



Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy – Geographic Workshop 1

8th October, G-Live, Guildford

Transcript Report



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1. What key word or phrase would describe your ideal for nature in Surrey in 2050?

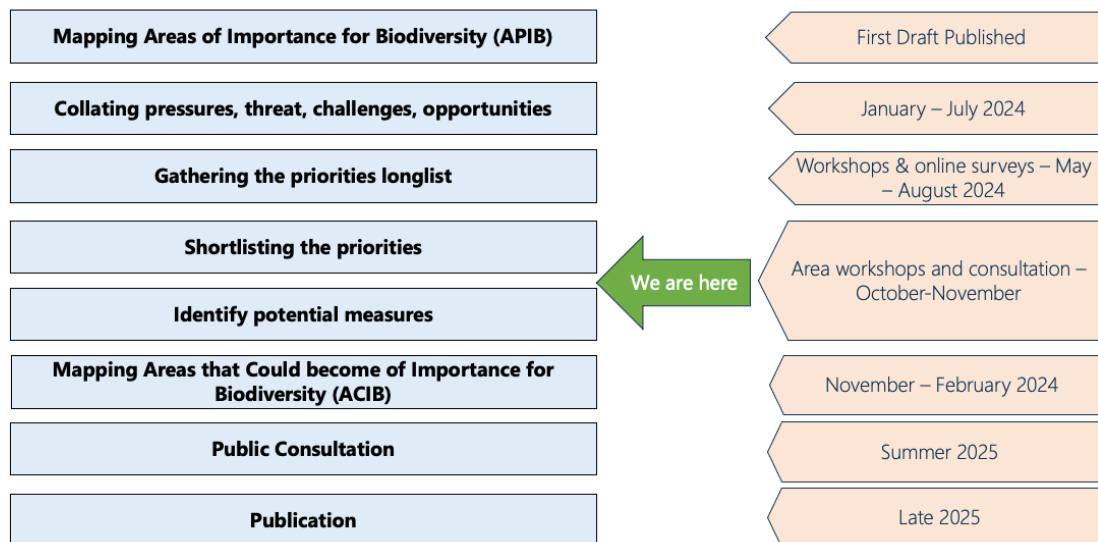
59 responses



2. Presentations

Following the warmup exercise, two presentations were given “The story so far” (see Appendix A). The presentation from Adam Brown included a helpful diagram showing the LNRS process:

Where are we in the LNRS process?



Jim Boot then gave a presentation showing how the earlier workshops had informed the short-listing of the priority outcomes (see Appendix A Presentation).

3. Questions and answers

The presentations were followed by a question and answer session:

- Amount of land = 20% high biodiversity
- Image of farmland is perhaps different in Surrey. Does not mean we don't care about farmland.

- Education – what does cross cutting mean? Developing a communication and education strategy to sit along the LNRS.
- Has ecosystem service mapping been done? Not yet, but will be based on the “measures” discussion
- Shape file additions [of chalk streams and fens] sent to Natural England – will be sent to Adam
- How are the priorities going to be used? Will be habitat specific in the strategy.

4. Part 1: Outcome prioritisation

At their tables, participants discussed/ made comments on post-it notes and then rated the priority outcomes using sticky dots (see example below):

The results were as follows. Suggested changes to the wording are in square brackets:

Woodland, Forests and Parkland		
Ref	Proposed Outcome	Priority
W1	Management of existing woodland is improved, incorporating open spaces, glades, and transitional habitats to maximise species diversity	21
W2	New areas of native woodland are created to improve connectivity, reduce flood risk and improve air quality, with specific focus on those areas with the lowest existing woodland cover	9
W3	Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) are restored with a diverse species mix that appropriately considers the need to adapt to changing climatic conditions	3
W4	Ancient Woodlands are brought back into positive management, protected and buffered with new woodlands or associated scrub/successional habitats	11
W5	Populations of deer and Grey Squirrel are effectively managed either through reintroduction of native predators or increased culling/hunting to allow the natural regeneration and health of our woodlands	16
W6	Invasive and dominant plant species such as [pokon] dodendron are controlled or eradicated to improve the condition of woodland understories and encourage native woodland flowers	6
W7	Ancient and veteran trees are protected with new individual trees planted in our historic parklands to provide replacement veteran trees into the future	8

