



SURREY NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

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Geographic Workshops

Introduction

The purpose of this second round of workshops was to bring together the outputs from the first set of workshops held in the summer of 2024 for review and further prioritisation. During the period May to August, the first set of 8 workshops were held involving 140 participants from a range of local stakeholders and the general public.

Information collected

What's special about Surrey – personal views	64
Questions and answers (informing the website FAQ)	32
SWOT results	1506
Reflections	34
Outcomes and actions	252

The results of the first set of workshops – particularly the SWOTs, outcomes and actions – were analysed resulting in a short-list of 46 outcomes and supporting actions being drawn up. These were then refined and brought to the second set of geographic workshops held in October and November for further discussion and prioritisation.

In a parallel exercise undertaken by the Surrey Nature Partnership, an online survey was promoted using Commonplace – an online survey and mapping application. The results of this survey were also shared at the second round of workshops to assist in further refinement of the outcomes and actions or measures.

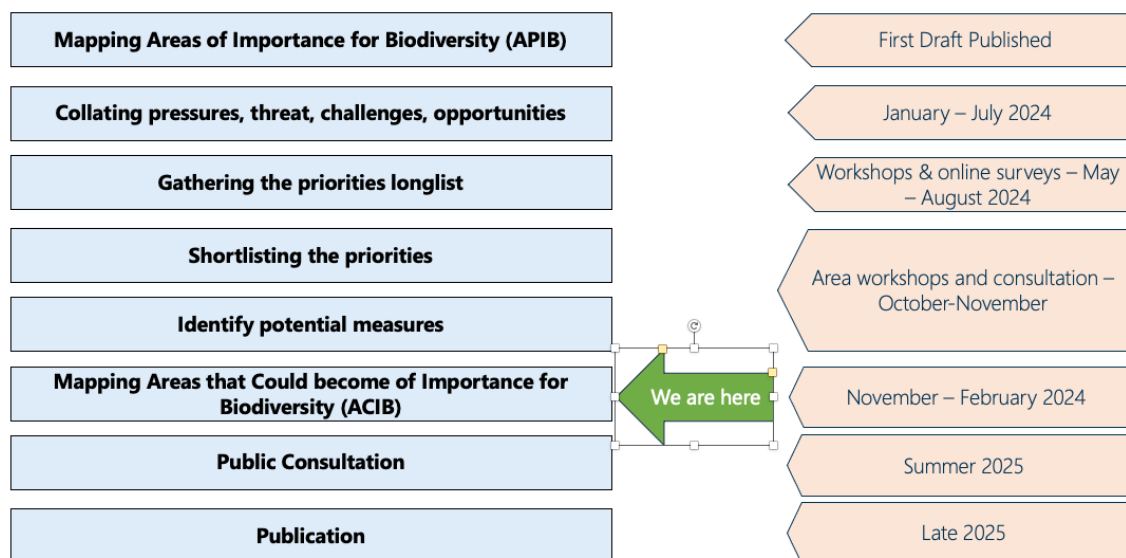
The geographic workshops were attended by 68 people, many but not exclusively, who had attended the first set of workshops. This time they were organised on a geographical rather than sector basis in Guildford, Bletchingley and Woking. The agendas were repeated across all three areas:

1. Word cloud activity considering:
 - a. Nature in Surrey today
 - b. Nature in Surrey in 2050 – fears
 - c. Nature in Surrey in 2050 – ideal [vision]
2. Questions and answers
3. Review and then polling on proposed priority outcomes
4. Deep dive into one Outcome for each theme, discussion and action planning
5. Feedback / observations
6. Evaluation (of the workshop)

This report summarises the results of those workshops (full transcripts of the workshops can be found online at <https://surreynaturepartnership.org/snr-workshops/>).

The outputs of the second round will in turn inform the priority outcomes and secondary outcomes for the draft Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy which will now be drawn up and formally consulted on during early 2025. All participants and the wider public will then have a further opportunity to review and comment on the proposed outcomes and measures to address Nature Recovery in Surrey in the coming period to 2050. The flow chart below sets out what activities have been completed and the next steps in developing and adopting the plan:

Where are we in the LNRS process?



Geographic Workshop Results

As described in the introduction, participants at the workshops were asked to describe nature in Surrey now, their fears for nature in Surrey in twenty-five years' time and their hopes for the same period. The combined results are shown below with the largest words showing where words were repeated / there was common ground.

Word clouds



Figure 1: Nature in Surrey today

- Diverse 7
- Biodiverse 6
- Abundant 3
- Flourishing 3
- Vibrant 2
- Accessible 2

A vision statement for Surrey Nature in 2050 might start:

“In 2050 Nature in Surrey will be thriving, connected and diverse. Biodiversity will be abundant and flourishing and nature will be vibrant and accessible to all.”

At each workshop, participants were able to ask questions, which were in turn used to generate a FAQ which is hosted on the Surrey Nature Partnership website <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs#local> (Page Contents). Here is a flavour of some the commonest questions:

Q Education – what does cross cutting mean?

