to migration upriver.

Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>Brown/Sea trout</b> <i>Salmo trutta</i>	S41. Widespread. Sea trout and brown trout are same species: former is migratory spending most of its life at sea and returning to freshwater to spawn; latter spends all of its life in freshwater. Subspecies included in species given limited number of records for subspecies. Lowland rivers generally have limited populations, but East Sussex rivers appear to support reasonable and possibly unique populations.
<b>European eel</b> <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	S41, CR. Widely distributed around British and Irish coasts. Found in rivers and estuaries. In common with global trend, East Sussex eel stocks have fallen by over 90%. <a href="#">European eel</a>
<b>European otter</b> <i>Lutra lutra</i>	Legal protection, S41, Sussex Rare. Have been endangered or extinct in nearly all of their native countries but now recovering across Europe. Slow to return to East Sussex and currently no known resident otters.





# Urban Nature

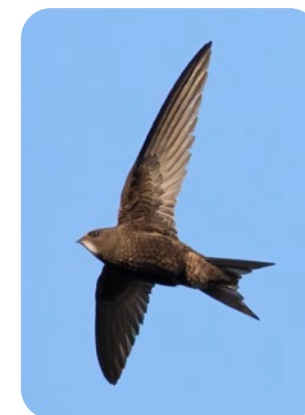
## Urban Birds Assemblage

### Measures:

- Create and improve management of species rich grassland, wetland and pockets of scrub in urban areas and improve connectivity within the landscape.
- Encourage the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS).
- Provide suitable nest boxes/cups for swifts and house martins where there are no natural nests present and preserve existing nest sites through partnership working.
- *Engage with businesses and the public to educate them about these species and encourage their involvement in conservation of threatened urban bird species.*
- *Develop Sussex-wide guidance or standard planning conditions to encourage provision in new development (e.g. BHCC swift brick policy).*
- [1563785657-wwt-rspb-sustainable-drainage-systems-guide.pdf](#)

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Species	Additional Information & Resources
<b>House martin</b> <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	BoCC Red. Common but declining summer visitor and abundant passage migrant. English population declines appear more severe in South East England.
<b>Starling</b> <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	S41, BoCC Red. Common but declining resident and very common to abundant winter visitor. Sussex holds c. 2.1% of GB population. Brighton murmurations considered iconic. Steep decline.
<b>Swift</b> <i>Apus apus</i>	BoCC Amber. Common summer visitor and passage migrant in East Sussex. Decline in breeding population. Scored highly in public surveys.



📷 Swift

© iStock.com/Yuriy Balagula

# LNRS Glossary

## Archaeophyte

Non-native species that were introduced by humans, either intentionally or unintentionally, and because naturalised in Britain and Ireland between the start of the Neolithic period and AD1500.

## Assemblage

A group of species that share similar requirements and are likely to benefit from the same recovery measures.

## Bioindicators

Living organisms that give an indication of the health of an ecosystem. Some organisms are very sensitive to pollution in their environment, so if pollutants are present, the organism may change its morphology or behaviour, or it could die.

## Flagship species

A species selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause. Focusing on conservation of that species can help support the status of other species which share its habitat.

## Keystone species

A species that plays a pivotal role in how its ecosystem functions. Every ecosystem has certain species that are critical to the survival of other species in the system. An ecosystem may experience a dramatic shift if a keystone species is removed.

## Kleptoparasite

An animal that steals food or prey from another animal.

## Taxa

All life is divided into groups known as taxa, where a single taxon represents a particular way of dividing up nature, e.g. a population of whales or a species of fish.

## Thermophilic

Organisms that thrive at relatively high temperatures.









# Sussex Nature Recovery

A collective blueprint for targeted action

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East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 1 – Context & Description of  
Strategy Area



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 2 – Priorities, Measures and the  
Local Habitat Map



East Sussex and Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 3 – Priority Species



West Sussex, East Sussex and  
Brighton & Hove  
Local Nature Recovery Strategy  
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities  
Part 4 – Technical Methods

View all the documents at:

[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)

Draft Published October 2025



# Section 5.

## Local Habitat Map

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📷 Kingfisher

© Darin Smith/Sussex Wildlife Trust



[SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk](https://SussexNatureRecovery.org.uk)



Appendix 4

The intention of this map is to identify areas already important for biodiversity within the LNRS area and those areas that could become important, if the measures within the LNRS are implemented in a targeted way.

The Local Habitat Map has three, inter-related parts:

- A map of 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' (APIB map);
- A map identifying where measures can best be delivered (Measures map);
- A map of 'Areas that could become of importance for biodiversity' (ACIB map).

## 5.1 Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)

Statutory guidance strictly defines what should be included in the APIB as the following:

- All national conservation sites;
- All local nature reserves;
- All existing local wildlife sites and areas of irreplaceable habitat.

The statutory guidance is clear that Responsible Authorities should not map any other areas as being of particular importance for biodiversity. This is not to suggest that other areas are not important, but to help establish a nationally consistent baseline and to align well with local planning policy and avoid duplicating with the identification of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

**Our APIB covers 42,518 ha which is 23.5% of the LNRS area.**

We have 13,024ha of priority habitats that lie outside of the APIB as they are not formally designated as protected sites. This equates to 7.2% of the LNRS area. Some of this may comprise irreplaceable habitat as we do not know its full extent. In recognition of this

richness of biodiversity, and to ensure that our first port of call is to look after what we have and to make it better, many of our measures relate to enhancing the condition of our priority habitats.

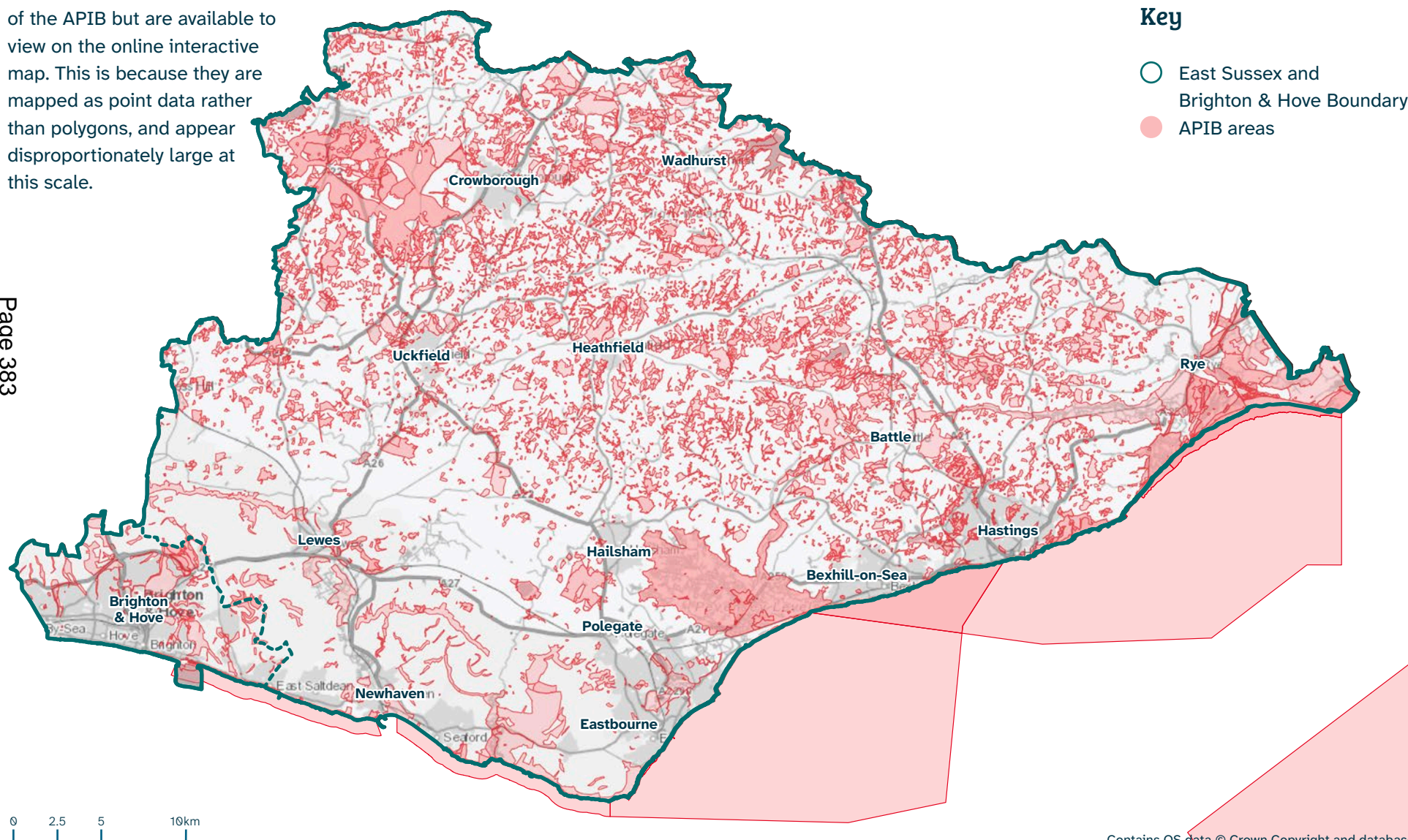
Much of our LNRS area is also already under positive management for wildlife, both inside and outside protected sites, either through its ownership and management by environmental organisations such as the National Trust (1,843ha), RSPB (284ha), Sussex Wildlife Trust (1,120ha) or the Woodland Trust (484ha), or through Environmental Stewardship agreements (22,189ha). East Sussex County Council has also designated 47ha as Wildlife Verges, with one of these supporting more than 85% of the UK population of the nationally rare spiked rampion.