Woodland, Forests and Parkland

Ref	Proposed Priority / Outcome	Rating	Comments
W1	Management of existing woodland is improved, incorporating open spaces, glades, and transitional habitats to maximise species diversity	21	
W2	New areas of native woodland are created to improve connectivity, reduce flood risk and improve air quality, with specific focus on those areas with the lowest existing woodland cover	9	Greatest potential to enhance nature recovery Species richness and native woodland – non natives will be important for climate change, pests, diseases etc.
W3	Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) are restored with a diverse species mix that appropriately considers the need to adapt to changing climatic conditions	3	PAWS sites may not be right places for new diverse mix – historical mycelium etc supports a particular ecosystem
W4	Ancient Woodlands are brought back into positive management, protected and buffered with new woodlands or associated scrub/successional habitats	11	Merge W3 and W4
W5	Populations of deer and Grey Squirrel are effectively managed either through reintroduction of native predators or increased culling/hunting to allow the natural regeneration and health of our woodlands	16	Woodland based economy
W6	Invasive and dominant plant species such as rhododendron are controlled or eradicated to improve the condition of woodland understories and encourage native woodland flowers	6	Stop releasing pheasants Urban tree planting
W7	Ancient and veteran trees are protected with new individual trees planted in our historic parklands to provide replacement veteran trees into the future	8	Trees outside of woodlands, agroforestry, hedgerow trees Also manage for natural succession. Ancient trees support specific species assemblies.

Open Habitats (grassland, scrub and heathland)

Ref	Proposed Priority / Outcome	Rating	Comments
OH1	Manage existing heathland to create a mosaic structure including bare ground, pioneer [trees and shrubs], ensuring dominant species such as bracken and gorse are adequately controlled [and manage recreation]	18	Should be a given for protected areas. Need to address niche habitat provision.
OH2	Create new [corridor to connect] lowland heath on suitable forested land through the sensitive removal of trees	4	Also connect city through restoration of neglected heath pockets

<i>Open Habitats (grassland, scrub and heathland)</i>			
OH3	Manage heathland to respond to increases in wildfire and the broader risks of climate change, including rewetting where appropriate	17	
OH4	Chalk grassland is protected conserved, created and restored along the North Downs providing a vital link in the Big Chalk landscape to the Kent Downs [and westwards!]	20	Connectivity / stepping stones between existing pockets
OH5	Species-rich grasslands (wildflower meadows) are expanded and restored to improve connectivity, soil permeability and nectar rich habitats	13	Flood plain restoration. Bee-lines, conservation grazing
[OH6]	[Scrub habitat mosaics eg nightingale & other species. Link to regenerative farming / large estates] [Continue to expand SANGS ¹ as deflector and recreation sites]		Land involved in recreation management eg SANGS, dog exercise areas – should be part of LNRS

<i>Wetlands and Rivers</i>			
Ref	Proposed Priority / Outcome	Rating	Comments
WR1	Broad riparian buffers across our river systems improve linear connectivity, provide habitat and food sources for key species such as Water Vole and reduce pollutants and sediment from entering our rivers	15	
WR2	Populations of key invasive species causing damage to our wetlands and rivers are reduced or eradicated and managed into the future	10	
WR3	Reconnect flood plains and create and restore wetlands to reduce downstream flood risk, recharge aquifers and make water available for abstraction year-round	20	Chalk stream first approach (which are biodiverse) are protected when abstraction happens further down the river
WR4	[All] Chalk streams, springs and headwaters are recognised, protected and restored	7	
WR5	Obsolete obstacles within our rivers are removed to restore our rivers and removing barriers to fish passage	9	
WR6	Create, and restore and [maintain] ponds across the landscape to provide vital	2	Wider including garden ponds
WR7	Natural function of modified watercourses is restored improving water quality and quantity	4	Re-naturalise modified river courses to restore natural functioning
[WR8]	[Identify and reduce pollution both point and diffuse]	3	
[WR9]	[Beavers]	4	

