



# Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership Governance Group: Terms of reference

## Delivery and implementation of the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Strategies

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a mandatory system of spatial strategies which establish priorities and map opportunities for nature recovery and deliver wider environmental benefits. Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC) have been appointed as the Responsible Authorities (RAs) to deliver and implement the LNRS for their respective counties.
- 1.2. As proven in the development of the LNRSs, there are significant advantages in working closely with neighbouring counties. This has been exemplified by the close working relationship through the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership (NSNRP), which is continuing into the delivery and implementation phase. The NSNRP brings together a broad range of stakeholders in the common goal of delivering nature recovery and securing healthier and more resilient natural systems through the development of a 25 Year Environment Plan for Norfolk and Suffolk. There is excellent alignment between the goals of the Partnership and delivery of the LNRSs.
- 1.3. As a result of planned Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution processes, there will be significant changes to organisational structure of NCC and SCC from 2026 onwards. The creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk will provide a unitary authority with responsibility for the Local Nature Recovery Strategies. The presence of the NSNRP will provide a stable structure to ensure nature recovery priorities are maintained across the region throughout these changes.
- 1.4. NCC and SCC initially created a Nature Recovery Partnership Steering Group to provide guidance, and advice in the development of their LNRSs during 2024-25, as a part of the Partnership's wider nature recovery remit. A review of this Steering Group (subsequently named 'Governance Group') will create an evolved structure to support, drive and implement delivery of the LNRSs. This will align with Defra guidance, as set out in the English Devolution White Paper and the ministerial letter to all RAs, where it is envisaged that RAs will take on a role in the delivery of LNRSs made up of four key functions:
  - Lead and convene a delivery partnership
  - Embed LNRS into local decision making
  - Identify strategic projects and facilitate project development
  - Monitor and report on delivery of LNRS priorities

1.5. The Governance Group will operate in conjunction with specialist Partnership Action Groups (PAGs) drawn from NSNRP members, Supporting Authorities (district, borough, city and county councils, alongside the Defra family represented by Natural England) and wider sectors of society to provide an extensive range of experience and representation (see Table 1). Groups will operate jointly across Norfolk and Suffolk with membership drawn from both counties, or within a Norfolk or Suffolk footprint, if necessary, as follows:

- a) Mapping and Monitoring
- b) Planning Alignment
- c) Engagement, Advocacy and Communication
- d) Land Management, Infrastructure, Project Development and Delivery
- e) Funding and Investment
- f) Species and Habitat Recovery

As required, separate independent engagement will be convened with other sectors as opportunities arise.

1.6. Membership of the PAGs will include identified representatives from the NSNRP, Supporting Authorities, nature conservation NGOs, the wider Defra family (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency) and wider sectoral groups as appropriate. This will ensure there is opportunity to seek support across public, private and voluntary sectors, engaging directly with locally active organisations and individuals. These groups will be used to identify key work areas, facilitate discussions, identify engagement opportunities and ensure LNRS alignment across the region. In addition, they will be utilised within the review process of the LNRSs as defined by Defra guidance. PAG membership will remain flexible to ensure appropriate partners with specific skills or experience are involved, which may be more relevant within the development and support of projects.

1.7. Table 1 outlines the aims and outputs from each PAG and the intended or suggested users of these outputs. These outputs will contribute to an Engagement and Communications Plan prepared by the LNRS team and approved by the Governance Group. As delivery and implementation of the LNRS takes place, it may be necessary to review these outputs in terms of demand, to ensure benefits and outcomes are achieved.

1.8. The Governance Group will include the representatives from each of the PAGs and identified representatives from the Supporting Authorities, eNGOs, the Defra family, NSNRP, SCC and NCC and others identified and co-opted as necessary to ensure the group has access to all the expertise necessary (see Diagram 1).

## **2. Purpose**

2.1. The Governance Group will:

- (a) Steer work to deliver and implement the LNRSs by providing strategic guidance, expertise and advice for NCC and SCC and the PAGs, as defined above in section 1.4.

- (b) Receive reports from and input to agendas for the PAGs.
- (c) Ensure there is cross-boundary synergy between Norfolk and Suffolk as the counties deliver their respective LNRSs.
- (d) Oversee the relevant delivery areas to ensure they are consistent with any associated guidance.
- (e) Share information on new plans, projects, and public consultations relevant to the LNRS.
- (f) Integrate the LNRSs with the NSNRPs wider nature recovery work for Norfolk and Suffolk using all relevant evidence and data.
- (g) Ensure that issues and concerns raised by the Partnership and PAGs are discussed and solutions found.
- (h) Ensure that there is due consideration of the benefits of cross-cutting topics such as geodiversity, landscape, historic environment, soils etc.
- (i) Provide a steer on any conflict arising (e.g. priorities, areas of potential for nature recovery).
- (j) Represent the views of the NSNRP.
- (k) Provide information and steer to the Local Nature Recovery All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), via the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) network. This may include supporting documentation submitted to cabinet or committees for discussion in parliament.  
Provide representation on the LNP network via the co-chairs and Nature Recovery Partnership Manager in the first instance.