## Map 1. Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove

Ancient and veteran trees are not shown on this static version of the APIB but are available to view on the online interactive map. This is because they are mapped as point data rather than polygons, and appear disproportionately large at this scale.



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## 5.2 The Measures Map

The Statement of Biodiversity Priorities sets out the measures (actions) that if carried out can help to contribute to achievement of the priorities for the LNRS. The Measures Map identifies the **locations where these could be carried out to deliver the greatest benefit to biodiversity and/or the wider environment**, based on stakeholder judgement and best available datasets. Creating this map involved identifying where measures could help to create 'bigger, better, more and joined-up' areas of wildlife-rich habitat and/or help to act as nature-based solutions to issues such as flood risk reduction, improving water quality and so on.

The Priorities & Measures tables in the section above indicate whether a measure is mapped or not.

A **Mapped Measure** is a measure that has been mapped in a located area.

A **Non-Mapped Measure** is a measure that has not been mapped – and this may be for several reasons:

- The measure may be beneficial across the whole LNRS area (so therefore it is not possible to target it to where it would make the most difference); Examples include deer management and measures to enhance wildlife habitat on farmed land;
- The measure is not about direct action for habitat creation/enhancement activity;
- There is insufficient data to map the measure (or mapping cannot be done to a level of accuracy or reliability that is useful or meaningful).

**Just over 40% of measures for this LNRS have been mapped.**

**Areas on the measures map cover 63,102ha, which is 34.9% of the LNRS land area.**

Statutory guidance specifies that areas included within the measures map are considered strategically significant areas and are eligible for biodiversity net gain uplift (via the BNG metric).

All measures included within the LNRS are important in helping to achieve the stated ambitions and priorities within the document. Just because a measure is not mapped does not mean that it is less important as part of the overall strategy for nature's recovery. Where measures are mapped, there will be areas of the map they do not cover. However, there may still be very specific local opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation that are known to landowners and others in these areas. In these cases, it is hoped that the principles, priorities and measures can guide action.

The process of mapping measures included iterative analysis and feedback, using a range of datasets to inform priority locations for potential measures to be carried out. The methodology for mapping each measure is described in Part 4.

The Measures Map is colour coded and for ease of reference is presented to identify measures for each main habitat group, before these are presented as an overall measures map.

The various habitat layers of the Measures Map are best viewed on the interactive online map.

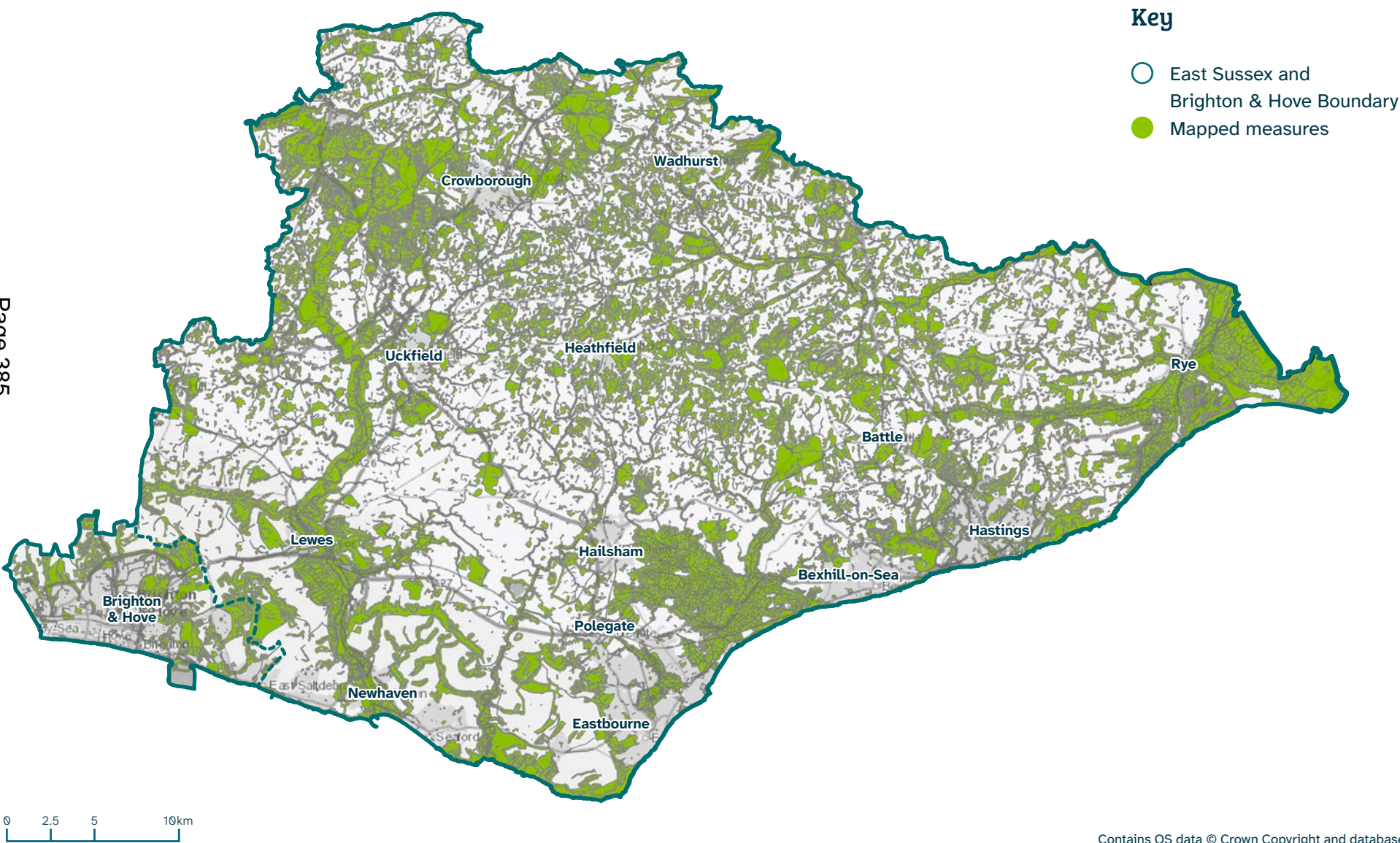
**Note:** some of these measures overlap, which simply means that there may be more than one action on the ground in these areas which would confer benefit for biodiversity and/or deliver wider environmental benefits. These overlaps have been checked carefully to identify any measures which should have priority over others or to remove those that may conflict with others or be better implemented elsewhere. As such, we believe that the overlaps that remain provide landowners with the flexibility to choose those which best fit with other plans for their land or surrounding habitats.