¹ Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces – to protect vulnerable sites

<i>Farmland and broader landscape</i>			
Ref	Proposed Priority / Outcome	Rating	Comments
FL1	Increase in the number of farms and land managers employing nature friendly farming practices and sensitive land management, resulting in a whole landscape that is rich in wildlife.	17	How does this fit with the National Food Recovery Plan? Tenant farmers and corporate landowners may have divergent views
FL2	Protect, manage and increase the mosaic of semi-natural habitats within the farm landscape and other land uses	17	
FL3	Improved management and creation of hedgerows to provide increased habitat and connectivity across the landscape	12	Hedgerows as part of the mosaic? [FL2]
FL4	A working landscape that is underpinned by healthy and biodiverse soils that increase soil carbon and soil biodiversity	8	
FL5	A land-based economy that sufficiently rewards nature recovery actions and that is supported by the residents of Surrey	18	Government / public bodies
FL6	Integration of agroforestry both in pastoral and arable systems	6	Forestry Authority have an advisor who will visit a land manager

<i>Urban</i>			
Ref	Proposed Priority / Outcome	Rating	Comments
UR2	Green routes/pathways into and across urban areas are maintained and established providing connecting corridors for wildlife and people [money for access]	25	Improving quality of greenspaces. Green routes pull people away from sensitive sites. Lawton Principles – more joined up. Repair the Downlink and Cycle Highways
UR3	Pocket parks, rain gardens and green roofs are installed across urban areas to tackle heat island effect, reduce flooding and to create greener, healthier places to live	12	Green roofs. Biosolar. Improve water quality. Better places to live. Reduce travel by car. Big management issue. Needs to relate to groundwater
UR4	Wildflower habitat is restored appropriately across our road verges to provide connecting corridors and pollinator habitat, while respecting the need of road safety and clear site lines	13	Bigger gardens – not pocket parks. Stop paving over. More control over pocket parks. Tackle issues of roads. Wildlife gardens – how to reach a wider audience. How real is the safety issue.
UR5	Natural green spaces are created with adequate facilities to support health and wellbeing, green prescribing and recreation [community orchards]	9	Strategic crossings e.g. Junction 10 Describe difference between UR2 and UR5. Regulation – guidance for developers related to all these. Guidance is too soft.

Urban			
UR6	Individual trees are protected, and new trees planted to increase urban tree-canopy cover providing clean air and shade to communities	13	Landscaping guidance / regulation to developers to avoid Invasive Non Native Species introduction
UR7	Mineral and waste sites are sensitively restored to deliver benefits to biodiversity	4	

General comments (Urban related):

- Place making.
- How is the LNRS to be implemented?
- Reduce use of pesticides - missing

5. Part 2: Measures to achieve priority outcomes

Woodland, Forests and Parkland

Outcome W1: Management of existing woodland is improved, incorporating open spaces, glades, and transitional habitats to maximise species diversity

Measures:

- More woods into Forestry Commission management plans
- Increase structural diversity of woods, thinning, coppicing etc
- Identify new markets for timber
- Diversity species of trees within woods
- Diversify income stream e.g. forest bathing, orienteering, forest schools to fund woodland management
- Manage grey squirrel over populations
- Ivy is a problem, next time you walk through a woodland, estimate the number of trees you see overcome by ivy

Outcome W2: New areas of native woodland are created to improve connectivity, reduce flood risk and improve air quality, with specific focus on those areas with the lowest existing woodland cover

Measures:

- Diversify species, adapting to climate change extremes
- Planting in parks before loss of ancient / mature trees – rather than replace
- Incentives to keep or plant urban / domestic hedgerows and hedges
- Focus on boroughs like Tandridge & Spelthorne for urban planting (Gatwick & Heathrow funded)
- Design to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits
- Opportunity for food tree trails e.g. cherries, apples, pears – beyond orchards and more connected in urban areas to engage communities and connect wildlife
- Restore “lost” woods – those that were felled in 20th C.