## 2.2. Ways of working

- (a) Governance Group members will work together to ensure that any issues and concerns raised by the Partnership and PAGs are discussed, and where possible, advice provided, solutions suggested and implemented.
- (b) The Governance Group is not a platform for lobbying other members but is rather an opportunity to collaborate in a constructive way towards shared outcomes for nature recovery.
- (c) NCC and SCC will seek and appoint members to the Governance Group and will make recommendations for membership and chairs of the PAGs to enable them to be set up.
- (d) NCC and SCC will appoint the co-chairs of the Governance Group, along with a Partnership Manager and appoint a secretary.
- (e) Sub-groups of the Governance Group may be formed as appropriate, with guest or interim leads or chairs.
- (f) The Governance Group will aim to meet collectively at regular intervals to deliver and implement the LNRS, and to align with the required review and re-publication process when defined by government guidance. Meetings can take place online or in person.
- (g) To avoid excessively large working groups, partners, eNGOs and the Defra family may work collectively (within their groups and outside meetings) to agree representatives to attend meetings. It is likely that working arrangements will be adjusted to meet the demand and requirements.



(h) There should be no fewer than ten members of the Governance Group present for the meeting to be quorate.

### **3. Meetings**

3.1. The Responsible Authorities will provide secretariat to support the Governance Group and all PAGs in ways such as setting up meetings, circulating agendas, taking and circulating minutes, arranging electronic storage of files and supporting information.

3.2. Documents relating to agenda items will be circulated at least 5 days before meetings by the secretary. Minutes will be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting, with opportunity for amendments or additions to be requested. All comments should be provided within one week of the minutes being circulated.

Changes to this document can be proposed by the Governance Group itself, following agreement at a meeting, for the Responsible Authorities to endorse.

Date: June 2026

Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council

## Diagram 1: Governance Group Structure



**Table 1: PAG Group Structure**

<b>PAG Focus Area (in priority order)</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Additional Members (examples, not exhaustive, all groups contain LNRS team and NE)</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Intended Output Users (linked to Engagement and Comms plan where appropriate)</b>
<b>Mapping and Monitoring</b>	To align with Defra requirements, capturing projects within tool, have knowledge of updated data sets and be involved in preparation of reviewed mapping	Geospatial team NBIS/SBIS Supporting organisations and data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring tool for project capture</li> <li>• Updated data sets for review and republication</li> <li>• Ambassador role of sharing LNRS tool and requirements</li> <li>• Mapping of current projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and mapping tool for all stakeholders across region</li> <li>• Updated data for Defra and Responsible Authorities, and other relevant partners</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for progress monitoring and alignment with guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Alignment</b>	To ensure the LNRS is embedded in decision making processes across planning and land use considerations.	LPAs, DMOG/DPOG, BNG focus, eNGOs, heritage and archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent use of LNRS in decision making using case studies and model examples to support officers</li> <li>• Updated/reviewed guidance document</li> <li>• Involvement in consultations on Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning professionals and representatives from across the region</li> <li>• Landowners/managers and planning applicants</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for progress monitoring and alignment with guidance</li> </ul>

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<b>Engagement, Advocacy and Communication</b>	To ensure a wide network of stakeholders are utilised to maximise promotion and support of nature recovery actions across the region. To ensure the LNRS is accessible to all sectors.	Community groups, parish and town councils, health and wellbeing, education, tourism sector, culture and arts, youth groups, eNGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bespoke guides for various sectors</li> <li>• Involvement in varied engagement events and activities</li> <li>• Case studies of best practice</li> <li>• Volunteer potential resource on website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders across the region e.g. general public, community groups, businesses, local authorities, education establishments, eNGOs, landowners and managers</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for progress monitoring and alignment with guidance</li> </ul>

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<b>Land Management, Infrastructure, Project Development and Delivery</b>	To have oversight of development of project pipelines, aligning visions & shared outcomes, maximising connectivity and adding value to projects. To acknowledge the pressures of infrastructure and development across the region, and to recognise and develop opportunities presented by alignment with the LNRS	NFU/CLA, farm clusters, LRS, Protected Landscapes Water sector, catchments, NSIPs, transport and infrastructure, access, housing developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of nature recovery projects within region (linked to mapping/monitoring tool and data)</li> <li>• Understanding of upcoming land use changes within region and potential impact</li> <li>• Case studies of best practice</li> <li>• Ambassador role of sharing LNRS requirements and opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any individual or group across the region delivering or planning to deliver a nature recovery project</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for progress monitoring and alignment with guidance</li> </ul>

<b>PAG Focus Area (in priority order)</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Additional Members (examples, not exhaustive, all groups contain LNRS team and NE)</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Intended Output Users (linked to Engagement and Comms plan where appropriate)</b>
<b>Funding and Investment</b>	To develop recognition and awareness of all private, public & blended finance options, supporting grant applications and proposals.	Natural Capital East, Chamber of Commerce, Business Boards, Green Finance,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RA specific grant funding</li> <li>• Online portal – information for sources of funding</li> <li>• Database of funding potential</li> <li>• Ambassador role of sharing LNRS requirements, application processes and opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any individual or group across the region delivering or planning to deliver a nature recovery project</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for progress monitoring and alignment with guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Species and Habitat Recovery</b>	To ensure the correct species and habitats are recognised within the work of the LNRS delivery and implementation, and to focus data collection for revision and reprioritisation.	NBIS/SBIS, eNGOs, ecologists, species experts and recorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data sets for species and habitats</li> <li>• Information for long list and short-listing processes</li> <li>• QC/review of project data</li> <li>• Data and focus for species recovery funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any individual or group across the region delivering or planning to deliver a nature recovery project</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for progress monitoring and alignment with guidance</li> <li>• Responsible Authorities for integration into LNRS review process</li> </ul>