



## Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy – Geographic Workshop 3

7<sup>th</sup> November, the Lightbox, Woking  
Transcript Report



Jim Boot, Senior Consultant  
Resources for Change (R4C)  
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## 1. WORD CLOUDS

The workshop started with an exercise using an online polling App Mentimeter where participants on their mobile phones were able to suggest key words or phrases in response to the following questions:

When you think about nature in Surrey today, what word or phrase comes to mind?

31 responses



3 13

When you think about nature in Surrey in 2050, what fears do you have?

33 responses



2 13

Mentimeter

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

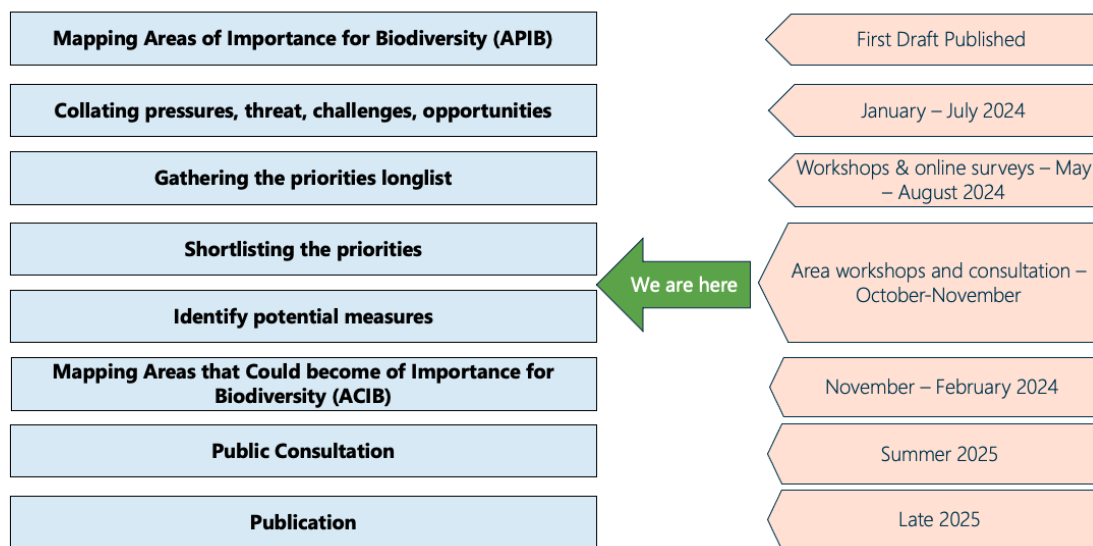
35 responses



## 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:

**Q** Where Does BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) fit in?

**A** There is a direct link, areas identified as opportunities for nature recovery in the LNRS will get a 15% uplift in the BNG metric.

**Q** How Much is this work led by data?

**A** This depends on the amount of data available, but it will be led by the right habitat in the right place. So far there have been no conflicts in the prioritisation. Most of the information will be on the website and happy to share. There are also several experts in a range of disciplines on the Steering group and the Biodiversity Working Group who will help to ensure a balanced view is taken.

**Q** Is it possible to have a copy of the biodiversity sites cut by local authority Area?

**A** Yes. It can be cut by local authority area to allow them to comment at an early stage and to incorporate into their forward planning.

**Q** How does LNRS look at more specialist habitats, e.g. urban, railway lines, churchyards ?

**A** These areas are being looked at as well particularly in regards to connectivity. Representatives from these areas have been involved in workshops.

**Q** How important is transport infrastructure in this connectivity? Have been asked to highlight barriers to connectivity by National Rail for example?

**A** As above.

#### **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):



**Woodland, Forests and Parkland**

|    |   |     |   |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 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   | 1.5 |   |
| W4 | Ancient Woodlands are brought back into positive management, protected and buffered with new woodlands or associated scrub/successional habitats  | 4.5 | I find connectivity as a high level function to be very important but it sits above most of these issues whilst only mentioned in a few   |
| W5 | Populations of deer and Grey Squirrel are effectively managed either through reintroduction of native predators [pine marten] [lynx] or increased culling/hunting to allow the natural regeneration and health of our woodlands | 5   | And other measures<br>Deer control very important. Huge lack of local awareness about their impact on woodland flora and regeneration<br>Improved positive management implies proper control of deer, grey squirrel and invasive plants |
| 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   | 5   | See W5  |
| W7 | Ancient and veteran[notable] trees are protected with new individual trees planted in our historic parklands to provide replacement veteran trees into the future   | 2   | Plant open grown trees for the future with blossom/nectar species supporting habitat<br>Appropriate spp. Of trees to survive climate change.<br>Hedges/Shaws connecting biodiversity hotspots   |
| WG |   |     | Traditional orchards?<br>Merge W1 and W4?<br>Merge W5 and W6?   |