Outcome W4: Ancient Woodlands are brought back into positive management, protected and buffered with new woodlands or associated scrub/successional habitats

Measures:

- Introduce new woodland on existing Ancient Woodland sites with plantation land
- Greater policy protection
- Replace trees lost to Ash dieback and Dutch Elm disease
- Increase open space (up to 20%) with woodland
- Buffer Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland with natural colonisation and planting

Outcome W4: Ancient Woodlands are brought back into positive management, protected and buffered with new woodlands or associated scrub/successional habitats

- Link landowners to current grant schemes eg Countryside Stewardship
- Find economic use for timber crops to fund management
- Manage to promote structural diversity
- Limit public access to sensitive sites
- Connect small, fragmented Ancient Woodland through planting a diverse range of species
- Address the impacts of Ash dieback replant with resilient species for the future
- Enhance ghyll woodlands, buffer from surrounding agriculture – locally a rare and important habitat
- Climate change: use tree seeds from climate matched zones eg southern Europe
- Community engagement – local seed nursery
- Identify future veteran trees

Outcome W5: Populations of deer and Grey Squirrel are effectively managed either through reintroduction of native predators or increased culling/hunting to allow the natural regeneration and health of our woodlands

Measures:

- Landscape scale management * - culling is key
- More landholdings into WD1, WD3 Countryside Stewardship
- Identify markets for venison locally
- Protect areas with fencing where culling is not viable
- Supporting natural predators e.g. pine marten
- Monitor browsing impacts of deer. There needs to be a reduction in signs over the time of the LNRS.
- Squirrel contraception
- Education to show deer have negative impacts on woodland

Farmland and broader landscape

Outcome FL1: Increase in the number of farms and land managers employing nature friendly farming practices and sensitive land management, resulting in a whole landscape that is rich in wildlife.

Measures:

- Cover-cropping over winter to stop fertilisers leaching into groundwater
- No till
- Right land for right outcomes eg not arable on unproductive land, grassland restoration opportunities
- More wild margins
- Introduce horse culture to Nature Friendly Farming principles – reduce grazing pressures, rotation
- Companion cropping
- GPS mapping minimal / managed input
- Easier access to buy and sell local produce
- Education

Outcome FL2: Protect, manage and increase the mosaic of semi-natural habitats within the farm landscape and other land uses

Measures:

- Pay them – provide farmers / landowners with financial options

• Pay them appropriately for what we are asking them to do
• Plant hedgerows
• Manage existing hedgerows
• Add buffer zones to hedgerows, treelines, ancient / veteran tree root [protection areas]
• Flood naturally wet fields that are unproductive
• Provide scrub corners linked to hedgerows
• Low intensity grazing on low productive grassland – to encourage species rich grassland
• Winter feeding farmland birds
• Recognise Ancient Woodland pockets within farmland and create bigger zone around them
• Landowner and cluster groups – sharing grazing stock to manage land
• Garden cluster groups – working together (share knowledge, equipment)

Outcome FL5: A land-based economy that sufficiently rewards nature recovery actions and that is supported by the residents of Surrey

Measures:

- Funding stream that covers – hedgerow management, buffer zones around key trees, particularly ancient woodland
- Better appreciation of importance of local food (Environmental Education)
- Local food initiatives, quality vs quantity
- Education – food security / food waste / value of food
- Balanced food protection

Open Habitats (Grassland, scrub and heathland)