**Disclaimer:** *The Measures Map is a guide and show suggested measures for nature's recovery in an area. It is important to undertake site specific investigations and seek expert advice and the necessary permissions before starting work on the ground. The Measures Map should not be treated as definitive but as a tool to help plan and coordinate action for nature's recovery.*





Map 2. All Mapped Measures



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**Note: Measures mapped to land included on the APIB**

Some of these measures are mapped onto land that appears on the APIB and as such indicate action that could be taken to deliver benefit for biodiversity and/or the wider environment on areas already identified as of particular importance for biodiversity. This is important for Local Wildlife Sites and areas of irreplaceable habitat which are not covered by statutory protections and management agreements (such as exist for SSSIs and NNRs) and is intended to help target action in these sites and habitats where it may be needed most.

Defra guidance for the preparation of an LNRS advises that no measures should be mapped onto 'national conservation sites' (SSSIs, SACs/SPAs, NNRs, Ramsar Sites) unless there is no duplication or conflict with the management agreement for each site. As there are 65 SSSIs alone in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, it was not possible to check the Measures Map against each management agreement separately. However, one of our key principles is to look after what we have and make it better, and the potential measures mapping has been designed to deliver a

coherent network for nature recovery across the Strategy area. As such, some of our measures lie within national conservation sites and present future considerations for these sites. We have agreed with Natural England that measures to **enhance habitats** (rather than for habitat creation) can be mapped within high priority sites, e.g. those with international designations. These measures sit alongside the legal requirements associated with these sites and do not override them or replace existing management associated with the designation, nor do they negate the need for any requisite consents or approvals. It is essential that the existing designated features and the legal processes and guidance are checked and followed prior to delivery of the suggested measure. How potential measures may be applied to national conservation sites in the future will be part of an ongoing point of discussion during the Strategy's delivery, monitoring and review process.

Measures which are mapped on land not included in the APIB are captured on the third part of the Local Habitat Map, the ACIB (Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity) – see over.



## 5.3 Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)

Measures that are mapped onto land **outside the APIB** are together identified on the third map within the Local Habitat Map – the map of **Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)**. In essence, the ACIB identifies where and how habitats can be enhanced or created to create a more joined-up and resilient ecological network of habitats between and around the core sites and irreplaceable habitats mapped on the APIB. The ACIB does not overlap with the APIB.

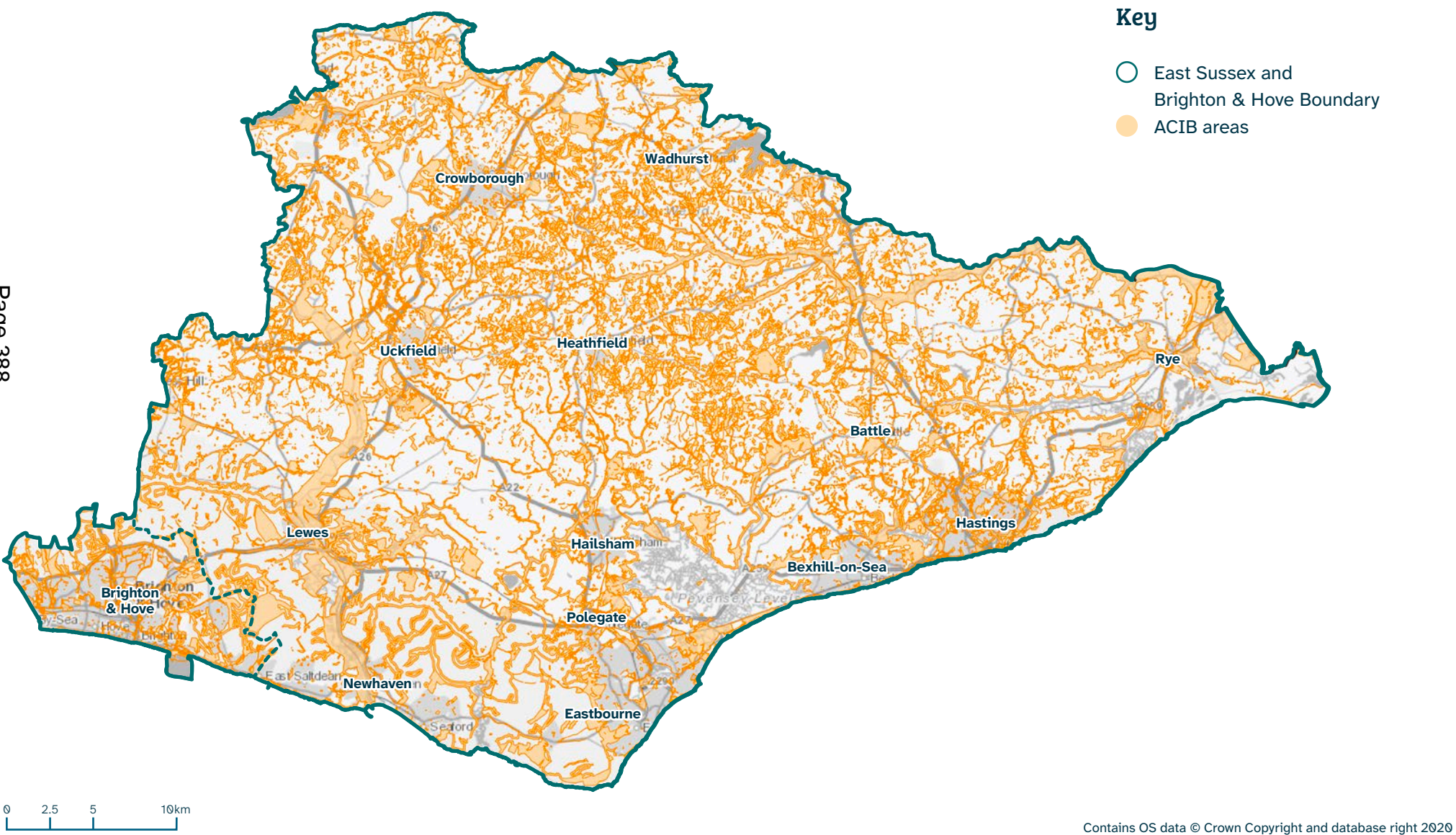
The ACIB for the LNRS area covers 39,837 which is 22.02% of the land area.

Together the APIB and ACIB cover **82,355ha, 46%** of the land cover of the LNRS area.

It is important to note that the ACIB is an interpretation of where action for nature could have the most benefit for nature and the wider environment, based on best available data and stakeholder input. Inclusion on this map does not automatically guarantee that it is possible to enhance/create habitat in these areas. Any potential habitat creation or enhancement proposals will need thorough investigation and consent before they take place. Any efforts to create or enhance space for nature outside these areas is also valuable and should be encouraged.