**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, ensuring dominant species such as bracken and gorse [and birch] are adequately controlled | 6      |   |
| OH2 | Create new lowland heath on suitable forested land through the sensitive removal of trees  | 4      | If done well, very easy but we mustn't lose our sustainable timber production and have to import it all.<br>Create heathland in forestry as part of mixed commercially viable landscape |

| <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                                  | 9  |  |
| 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                         | 26 |  |
| OH5   | Species-rich grasslands [and other open habitats] (wildflower meadows) are expanded and restored to improve connectivity, soil permeability and nectar rich habitats | 24 | Especially general connectivity          |
| [OH6]   | [Recreate/restore historic heathland over planted with trees]  |    | Between 'manage' and 'create'            |
| OHG   |  |    | Merge OH1 and OH3?<br>Merge OH4 and OH5? |

| <i>Wetlands and Rivers</i> |   |        |   |
|----------------------------|---|--------|---|
| Ref                        | Proposed Priority / Outcome   | Rating | Comments  |
| WR1                        | [simplify?] [Wide watercourse/riverside vegetation?] Broad riparian buffers across our river systems improve linear connectivity, provide habitat and food sources for key species such as Water Vole [and beavers] and reduce pollutants and sediment from entering our rivers | 5      | Reedbeds to help 'filter' pollutants. Can't stop surface run off. Also can't dictate use of agri pesticides, surfactants etc  |
| WR2                        | Populations of key invasive species causing damage to our wetlands and rivers are reduced or eradicated and managed into the future   | 5      | Deer in reedbeds  |
| WR3                        | Reconnect flood plains and create and restore wetlands to reduce downstream flood risk. Recharge aquifers and make water available for abstraction year-round [is this nature recovery?]  | 3      | Reconnect for nature objectives – not just to facilitate more abstraction. We need to reduce society's wasteful use of water and taking it for granted – not just provide more and more to be wasted/misused. |
| WR4                        | Chalk streams, springs and headwaters are recognised, protected and restored  | 0      | Bourne<br>Protect/Preserve routes during dry periods<br>More of a policy. What is the outcome resulting from this?  |
| WR5                        | Obsolete obstacles [simplify language] within our rivers are removed to restore our rivers and removing barriers to fish passage  | 4      | Modified watercourses   |
| WR6                        | Create, and restore and [maintain] ponds across the landscape to provide vital [habitats]   | 1      |   |

| <i>Wetlands and Rivers</i> |  |   |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| WR7                        | Natural function of modified watercourses is restored improving water quality and quantity | 4 | Removing man-made features won't change water quality?<br>Has natural flood management been considered (beavers, trees etc) for River Thames scheme?<br>Habitat creation from gravel extraction   |
| [WR8]                      | [Restoration of disused farmland ponds]  | 0 |   |
| WRG                        |  |   | Objectives have lots of overlap – eg remove obstacles is a key thing for chalk stream restoration and restore natural function/processes<br>Outcomes vs actions to be split apart<br>WR3 and WR7 Are these the same or is one more an action or outcome?<br>Some are more outcomes than actions |

| <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. | 6      | Feels action-based compared to others<br>Is this a nature recovery outcome?         |
| FL2                                   | Protect, manage and increase the mosaic of semi-natural habitats within the farm landscape and other land uses  | 3      | Action?<br>Tie in with landscape recovery programme – linking up neighbouring farms |
| FL3                                   | Improved management and creation of hedgerows to provide increased habitat and connectivity across the landscape  | 2      | Action?<br>Include 'set aside' as well as hedgerows.<br>Ponds?                      |
| FL4                                   | A working landscape that is underpinned by healthy and biodiverse soils that increase soil carbon and soil biodiversity   | 3      | Soil carbon – is soil actually a significant carbon sink?                           |
| FL5                                   | A land-based economy that sufficiently rewards nature recovery actions and that is supported by the residents of Surrey   | 5      | DEFRA – Landscape Recovery Scheme   |
| FL6                                   | Integration of agroforestry both in pastoral and arable systems   | 1      |   |
| FLG                                   |   |        | Please can we mention farmland birds?   |