A Developing a communication and education strategy to sit along the LNRS.

Q Has ecosystem service mapping been done?

A Not yet but it will be based on the “measures” discussion.

Q How are the priorities going to be used?

A Will be habitat specific in the strategy.

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 [sorted] 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 regard to connectivity. Representatives from these areas have been involved in workshops.

Part 1: Outcome prioritisation

At each of the workshops, the participants were able to review and discuss the emerging proposed outcomes. A full set of how they prioritised these can be seen for each individual workshop in the workshop transcript reports:

<https://surreynaturepartnership.org/snr-workshops/> . The combined results are

available in full in Appendix A. Below are the top rated 13 outcomes across all the themes:

Theme	Ref	Outcome	Overall score
Woodland, parkland and forest	W1	Management of existing woodland is improved, incorporating open spaces, glades, and transitional habitats to maximise species diversity	46
	W4	Ancient Woodlands are brought back into positive management, protected and buffered with new woodlands or associated scrub/successional habitats	32.5
Open habitat and grassland	OH 4	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!]	72
	OH5	Species-rich grasslands (wildflower meadows) are expanded and restored to improve connectivity, soil permeability and nectar rich habitats	61
	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]	39
Wetland and Rivers	WR3	Reconnect flood plains and create and restore wetlands to reduce downstream flood risk, recharge aquifers and make water available for abstraction year-round	41
	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	36
Farmland and the broader landscape	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.	43
	FL5	A land-based economy that sufficiently rewards nature recovery actions and that is supported by the residents of Surrey	42
	FL2	Protect, manage and increase the mosaic of semi-natural habitats within the farm landscape and other land uses	34
Urban	UR2	Green routes/pathways into and across urban areas are maintained and established providing	53

Theme	Ref	Outcome	Overall score
		connecting corridors for wildlife and people [money for access]	
Urban	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	38
	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	34

It is notable that

- Open Habitat **OH4 “Chalk grassland is protected conserved, created and restored ...”** is significantly the most well supported outcome with 72 votes
- with the next also an Open Habitat being OH6 “Species-rich grasslands (wildflower meadows) are expanded and restored ...” with 61 votes.
- The next / third nearest is UR2 “Green routes/pathways into and across urban areas are maintained and established providing connecting corridors for wildlife and people” with 53 votes.

Part 2: Measures to achieve priority outcomes

In the next activity, participants were asked to take the top 3 rated outcomes for each theme and to suggest priority measures or actions to deliver these. The Natural England guidance has been used to assess the full list of measures set out in the transcript reports as to whether they meet the criteria:

48. Each statement of biodiversity priorities must set out ‘the priorities, in terms of habitats and species, for recovering or enhancing biodiversity (taking into account the contribution that recovering or enhancing biodiversity can also make to other environmental benefits)’. This is an important step in the process of preparing a local nature recovery strategy as it establishes what the strategy is seeking to achieve. It is, therefore, a stage in strategy preparation where engagement with local partners will be particularly needed.

50. Each statement of biodiversity priorities must also include ‘proposals as to the potential measures relating to those priorities’. These are the practical actions that, if taken, would make positive contributions to delivering the priorities agreed with local partners. For example, rotational coppicing of native woodland to provide dormouse habitat or ditch-blocking to re-wet degraded peat to mitigate climate change.

52. The priorities identified by every local nature recovery strategy should reflect local circumstances, including the most important issues to local people and organisations.

The following priority measures are assessed as meeting the Natural England criteria either fully (2 points), partially (1) and not at all (0). Only measures that meet at least one of the criteria fully or two partially will be included at this stage.

Woodland, forest and parkland measures

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

Measure	Habitat	Species	Score
More woods into Forestry Commission management plans	2	0	2
Increase structural diversity of woods, thinning, coppicing etc	2	0	2
Diversity species of trees within woods	0	2	2
Manage grey squirrel over populations	0	2	2

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

Measure	Habitat	Species	Score
Connect small, fragmented Ancient Woodland through planting a diverse range of species	2	1	3
Introduce new woodland on existing Ancient Woodland sites with plantation land	2	0	2
Buffer Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland with natural colonisation and planting	2	0	2
Address the impacts of Ash dieback replant with resilient species for the future	0	2	2
Enhance ghyll woodlands, buffer from surrounding agriculture – locally a rare and important habitat	2		2
Identify future veteran trees	0	2	2
Eat the deer and create local regulated market to support controlled reduction in deer population	0	2	2
Cull squirrel population through sterilisation or eat them too	0	2	2

Farmland and the broader landscape

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.