Map 3. Map of Areas that Could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)





**Report to:** Lead Member for Transport and Environment

**Date of meeting:** 16 February 2026

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** Community Match Schemes

**Purpose:** To set out proposed expenditure for 2026/27 as contribution towards Community Match schemes.

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:**

- (1) agree that £60,000 of match funding is allocated towards the Ripe and Chalvington Community Match signing and lining scheme and traffic calming features for detailed design work and construction in 2026/27;**
  - (2) agree that £15,000 of match funding is allocated towards the Wivelsfield Community Match signing and lining scheme for detailed design work and construction in 2025/26; and**
  - (3) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve the 50% match funding contribution for the schemes in recommendations 1 and 2, up to a maximum contribution of £60,000 per scheme once the design and construction costs are known.**
- 

## **1 Background Information**

1.1. The Community Match initiative was launched by the County Council in 2014. The initiative offered the opportunity for local communities in East Sussex (typically a parish or town council or community group) to take forward schemes identified as a local priority, but not assessed to be of sufficient priority to be delivered using County Council funding alone through the Council's capital programme of local transport improvements.

1.2. The Community Match process begins with a feasibility study to assist communities in identifying possible solutions to locally identified traffic or transport issues and determining cost estimates. The feasibility study is undertaken by East Sussex Highways and is funded by the Parish or Town Council, residents' group or organisation promoting the scheme. Many potential schemes do not progress beyond the feasibility stage as it becomes clear that the scheme is not feasible or would be too expensive to deliver using local funding, or there is not agreement among local residents and businesses about the scheme proposals.

1.3. If a Parish or Town Council or community group support the measures suggested in the feasibility appraisal, they can apply to the County Council for Community Match funds to take the scheme forward to detailed design and construction. The maximum financial input from the County Council is £60,000 per scheme, which needs to be matched by the Parish or Town Council or community group. The feasibility appraisals are only able to give approximate scheme costs and more detailed scheme costs can be provided to applicants as more design work is undertaken. As part of the Community Match funding applications, the relevant County Councillors are asked whether they are supportive of the proposed Community Match schemes in their division.

1.4. The delivery of Community Match Schemes will help contribute towards the County Council priorities of making best use of resources now and for the future and keeping vulnerable people safe.

## 2 Supporting Information

2.1. Although the Community Match funding scheme has now ended, the County Council will still honour all applications submitted before the decision was made to close the scheme. This will be the last round of applications to be considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

2.2. Two schemes have been received requesting funding to take a scheme forward. It is important that projects have strong support from the local community and that they comply with relevant County Council policies.

2.3. A summary of the schemes, together with estimated total cost, community contribution and Community Match Fund contribution, is shown below. The community contribution will be at least 50% of the detailed design and construction costs for each scheme. The final costs will likely vary from the current estimate once the detailed design has been undertaken and the scheme fully costed. Therefore, the level of Community Match Fund contribution allocated to each project, with a maximum contribution of £60,000 per project, may change depending on the final cost.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Total cost</b>	<b>Community contribution</b>	<b>ESCC Community Match Fund contribution</b>
Ripe and Chalvington Parish Council – Introduction of additional signing and lining/markings and traffic calming features.  The scheme would be delivered through the East Sussex Highways contract.	Circa £120,000	£60,000	£60,000
Wivelsfield Parish Council – Introduction of additional signing and lining/markings on South Road, Wivelsfield.  The scheme would be delivered through the East Sussex Highways contract.	Circa £30,000	£15,000	£15,000

### *Risks*

2.4 Communities will be recharged their share of the detailed design and construction work. In addition, for Community Match schemes there is a notable risk around delivering schemes that include speed limit or parking changes which require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), and the increase in costs that comes with delivering these types of schemes due to the additional resource and administration required. If formal objections to TROs are received and cannot be resolved by discussion with the objectors, objections must be considered by Planning Committee. This process adds both time and cost to the scheme.

## 3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. The Community Match programme provided the opportunity for town or parish councils, local resident groups and organisations to secure match funding to enable local priority schemes to be delivered which otherwise would not come forward using County Council funding alone through the capital programme of local transport improvements.

3.2. Therefore, the Lead Member is recommended to allocate £60,000 of Community Match funding to signing and lining scheme and traffic calming features in Ripe and Chalvington and

£15,000 of Community Match funding for the introduction of additional signing and lining in Wivelsfield.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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**LOCAL MEMBERS**

Councillor Nick Bennett

Councillor Matthew Milligan

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Ripe and Chalvington Feasibility Study

Ripe and Chalvington Equality Impact Assessment

Wivelsfield Feasibility Study

Wivelsfield Equality Impact Assessment



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**Report to:** Lead Member for Transport and Environment

**Date of meeting:** 16 February 2026

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy, and Transport

**Title:** Proposed Allocation of Bus Grant Revenue Apportionment

**Purpose:** To seek approval of the allocation of Bus Grant Revenue Funding Apportionment 2026/27 to 2028/29

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**RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:**

- (1) approve the proposed indicative allocation of Bus Grant revenue funding 2026/27 to 2028/29 set out in Table 5 of this report;**
  - (2) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to implement and make future changes to the Bus Grant Allocations, including amending bus service provision as necessary in accordance with the available funds in the revenue budget and future ticketing opportunities noting that delegated fare revisions will have regard to the key decision process; and**
  - (3) note that a separate proposal for remaining capital Bus Grant allocations will be presented to the Lead Member for approval at a decision-making meeting in March 2026 to meet the latest Department for Transport (DfT) requirements for consolidated local transport funding.**
- 

## **1 Background Information**

### Strategy and Implementation

1.1 East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) bus strategy is set out in the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plans ([BSIP1](#) and [BSIP 2](#)) and the delivery is set out in the [East Sussex County Council Bus Service Improvement Delivery plan 2025](#).

1.2 On 5 December 2025, ESCC was awarded a total of £16,561,590, which included Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) over the 3 years (£5,520,530 per annum) from Department for Transport (DfT), for [future bus grant funding](#). This report seeks to allocate funds based on the strengths of the BSIP1 and BSIP2 delivery, which will focus on continuing to deliver key successes as outlined below in this report, to continue to deliver ESCC's strategy and ambitions for bus services in the county.

1.3 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) received a BSIP1 grant allocation of £41.4m in 2022, with revenue funding of £19.1m and capital funding of £22.3m. The latest revenue allocation is 5% lower when comparing against funding provided in 2025/26 (£5,811,084), and a 13% reduction from the BSIP1 funding (£6.36m per annum). This report therefore provides a proposed allocation in line with the available funds. The establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority may have implications for transport, and our understanding of the impacts will evolve over the coming months.

1.4 ESCC allocated previous revenue funding with a primary focus on bus service provision (£14m, 73% of revenue) and fare reductions (£4.5m, 24% of revenue), with a combined allocation of £18.5m which is a total of 97% of the revenue funding (illustrated in Figure 1 and table 1). The

proposed allocation is weighted to more bus services, to aim to mitigate the impact of the reduction in funding received.

## 2 Supporting Information

### BSIP2 Grant and Allocation

2.1 ESCC received a further £5.368m of revenue funding in 2025/26. As BSIP bus service provision (bus service enhancements) were covered in 2025/26 with the BSIP1 funding, £3m (56%) of the funding was allocated to fare reductions and supported bus services. This new funding allowed the continuation of [existing BSIP fare reductions](#) and also allowed for additional fare reductions to be introduced.