**Farmland and broader landscape**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | yellowhammer, skylark, corn bunting etc<br>Restoration of disused farmland ponds<br>Clusters |
|--|--|--|--|

**Urban**

| 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   | 7      |  |
| 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                           | 6      |  |
| UR4  | Wildflower habitat is [created] restored appropriately across our road verges to provide connecting corridors and pollinator habitat, while respecting the need of road safety and clear site lines | 2      | Not just road verges   |
| UR5  | Natural green spaces are created with adequate facilities to support health and wellbeing, green prescribing and recreation   | 2      |  |
| UR6  | Individual trees are protected, and new trees planted to increase urban tree-canopy cover providing clean air and shade to communities  | 3      |  |
| UR7  | Mineral and waste sites are sensitively restored to deliver benefits to biodiversity  | 2      | Repetition of SCC minerals and waste plan. This should be happening anyway. Avoid what's the % net gain? Is it worth it? Or could impact be made elsewhere? Should these be developed as Potential Development Land/brownfield? No new mineral sites. Reuse existing materials<br>Circular economy etc |
| UR G |   |        | Merge UR2 and UR4?<br>Merge UR5 and UR 6?<br>Many churchyards are wildlife gems with super semi-natural/species rich/fungi rich swards due to ancient soils. But many churchyard managers are unaware of their own resource. Education. Gods Acre website etc  |

## 5. Part 2: Measures to achieve priority outcomes

### Woodland, Forests and Parkland

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

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

Measures:

- Eat the deer and create local regulated market to support controlled reduction in deer population
- Cull squirrel population through sterilisation or eat them too
- Surrey wide nature day (volunteer) to remove invasive species (plants) – businesses, schools, clubs – scouts etc
- Respond to govt Curriculum and Assessment Review (include natural history, climate change) – Brings nature into education
- Be prepared to remove past WW2 plantations
- Biodiversity collage > educational card-based workshops
- + climate Framework for climate change education

### 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:

- Develop farm clusters – to support farmers with advice and information
- Take advantage of the Landscape Recovery funds
- Set up a farmland Ponds Group – restore disused ones, work with FIPL advisors and countryside Management Partnerships
- SF1 – use this to encourage nature friendly farming – lobbying DEFRA/Govt
- Publicise the work of RSPB and other nature friendly farmers to farming groups

### 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 [and birch] are adequately controlled*

Measures:

- Map historic (pre WW2) as a baseline (most overplanting damage has happened since then)
- Cut and collect
- Conservation grazing - do more!
- Reduce dogs – public education
- Increase bare ground/young heather, mechanical scrapes – bring back the silver studded blue!

### Wetlands and Rivers

*WR1: [simplify?] [Wide watercourse/riverside vegetation?] Broad riparian buffers across our river systems improve linear connectivity, provide habitat and food sources for key species such as Water Vole [and beavers] and reduce pollutants and sediment from entering our rivers*

|  |
|--|
| Measures:  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More holistic/whole systems thinking</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting go of outcomes (ie beavers) – habitat suitably research/maps exist, consider natural releases</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water voles reducing mink?</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish monitoring of key species – ecological survey of county from point of view of identifying high priority/value habitats for riparian zones. Add to map of sympathetic landowners (hotspots)</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to landowners/stakeholders</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewilding network – share knowledge/case studies, link with others already doing this. Maybe use a different term?</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn lessons from existing schemes</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn from great cases eg The Wardle (?) etc</li> </ul>   |

## Urban

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

*UR4: Wildflower habitat is [created] 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   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure green routes are identified and written into borough local plan</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure connectivity extends beyond designated plans</li> </ul>                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure planting of vegetation is sufficient to attract wildlife</li> </ul>        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure support of local populace</li> </ul>                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure plant selection is suitable to provide food/habitat protection</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide street furniture to encourage usage by public</li> </ul>                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage community activity in site maintenance</li> </ul>                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly provide under road tunnels for mobility</li> </ul>                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create public paths</li> </ul>  |

## 6. Feedback/Observations

- For beavers!
- Jargon – simpler language, eg riparian
- More holistic – whole systems – what nature wants to do
- Still more about farm clusters and their role/support. FIPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes) grants
- Lack of awareness of government initiatives particularly for farmers
- Wild venison in the buffet
- Process has brought people together from different organisations, professions, areas – don't lose this momentum and good will
- There are actions we can embed into the local plans.

## 7. Evaluation

1. The workshop was well organised and facilitated

4.4



2. I was able to contribute effectively

4.4



3. I am confident that the Surrey LNRS will make a difference

4.2

