

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment, and Future Generations

Date response requested:² 21 January 2025

Response to report:

Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with climate finance and	Accept	We are looking at how to present Oxfordshire natural capital mapping by Oxford University within and alongside the Local Nature Recovery Strategy prior to publication in the Autumn. We

¹ Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

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natural capital work happening locally and nationally.		are also engaging with the LEP Green Prospectus and working with the Local Nature Partnership on their Nature Finance workstream and Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Investment Fund which focuses on green finance for projects which will align with the LNRS. The LNRS is aligned with delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain and we will continue to monitor additional green finance opportunities coming forward nationally.
2. That the Council should ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Government's five missions and their outputs.	Partially accept	Having reviewed the Government's 5 missions, it is hard to see a direct link to the LNRS, however, there is a clear link between the LNRS and delivery of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan as well as achieving the national commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30).
3. That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on the nature costs of roads and rails.	Accept	The Landscape and Nature Recovery Team are currently liaising with officers producing the Movement and Place Strategies (part 2 of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan). The Local Nature Partnership are currently engaging on review of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to ensure Green Infrastructure and delivery of LNRS is integrated, and we will look for opportunities for the Landscape and Nature Recovery Team to further engage.
4. That the Council should develop a delivery plan to ensure that teams within the County Council have integrated and adopted the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	A draft of the Council's Biodiversity Action Framework and associated Action Plan have been produced for imminent internal consultation with a view to adoption in early summer. Extension of the LNRS Project Managers contract for a further year, and current recruitment of a Biodiversity Officer, will allow additional officer time to integrate LNRS delivery across Council services.
5. That the Council should make explicit in an annex to the documentation the implications of the strategy for district councils, town and parish councils, neighbourhood groups, and other key partners as well as the actions expected of them.	Accept	Work is now being taken forward by the LNRS Project Manager and partners to develop LNRS user guides for a variety of audiences to be available alongside LNRS publication in Autumn.

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6. That the Council should strengthen the explanations within the strategy of the benefits to health and wellbeing of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	We invited the Public Health team to submit a response to our consultation to help us improve how we reflect the benefits to health and wellbeing of the LNRS; this will inform the review of the draft LNRS prior to publication in Autumn.
7. That the Council should consider how best it can publicise positive elements of nature recovery that are already happening.	Accept	We will do comms around launch of the LNRS in Autumn, and also plan to do some comms as part of Big Green Week. We would like to develop a comms strategy for biodiversity and nature recovery and will add this to the service delivery plan for 25/26. Such work will require specialist comms support as well as co-ordination with partners such as the Local Nature Partnership; in developing the LNRS we have established a Comms Engagement Working Group through the Local Nature Partnership which we will look to continue..
8. That the Council should ensure it sets an example maintaining its own land for nature recovery and biodiversity gain, as the Responsible Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	This is integrated within the draft Biodiversity Action Framework which introduces policies around our own land management and is likely to be ready for adoption in early summer. We are working with the Properties and Estates Team on development of a habitat banking vehicle to enable delivery of biodiversity net gain on our land, and also promote the delivery of 20% biodiversity net gain through colleagues bringing forward Council-led planning applications.
9. That the Council should work with schools to support them to promote biodiversity and nature recovery in their grounds.	Partially accept	With current resource levels and varied responsibility and relationships with schools it is considered only light reactive response is achievable. This would also be in the form of providing direction to suitable guidance and advice material only. There is some link with our community tree programme, with the Tree Service is planting 3 new community orchards on primary school sites in Oxford with a grant from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund. Much work with schools is delivered through our partners, including the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust,

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		Earth Trust, and Science Oxford. Promotion of sources of support for schools has been included within the draft Biodiversity Action Framework which is likely to be ready for adoption in early summer.
10. That the Council should investigate the costs of collecting and/or piling mown grass to enhance wildflower growth and other biodiversity benefits.	Accept	<p>The introduction of cut and collect within the Highways network is currently focussed on our 52 Road Verge Nature Reserves, with an aim to introduce 6 new sites into a cut and collect regime annually, this has been incorporated into the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (due for adoption in early summer).</p> <p>We'll continue to work with the Highways Team to understand costs for more extensive cut and collect and we are work with our highways contractors, Milestone on developing a biodiversity action plan for their new contract, including investigating implementing cut and collect more widely.</p>
11. That the Council should explore the possibilities of supporting flood defences through biodiversity means, including swales, sustainable drainage systems, and rain gardens.	Accept	The inclusion of natural flood management options within Section 19 Flood Reports is integrated into the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (due for adoption in early summer). The recently adopted Flood Risk Management Strategy cross references the LNRS and identifies the role of Natural Flood Management. The new Flood Task Force provides a mechanism to engage with a range of partners including farmer clusters who can help implement natural flood management.