Figure 1: BSIP1 Grant (Total: Revenue and Capital) Allocation

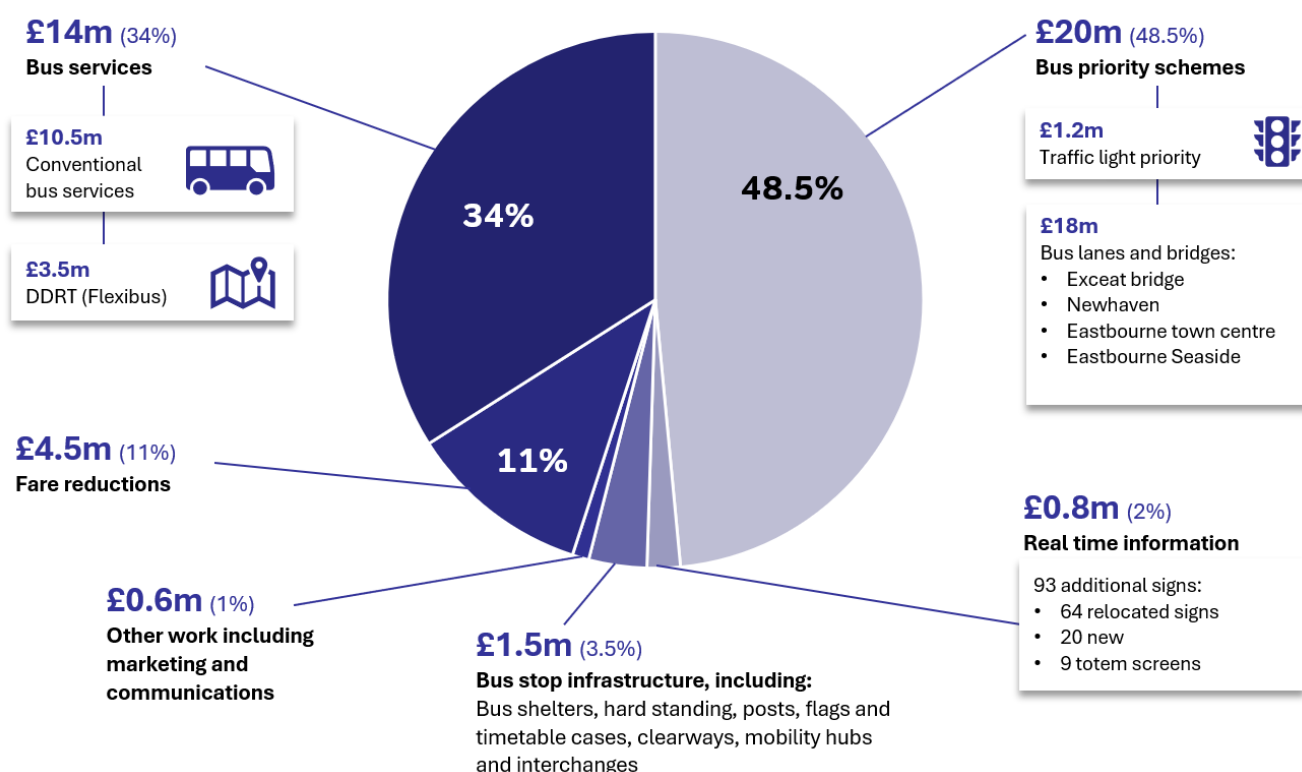


Table 1: BSIP1 Revenue Funding Allocation

	£m	%
Bus Services	14.0	73%
Fares	4.5	24%
Other	0.6	3%
Total	19.1	

### BSIP Key Outcomes

2.2 A significant amount has been achieved with the BSIP funding received. This investment has seen a total of £37m of social and economic benefits delivered across the period with a value for money of 3.87 (illustrated in Figure 2).



Figure 2: Economic and Social Benefits of BSIP Bus Services

**Economic benefit:**

**£26.4m**

Increased spending in the local economy  
Additional employment generated  
Investment in the supply chain  
Increased revenue

**Social benefit:**

**£9.6m**

Improved connectivity to employment,  
education, and social ties  
Reduced bus waiting times  
Reduced road accidents  
Value of having new travel options

**Environmental**

**benefit: £1m**

Reduced emissions and congestion  
from fewer car trips



**For every £1 spent on  
better bus services,**

**£ 3.87**

**was generated in social and  
economic benefits for communities  
across East Sussex**

**New bus routes, better frequencies, increased evening & Sunday  
services and new on-demand services**

**Improved access to jobs, education and communities**

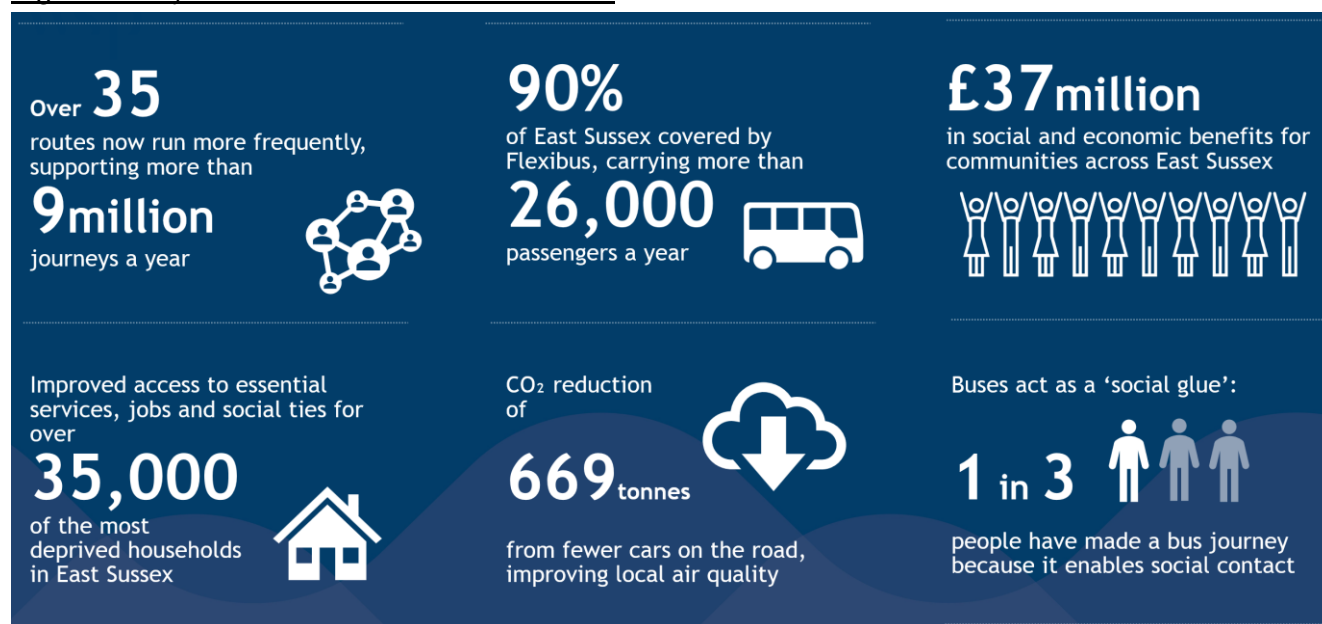
**Reduced emissions and congestion**



2.3 The funding and delivery of schemes (primarily bus service improvements and fare reductions) has resulted in impressive outcomes (illustrated in Figure 3) with:

- bus services running more frequently.
- Over 90% of East Sussex having a DDRT (Digital Demand Responsive Transport) service; and
- A reduction of an estimated 669 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Figure 3: Key Outcomes of BSIP Bus Services



### Passenger Growth

2.4 The BSIP schemes which have been delivered have played a leading role in the strong passenger growth in East Sussex. In 2023/24 ESCC were seventh out of 84 local authorities (DfT collated bus passenger data) in terms of passenger number and Covid recovery and the top shire / rural authority (the top 6 were all city or unitary authorities). In 2024/25 (data released November 2025) ESCC are eighth out of 84 local authorities (see Table 2) and the best performing when compared to neighbouring authorities (see Table 3).