Measure	Habitat	Species	Score
More wild margins	2	0	2
Set up a farmland Ponds Group – restore disused ones, work with FIPL advisors and countryside Management Partnerships	2		2

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

Low intensity grazing on low productive grassland – to encourage species rich grassland	1	2	3
Plant hedgerows	1	1	2
Manage existing hedgerows	1	1	2
Add buffer zones to hedgerows, treelines, ancient / veteran tree root [protection areas]	1	1	2
Winter feeding farmland birds	0	2	2
Recognise Ancient Woodland pockets within farmland and create bigger zone around them	2		2

FL4 A working landscape that is underpinned by healthy and biodiverse soils that increase soil carbon and soil biodiversity

Education – worm counts, dung beetles, soil testing	1	2	3
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FL5 A land-based economy that sufficiently rewards nature recovery actions and that is supported by the residents of Surrey

Funding stream that covers – hedgerow management, buffer zones around key trees, particularly ancient woodland	2		2
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Open habitat and grassland

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

Measure	Habitat	Species	Score
Management plans for specific species	1	2	3
Fenceless grazing – natural mosaics	2	1	3
Increase bare ground/young heather, mechanical scrapes – bring back the silver studded blue!	2	1	3
Expand the B-Lines model to cover county and local connectivity	2	1	3
Include wildfire measures	1	1	2
Cyclical grass cutting – leave longer patches in rotation	1	1	2
Get more volunteers and staff on the ground, plus livestock. Infrastructure/logistics needed to support this *	2		2

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

Guildford to Farnham chalk corridor – engaged landowners. Joined up management, regenerative farming, adjusted incentives	2		2
Guildford to Dorking [chalk corridor]	2		2
Nuanced management advice	1	1	2
No fencing collars	2		2

OH5 Species-rich grasslands (wildflower meadows) are expanded and restored to improve connectivity, soil permeability and nectar rich habitats

Accessible, understandable guidance on how to manage open habitats, and training, and alternatives to banned pesticides, eg Asulox	2		2
Facilitate/Promote measures that enable grazing on open habitats	2		2
Identify opportunities on field margins for open habitats to create connectivity	2		2
Get citizen scientists and local taxonomy groups to survey habitats and species.	1	1	2

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 beavers] and reduce pollutants and sediment from entering our rivers

Measure	Habitat	Species	Score
Create habitats to allow particular species to naturally spread into the river environment e.g. beavers. Consider natural releases.'	1	2	3
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)		2	2
Reintroduce water voles		2	2
Reintroduce beavers*		2	2
Whole river management strategy	2		2

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

Catchment based approach (CABA[1] partnership) to manage species control	1	1	2
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Urban

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

Measure	Habitat	Species	Score
Ensure planting of vegetation is sufficient to attract wildlife	1	1	2
Consider built environment associated habitats eg bird boxes, bee hotel, planting	1	1	2
Urban parks and green spaces – create appropriate habitats and corridors	2		2

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

Policy of cut and collect on long grass sections to increase wild flowers and becomes less tall and prettier	1	1	2
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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

Landscape requirements – no invasive species in new developments		2	2
External lighting – limit amount and use [to] wildlife designs where external lighting is installed	2		2
Identify priorities for verges that lie within identified B-lines and find ways to link up neighbourhood groups*	2		2
Biodiversity in school grounds, set as part of site for longer grass and pond (+ education about nature)	1	1	2
Effectively managed verge wild flowering process, maintaining highway safety	1	1	2
Consider areas for seeding/planting	1	1	2

It can be seen that not all the outcomes have measures that meet the criteria. It may be that further measures can be found in the earlier activities / workshops that do meet the criteria – but were not addressed in this second round. In particular, there are fewer measures for the

Farmland and broader landscape and further work with farmers and landowners may be required (see Recommendation A).

Recommendations / conclusions

- A. Reviewing the attendance at the second set of workshops, while there was a good balance across NGOs, the majority with a nature conservation focus (25) and a few carbon focussed (4), local government, parish and district councils were fairly well represented (16) with protected landscape / governmental bodies (7), there was low attendance from farmers (2) and slightly higher attendance from private / land related businesses (9) although some of these were social enterprises – there was only one golf club represented. Consider holding an additional session/s with farmers and potentially other landowners / managers.
- B. The workshops did work for reviewing the outputs from the first set of workshops and the new people who attended added some extra challenge ie people weren't marking their own work.
- C. They also worked for generating measures, although it is arguable that participants weren't rigorous enough in ensuring that the measures (actions) they proposed, met Natural England's criteria / focus on habitat and species.
- D. There is an indication that people were promoting their own projects / passions, regardless of whether they met the criteria. Inevitably this might mean a large proportion of the proposed measures won't make the final cut, maybe reducing people's buy-in.
- E. For the venues, 2/3 were accessible by train with the most well attended being daytime events being at Bletchingley Golf Course (32) and G-Live in Guildford (26). The Lightbox, Woking was the last well attended (10) and was an evening event. On balance though it feels correct to have provided an evening option.
- F. There were some technical issues in regard of the Lightbox, not experienced at the other venues and in hindsight, it might have been good to have a back-up plan. In line with the well attended farmer and land manager events in the first round, using land-based venues might be considered if another event targeting this group was considered.
- G. Overall, the second set of workshops worked well to sift and refine the outputs from the first set of workshops – the break between the two giving sufficient time to analyse and share the results.
- H. A further sift could be undertaken to categorise the results perhaps in a facilitated session with the Design Group.

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