OH1: Manage existing heathland to create a mosaic structure including bare ground, pioneer, ensuring dominant species such as bracken and gorse are adequately controlled

Measures:

- Strong partnerships
- Up to date baseline
- Management plans for specific species
- Sharing resources eg grazing, stock and equipment
- Funding can be sourced from BNG² offsite and SANGS³
- Include wildfire measures
- Fenceless grazing – natural mosaics
- Cyclical grass cutting – leave longer patches in rotation

OH3: Manage heathland to respond to increases in wildfire and the broader risks of climate change, including rewetting where appropriate

Measures:

- Consistent signage / education / awareness
- Volunteer 'fire' wardens
- Resources to create wildfire emergency plans – link with Local Planning Authority (LPA) Climate Action Plans
- Create buffers / [fire] breaks
- Re-wetting of existing watercourses
- Modelling where this would have best impact

² Biodiversity Net Gain

³ Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space

OH3: Manage heathland to respond to increases in wildfire and the broader risks of climate change, including rewetting where appropriate

- Accessibility to fires [?]
- Strong links to Emergency Services
- Modelling of habitats – possible introduction of habitats to slow fire spread
- Strong partnerships

OH4: Chalk grassland is protected, created and restored along the North Downs providing a vital link in the Big Chalk landscape to the Kent Downs

Measures:

- Encouraging small landowners and gardeners on chalk (next to Sheepleas, Purley Downs)
- Guildford to Farnham chalk corridor – engaged landowners
 - Guildford Borough Council
 - Puttenham Parish Council
 - Hampton Estate
 - The Land Trust
 - Surrey County Council
- Joined up management, regenerative farming, adjusted incentives
- Guildford to Dorking [chalk corridor]
 - National Trust
 - Albury Estate
- Nuanced management advice
- Grazing management vs public access (particularly sheep)
- Timing vs availability of layback land
- Public signage / education “Chalk downland” messaging / consistent
- Farming clusters – sharing resources, grazing stock and equipment
- Landowner clusters [as above]
- Garden clusters [as above]
- No fencing collars
- How to get facilities e.g. water to allow grazing
- Access to grazing animals – where to source?

Wetlands and Rivers

WR1: Broad riparian buffers across our river systems improve linear connectivity, provide habitat and food sources for key species such as Water Vole and reduce pollutants and sediment from entering our rivers

Measures:

- Widen buffer zones to minimum 10 metres*
- Countryside Stewardship options – making space for water
- Tree / hedge planting
- Fencing / no fence fencing to protect regeneration
- Reduce fertiliser use near rivers
- Remove artificial modifications e.g. piling *
- Land manager advice – funding advice
- Reintroduce water voles
- Reintroduce beavers*

WR2: Populations of key invasive species causing damage to our wetlands and rivers are reduced or eradicated and managed into the future

Measures:

- Mink eradication
- Local Action Groups (community groups) co-ordination
- Research into Bio-Controls (eg weevil, rust fungus)
- Educational piece (eg schools, businesses)

WR3: Reconnect flood plains and create and restore wetlands to reduce downstream flood risk, recharge aquifers and make water available for abstraction year-round

Measures:

- Remove flood levees / perched bank
- Stage Zero [before human interference] e.g. Cranleigh Water and Mole Gap⁴ Countryside Stewardship options [?]
- Create / restore wetlands
- Woody debris / leaky dams
- Re-meandering
- Raising beds e.g. with gravel
- Restore ghost ponds
- Earth observation data can identify areas with potential and measure impact of interventions in near real time. There are R&D projects doing this in Surrey.