Table 2: DfT's Annual Bus Passenger– 2024/25 Passengers Compared to 2018/19 - Top 10

Rank	LA or Region	2024/25 to 2018/19
1	Central Bedfordshire	113%
2	Cornwall including Isles of Scilly	109%
3	Thurrock	109%
4	Blackburn with Darwen	109%
5	Windsor and Maidenhead	109%
6	Slough	108%
7	Portsmouth	108%
8	East Sussex	<b>107%</b>
9	Southampton	105%
10	South Gloucestershire	101%

Table 3: DfT's Annual Bus Passenger Data– 2024/25 Passengers Compared to 2018/19 - Neighbouring Authorities

Rank	LA or Region	2024/25 to 2018/19
8	East Sussex	107%
11	Surrey	101%
32	West Sussex	91%
46	Brighton and Hove	88%
55	Hampshire	85%
58	Kent	84%

### 3 Bus Grant Revenue Funding 2026/27 to 2028/29 Proposed Allocations

3.1 Proposed Bus Grant allocations are shown in Table 4 below. The Lead Member is recommended to note that a separate allocation for Capital Bus Grant will be presented to the Lead Member at a future decision-making meeting to meet the latest DfT requirements for consolidated local transport funding.

Table 4: East Sussex County Council Bus Grant

	Total	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Revenue	<b>£16,561,590</b>	<b>£5,520,530</b>	<b>£5,520,530</b>	<b>£5,520,530</b>	-
Capital	<b>£17,305,288</b>	£4,284,114	£4,368,530	£4,199,698	£4,452,946

3.2 A key element of the proposed new allocation for continued BSIP delivery is to provide bus service provision to maintain the bus network and improvements as much as possible including extended weekend timetables and DDRT services.

3.3 When asked, 'What improvements (if any) to bus travel would you MOST like to see introduced in East Sussex?' (with over 2,000 responses) 'More frequent services, including evening and weekend and more direct services' was the highest requested provision.

#### Bus Services

3.4 The latest funding allocation is 5% lower (revenue funding) when comparing against funding provided in 2025/26 (£5,811,084), and a 13% reduction from the BSIP1 funding (£6.36m per annum).

3.5 Due to the reduction in funding from BSIP1 and from 2025/26 funding, it is proposed to remove allocations to subsidised fares to allow ESCC to maintain as much of the bus network as possible. The proposed allocation of ESCC's Bus Grant revenue funding is shown in Table 5.

3.6 The proposed allocation aims to maintain as many bus services as possible, when considering the reduction in funding received, alongside a significant increase in operational bus service costs. The impact of these factors means that some previous service enhancements will cease in April 2026 and there will be a reduction in the DDRT Flexibus service provision including the removal of the service on Saturdays. There may also be the need to amend provision in future years depending on future bus service costs.

3.7 Table 5 shows the proposed allocation of revenue Bus Grant funding over the next 3 years. It shows that there is a major focus on bus service provision (including DDRT services) with over 90% of the funds being allocated the bus services to support continued provision where possible.



Table 5: Proposed Indicative Allocation

	Allocation	%
Bus Services	£15,086,590	91%
ESCC Bus Back Better Team	£950,000	6%
Software and Support	£525,000	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,561,590</b>	

Note: these are **indicative** allocations and are based on tenders and forecasts (including the operational cost of the bus services, which can be impacted by ticket revenue). Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.8 To balance proposed service provision, with the reduction in funds as highlighted in paragraph 3.4, proposed allocations will include the amendment of 7 current bus service enhancements (see Appendix 1, table A1 for details) as a result of low passenger usage. In these areas, passengers will be able to use other bus services including the Flexibus (DDRT) service for continued public transport. In addition, there are 16 other supported bus routes (see Appendix 1, tables A2 to A4) that are recommended to cease to enable an effective balance between conventional and DDRT bus services. There are two new proposed services (Appendix 1, table A5) that are recommended to be funded as set out in the objectives in [BSIP2](#) (pages 75, 101, 102, 106 and 107)

3.9 In addition to the proposed changes, should costs be higher than forecast or should an operator cease to operate a service commercially, ESCC may be required to provide some or all of this service. There may be the need to amend future provision of bus services to balance the budget in the future to support these services.

3.10 Conventional Bus Services: tables A1 to A5 in Appendix 1 summarise the changes (from those currently operating, with funding until March 2026) to bus services that will be funded by East Sussex County Council from April 2026:

- Table A1: Bus Service reductions due to poor value for money
- Table A2: Removal of frequency enhancements introduced in July 2023 using BSIP funding
- Table A3: Removal of Monday to Saturday evening services introduced in July 2023 using BSIP funding
- Table A4: Removal of Sunday services introduced in July 2023 using BSIP funding
- Table A5: New Services in line with BSIP priorities.

3.11 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy, and Transport to implement and make future changes to the Bus Grant Allocations, including amending bus service provision as necessary in accordance with the available funds in the revenue budget.

#### Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) – Flexibus

3.12 The Flexibus DDRT service is a key part of the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP1 and BSIP2). The current BSIP2 document states the importance of this service alongside conventional bus services to provide coherent coverage across the public transport network across East Sussex. Extract from BSIP2:

*We will consider replacing fixed-route services with the Flexibus service, where it is more economically advantageous to do so and while also maintaining or improving access for passengers to key destinations.*

*We see Flexibus as a fundamental part of the public transport network for at least the next 5-10 years, providing access for rural residents to employment, education, services, and leisure opportunities – as well as supporting the visitor economy.*

3.13 The proposal as identified in paragraph 3.6 requires ESCC to focus the Flexibus service provision, making best use of the service as possible, within the budget available to continue to deliver the aspirations as set out in the BSIP2, to ensure that rural locations, which are not serviced by fixed routes, can continue to benefit from DDRT connectivity.

3.14 To balance the continuation of conventional and DDRT services, the recommendation is to cease operating DDRT service on Saturdays alongside a slight reduction in the Monday to Friday service provision, amending the maximum distance to 9 miles.

#### Fares

3.15 East Sussex will continue to work with operators with the Enhanced Partnership to aim to deliver future ticketing opportunities as they arise to deliver value for money fares for East Sussex residents and visitors.

### **4 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 The BSIP funding has delivered strong passenger growth putting ESCC as an authority in the top 10 in the last 2 years for passenger numbers (when comparing to pre-Covid passenger numbers).

4.2 ESCC has been awarded £16,561,590 revenue funding over 3 years by the DfT. The proposed allocations as set out in this report build upon the strengths of the BSIP1 and BSIP2 delivery, which continue to deliver ESCC's strategy and ambitions for bus services, with over 90% funding proposed to be allocated to bus service provision, in line with the funding available.

#### **RUPERT CLUBB**

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#### LOCAL MEMBERS

All

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Equalities Impact Assessment

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## APPENDIX 1

Table A1: Bus Service changes due to poor value for money

Service	Route	Time of Day	Description of Change	Approx Saving PA
54	Uckfield Bus Station-Manor Park Estate	Mon-Sat daytime	The service on this section of route will be reduced as a result of changes to Brighton & Hove Buses service fifty-four. The current seven Mon-Sat journeys would be replaced three journeys, running on Mon-Fri only, by diverting services 248 and 249 to additionally serve Manor Park. Around fifteen passengers used the affected part of the service when surveyed.	£45,000
125	Lewes-Ringmer-Glynde-Firle-Alfriston-Polegate-Eastbourne	Mon-Fri daytime	Removal of poorly used daytime journeys. These daytime journeys were last surveyed in Dec 25, when these journeys were used by sixteen passengers who did not have travel options on the day using other services. When surveyed in May 24 there were thirty-three passengers on these daytime journeys with no alternative services on the day. Though 9 of these were first time users travelling as part of a walk or day out. A further 16 passengers (8 return journeys) were a party travelling to/from Charleston for a day out (who said they use the service rarely). Passengers on the withdrawn journeys would potentially have the option of Flexibus, subject to availability.at the time of booking. Journeys used by school pupils would remain.	£72,000
246	Uckfield-Danehill-Sheffield Park-Fletching-Uckfield circular	Tue, Thu daytime	Only two passengers used this service when surveyed. Flexibus would offer alternative provision, subject to availability at the time of booking. 246 bus resource would be used to provide service to Uckfield Manor Park instead (see service 54).	£0
248	Hadlow Down	Mon, Wed, Fri daytime	No passengers were using the service in the Hadlow Down area when surveyed. The route would be revised to omit Hadlow Down but continue to run between Buxted and Uckfield. Hadlow Down residents would have the option of Flexibus, subject to availability at the time of booking. The 248 bus resource would be used to provide service to Uckfield Manor Park instead (see service 54).	£0
354	Wadhurst Rail Station-Wadhurst-Ticehurst	Mon-Fri peaks	Use is just 1 passenger per day.	£15,000
361	Etchingham-Hurst Green-Robertsbridge-Cripps Corner-Sedlescombe-St Leonards-Bexhill College	College Days	The approx. 25 students who use the service would instead need to change buses in the Hastings/St Leonards area, or travel by train.	£97,000
1066	Hastings-Battle-Robertsbridge-Hurst Green-Hawkhurst-Ticehurst-Wadhurst-Frant-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Sat daytime	Frequency reduced from hourly to approximately 80 minutes. The revised timetable would also help to improve timekeeping by giving more time to buses delayed by traffic congestion.	£127,000
Approximate annual saving				<b>£356,000</b>

**Table A2: Changes to frequency enhancements introduced in July 2023 using BSIP funding**

Service	Route	Time of Day	Description of Change	Approx. Saving PA
Link	Langney-Asda-Langney Point-Seaside-Eastbourne	Mon-Sat daytime	The Mon-Sat service frequency would reduce to half-hourly on Mon-Sat and hourly on Sundays. An average of around 790 passengers use the effected journeys per day, based on figures supplied by Stagecoach. Passenger only served by the Link would need to travel on alternative Link journeys, usually 15 minutes earlier or later.	£295,000
98	Sidley-Bexhill-Pebsham-Hastings	Mon-Sat daytime	The service frequency would reduce from 20 mins to 30 mins. An average of around 373 passengers use the effected journeys per day, based on figures supplied by Stagecoach. Passenger only served by the 98 would need to travel on alternative 98 journeys.	£111,000
Approximate annual saving				<b>£406,000</b>

**Table A3: Changes Monday to Saturday evening services introduced in July 2023 using BSIP funding**

Service	Route	Time of Day	Description of Change	Approx. Saving PA
3	Meads-Eastbourne	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of the 1910, 2005, 2105 and 2205 journeys from Eastbourne Station, and the 1931, 2026, 2126 and 2226 from Meads. 20 passengers used these journeys when surveyed.	£29,000
5B	Eastbourne-Langney Point-Sovereign Harbour	Daily evening	Removal of the evening journeys on the section of route between Seaside Tesco to Langney and Sovereign Harbour (the last journey also serves Pevensey Bay and Beachlands). Removal of the 2019 and 2119 from Sovereign Harbour. An evening service would still be provided between Eastbourne town centre, Bridgemere and Seaside Tesco. 18 passengers used the withdrawn section of 5B route, not served by other bus routes, when surveyed.	£75,000
6	Eastbourne-DGH-Hamlands-Willingdon-Polegate-Dittons Wood-Stone Cross-Westham-Langney	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of the 1913 and 2113 journeys from Eastbourne, and the 1813 and 2013 from Langney. 10 passengers used the sections of route not served by other bus routes when surveyed,	£40,000
52	Eastbourne-DGH-Willingdon-Polegate-Dittons Wood-Hailsham-Roebuck Park	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of the 1945, 2045, 2145 and 2245 journeys from Eastbourne, and the 1934, 2028, 2128 and 2228 from Roebuck Park. Alternative evening services for these communities would still be available for these communities by way of revisions to services 1B and 51 (both of which will instead be funded through S106 development contributions)	£60,000
53	Eastbourne-DGH-Willingdon-Polegate-Hailsham-Herstmonceux-Windmill Hill-Ninfield-Sidley-Bexhill Hospital-Bexhill	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of the 1930 and 2200 journeys from Eastbourne to Bexhill, plus 1934 and 2049 journeys from Bexhill to Eastbourne. 25 passengers used the section of route not served by other bus routes when surveyed.	£74,000
313	Northiam-Beckley-Peasmarsh-Rye-Rye Harbour	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of the journeys at 1940 from Northiam to Rye, 2041 Rye to Rye Harbour, and 2050 from Rye Harbour to Northiam via Rye. 5 passengers used these journeys when surveyed.	£11,000
329	Northiam-Brede-Westfield-Conquest Hospital-Hastings	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of 2125 journey from Northiam to Hastings. 2 passengers used this journey when surveyed.	
321	Conquest Hospital-Silverhill-Hastings	Mon-Sat evening	Removal of the 2245 journey from Conquest Hospital to Hastings Station. Around 4 passengers use these services per evening based on figures supplied by Stagecoach. The other evening service 321 journeys are provided on a commercial basis and are expected to remain.	£6,000
Approximate annual saving				<b>£295,000</b>



**Table A4: Removal of Sunday services introduced in July 2023 using BSIP funding**

Service	Route	Time of Day	Description of Change	Approx. Saving PA
121	Lewes-Chailey-Newick-Sheffield Park Gardens & Bluebell Railway	Sunday daytime	Removal of all Sunday journeys. 63 passengers used these journeys when surveyed.	£38,000
123	Lewes-Kingston-Rodmell-Piddinghoe-Newhaven	Sunday daytime	Removal of all Sunday journeys. 25 passengers used these journeys when surveyed.	
312	Rye-Playden-Wittersham-Tenterden	Sunday daytime	Removal of all Sunday journeys. 41 passengers used these journeys when surveyed.	£53,000
313	Northiam-Beckley-Peasmarsh-Rye-Rye Harbour	Sunday daytime	Removal of all Sunday journeys. 53 passengers used these journeys when surveyed.	
329	Tenterden-Northiam-Brede-Westfield-Conquest Hospital-Hastings	Sunday daytime	Removal of all Sunday journeys. 61 passengers used the section of route not served by other bus routes when surveyed.	
323	Harley Shute-Filsham Valley-West St Leonards-Hastings-Elphinstone Rd-Conquest Hospital	Sunday daytime	Removal of all Sunday journeys. Around 72 passengers use these journeys based on figures supplied by Stagecoach.	£40,000
Approximate annual saving				<b>£131,000</b>

**Table A5: New Services in line with BSIP priorities**

New Gatwick Airport Service
<p>Introduction of a new Service 500 between Gatwick Airport, Crawley Manor Business Park, East Grinstead, Uckfield, Forest Row, Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne. This is a joint project led by Gatwick Airport and Brighton &amp; Hove Buses, in partnership with WSCC and ESCC.</p> <p>New service 500 will replace existing services 54 and 261 between Eastbourne and Uckfield, and Uckfield and East Grinstead. It will follow the same route as these services but omit the 54 route section in Manor Park, Uckfield.</p> <p>500 will run on 7 days a week, from very early in the morning until very late at night, to cater for shift workers and air travellers.</p> <p>Gatwick Airport and WSCC will also be providing funding for this significantly enhanced service.</p>
New Night bus services to/from Brighton
<p>Brighton &amp; Hove Buses require modest levels of funding for the introduction of hourly Night bus services running throughout the night, on 7 days a week. These will run between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eastbourne, Seaford,</li><li>• Newhaven and Brighton;</li><li>• North Peacehaven and Brighton, and</li><li>• Lewes, The Universities and Brighton</li></ul> <p>Brighton &amp; Hove Buses expect the services to run fully commercially in subsequent years.</p>