Urban

UR2: Green routes/pathways into and across urban areas are maintained and established providing connecting corridors for wildlife and people

Measures:

- Mapping urban green corridors and assess condition, opportunity to expand*
- Surrey Assessment / Management Handbook
- Repair Green Routes such as Downslink and Cycle Highway
- More “cut and collect”
-

UR4: Wildflower habitat is restored appropriately across our road verges to provide connecting corridors and pollinator habitat, while respecting the need of road safety and clear site lines

Measures

- Better communication between Surrey Highways and general public
- Landscape requirements – no invasive species in new developments
- External lighting – limit amount and use [to] wildlife designs where external lighting is installed

UR6: Individual trees are protected, and new trees planted to increase urban tree-canopy cover providing clean air and shade to communities

Measures:

- Including in the planning application – enforcement [of planning requirements]
- % built for open space not grass
- Guidance for planting and water to maintain

⁴ Mole Valley geological lecture in September – Professor Richard Selby and Dr Mark Eller youtube

- Planted by people who can rather than can't

UR4: Wildflower habitat is restored appropriately across our road verges to provide connecting corridors and pollinator habitat, while respecting the need of road safety and clear site lines

Measures:

- Better communication from Surrey Highways on road verges cutting frequency (& cut and collect) and why "no mow" is good
- Identify priorities for verges that lie within identified B-lines and find ways to link up neighbourhood groups*
- Targeted tree planting on new streets and road verges – but not planted by developers who do it so poorly
- Biodiversity in school grounds, set as part of site for longer grass and pond (+ education about nature)
- Access to easy use maps / connectivity – present for "professional" (ecologist) and "general public"
- Monitoring of target species to assess impact on key SPP

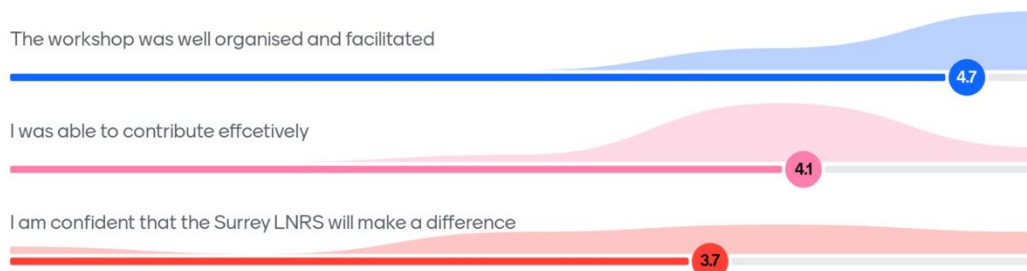
6. Feedback / observations

- Presenting nature is much more complex – learned a lot
- Areas of interest [i] might not otherwise have come across
- Creating a plan will help pull threads together
- Public opinion is changing and so issues may be addressed in any case – [except] the less well known [species / habitats]
- We're focussing on the low hanging fruit – sewage works rather than the wider issues of run-off and water in the landscape
- Easy to blame Thames Water rather than the water scarcity caused by development
- BNG assuming priorities are being delivered – identify sites that will bring wildlife benefits as otherwise they will be missed
- The conversations are really important. Need to extend these out. Importance of getting things mapped
- Waste water management plans are really important
- Impact of housing being built

7. Evaluation

Mentimeter

Please give us your feedback on this workshop



Mentimeter

Please let us know why you answered the confidence question in the way you did.

Still a lot of unknowns at this stage re landowner engagement	Will it be supported by government and local authorities	The right things are being discussed and i am hopeful that the important elements of nature recovery in Surrey will take the focus.	No funding for SCC to have leadership of implementation, not clear how delivery can be driven forward.
We'll organised	Not sure enough of the rest of the apparatus of the state will act consistently to fully deliver the strategy	75%	Great workshop, but it would be good if there was another workshop held on a weekend so that you can gain community engagement from those in full time education and employment (not just a boomer fest)



Mentimeter

Please let us know why you answered the confidence question in the way you did.

I feel positive but also wish that we could consolidate the early wins more effectively please. Interim wins would be great!	Ok	Need mapping to visually identify habitat opportunities and management actions eg as in landscape character assessment and urbanBOAS at a site level
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