**Table A6: 2026/27 Proposed Supported Bus Network**

Service	Route	Days/Times	Wholly /partly funded by S106 contributions from new developments
1B	Hailsham-Langney-Eastbourne	Mon-Sat eve & Sun daytime	wholly S106
3	Eastbourne town centre-Meads-Foot of Beachy Head	Mon-Sat daytime	
4	Eastbourne-Cherry Gardens-Hill Road	Mon-Sat	
5B	Eastbourne Cavendish Sch-Town Centre-Bridgemere	Schooldays	
6	Langney-Westham-Polegate-Eastbourne	Mon-Sat daytime	
6	Langney-Westham-Polegate-Eastbourne	Sun	wholly S106
7	Hastings-Ashford Way	Mon-Sat	
8	Eastbourne-Cross Levels Way-Langney-Pevensey-Beachlands	Mon-Sat daytime & eve	
24	Eastbourne-Polegate-Hailsham-Deanland Wood	Tue, Thu	
27	Hastings-Linton Rd	Mon-Sat	
28	Ringmer-Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne	Daily	wholly S106
28	Hailsham-Kings Academy, Ringmer	Schooldays	wholly S106
29	Uckfield-Crowborough-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Sat eve	partly S106
29A	Heathfield-Blackboys-Uckfield-Lewes	Daily	wholly S106
40	Berwick-Seaford	Tue, Wed, Fri	
42	Berwick-Hailsham	Tue, Wed, Fri	
48	Eastbourne-Drusillas-Alfriston	Tue, Thu	
51	Hailsham-Horam-Heathfield-Mayfield-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Sat eve & Sun daytime	wholly S106
51	Heathfield-Mayfield-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Sat eve peak	
51	Heathfield-Mayfield-Tunbridge Wells	Schooldays pm	
52	Roebuck Park-Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne	Sun eve	wholly S106
53	Eastbourne-Polegate-Hailsham-Herstmonceux-Ninfield-Bexhill	Sun	
73	Ark Helenswood/Ark William Parker school services	Schooldays	
74	Ark Helenswood/Ark William Parker school services	Schooldays	
95	Hastings-Battle-Ninfield-Bexhill-Little Common	Mon-Sat	
96	Bexhill-Cooden-Little Common	Mon-Sat	
97	Bexhill-Turkey Road	Mon-Sat	
98	Bexhill-Pebsham-Hastings	Sun AM	wholly S106
98	Bexhill-Pebsham-Hastings	Mon-Sat eve	wholly S106
100	Hastings-Icklesham-Rye	Mon-Sat eve	
101	Hastings-Fairlight-Winchelsea Beach-Rye	Mon-Sat eve	
101	Hastings-Fairlight-Winchelsea Beach-Rye	Sun	
119	Seaford local service	Mon-Sat	
120	Seaford local service	Sat pm	
121	Newick-Chailey-Lewes	Mon-Sat	
122	Barcombe-Lewes	Mon-Sat	
123	Newhaven-Rodmell-Kingston-Lewes	Mon-Sat	
125	Alfriston-Berwick-Glynde-King's Academy, Ringmer	Schooldays	
126	Seaford-Alfriston	Mon-Sat	
127	Lewes town service	Mon-Sat	
128	Lewes town service	Mon-Sat	



Service	Route	Days/Times	Wholly /partly funded by S106 contributions from new developments
129	Lewes Town Service	Mon-Sat	
145	Newhaven town service	Mon-Sat	
149	Scaynes Hill-Haywards Heath-Wivelsfield Green-Chailey School	Schooldays	
150	Withyham-Hartfield-Forest Row-Danehill-Chailey School	Schooldays	
166	Lewes-Plumpton-Wivelsfield Green-Haywards Heath	Mon-Sat	partly S106
167	Lewes-Plumpton-Ditchling-Hassocks-Burgess Hill	Mon-Fri peak; Tue, Thu	
168	Burgess Hill-Ditchling-Plumpton circular	Mon, Wed, Fri	
224	Wadhurst-Town Row-Rotherfield-Crowborough	Mon, Wed, Fri	
225	Crowborough-Heathfield-Battle	Tue, Thu	
226	Crowborough-Rotherfield-Mayfield	Tue, Thu, Sat	partly S106
227	Five Ashes-Rotherfield-Crowborough	Schooldays	
228	Crowborough-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Sat	
231	Etchingham-Burwash-Heathfield	Mon-Sat	
231	Hurst Green-Etchingham-Burwash-Heathfield-Blackboys-Uckfield	Schooldays	
248	Uckfield-Buxted	Mon, Wed, Fri	
249	Uckfield-Fairwarp-High Hurstwood	Tue, Thu	
251	Heathfield-Mayfield-Tunbridge Wells-Boys Grammar School	Schooldays	
256	Wadhurst-Lamberhurst-Bells Yew Green-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Fri	
266	Heathfield College school service	Schooldays	
267	Heathfield College school service	Schooldays	
268	Heathfield College school service	Schooldays	
269	Heathfield College school service	Schooldays	
270	East Grinstead-Forest Row-Danehill-Haywards Heath-Brighton	Mon-Sat eve	
291	Forest Row-Hartfield-Tunbridge Wells	Mon-Sat eve	
312	Rye-Wittersham-Tenterden	Mon-Sat	
313	Rye Harbour-Rye-Playden-Peasmarsh-Northiam	Mon-Sat daytime & early eve	
318	Heathfield-Uckfield-Ringmer King's Academy	Schooldays	
319	Hastings-Mayfield Farm	Sun AM	
321	Hastings-Down Farm	Sun am & eve	
322	Ore-Hastings-Harley Shute	Sun pm	
323	Hastings-Conquest Hosp	Mon-Sat daytime	
323	Harley Shute-Filsham Valley-West St Leonards-Hastings	Mon-Sat evenings	
323B	Hastings-Filsham Valley-Hollington-Conquest Hospital	Mon-Fri	
324	Hastings-Malvern Way	Sun pm	
324	Hastings-Malvern Way	Mon-Sat 2300 journey	
328	Hastings-Conquest Hospital	Mon-Sat mid eve	
329	Hastings-Conquest Hospital-Nothiam-Tenterden	Mon-Sat	
331	Hastings-Ore	Daily	
342	Northiam-Rye-Westfield	Schooldays	
347	Hastings-Ore-Pett	Mon-Sat	

Service	Route	Days/Times	Wholly /partly funded by S106 contributions from new developments
349	Hastings-Bodiam-Hawkhurst Moor	Daily	
355	Netherfield–Battle, Claverham College	Schooldays	
356	Little Common–Hooe–Catsfield–Battle, Claverham College	Schooldays	
359	Ore-Hastings-Silverhill-Bexhill, St Richard's College	Schooldays	
361	Peasmarsh-Northiam-Westfield-Bexhill College	Schooldays	
381	Westfield-Northiam-Robertsbridge College	Schooldays	
382	Westfield-Robertsbridge College	Schooldays	
383	Peasmarsh - Robertsbridge Community College	Schooldays	
468	Ditchling-Plumpton-Chailey School	Schooldays	
492	Denton Corner-Newhaven, Seahaven Academy	Schooldays	
494	Saltdean-Peacehaven, Seahaven Academy	Schooldays	
500	Eastbourne-Hailsham-Uckfield-East Grinstead-Gatwick	Daily	partly S106
1066	Hastings-Battle-Robertsbridge-Hawkhurst-Wadhurst-Tunbridge Wells	Daily	
1066	Hastings-Battle, Claverham College	Schooldays	
B67-79	Battle Area Community Bus services	Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri	
N12	Eastbourne-Seaford-Newhaven-Peacehaven-Brighton	Daily overnight	
N14	North Peacehaven-Brighton	Daily overnight	
N28	Lewes-Universities-Brighton	Daily overnight	
U4	Flimwell–Wadhurst (Uplands College)	Schooldays	
U5	Ticehurst-Wadhurst (Uplands College)	Schooldays	