

LNRS Advisory Board Board Meeting Minutes & Actions

Date: Tuesday 14th November 12:30-13:30

Venue: Via Teams

Attendees:

Gideon Ben-Tovim (Chair)	GBT	Nature Connected
Andrea O'Connor	AC	Sefton Council
Andrew Clark	AC	MEAS
Annie Merrey	AM	Faiths4Change
Colm Bowe	CB	LJMU
Dave Sweeney	DS	NHS Cheshire and Merseyside
David Shaw	DS	University of Liverpool
Emma Galbraith	EG	LCR
Helen Eaton	HE	Myerscough
Kate Martin	KM	National Trust
Katie Finkill- Coombs	KFC	Natural England
Lucy Atkinson	LA	MEAS
Paul Nolan	PN	The Mersey Forest
Racheal Jones	RJ	VCFSE Sector
Rachel Waggett	RW	LCR
Tom Burditt	TB	Lancashire Wildlife Trust

I Welcome / Introductions / Apologies

The meeting began with a welcome to all participants. Each attendee was introduced, and their presence acknowledged. No apologies were received for this meeting.

II LNRS Combined Authority – Emma Galbraith

GBT expressed thanks for initiating the work and anticipated collaborative efforts. Apologies were given for the delayed distribution of papers, with assurance of adherence to the rule of sending papers five days in advance in the future. RW then discussed the terms of reference.

RW provided an overview of the final draft terms for the group, emphasizing its role as an independent Advisory Board. The focus is on letting the group determine the direction of the LNRS. RW encouraged feedback on the proposed terms before finalization.

The LNRS, a new statutory duty for the Liverpool City region, aims for ecology and nature recovery. RW mentioned ongoing work, awaiting guidance from Defra. While adjustments may be needed, no fundamental changes are expected. Colleagues were encouraged to provide comments after digesting the information.

RW outlined the group's responsibility as the "responsible authority" mandated by Defra to deliver the LNRS by March 2025. Nature Connected was enlisted to form the advisory group, aligning with the combined authority's approach of seeking input before formulating policies.

Emphasizing inclusivity, RW mentioned the support of a technical group chaired by TB to delve into specifics. The local nature recovery strategy aims to engage a broad audience beyond technical experts.

The terms clarified the tight timeline for completing the LNRS by April 2025 and highlighted the group's role in advising and supporting its development. RW clarified the strategic focus, including determining priorities, mapping valuable nature areas, and identifying opportunities for recovery across the Liverpool City region.

Six local authorities collaborate to ensure alignment with existing plans. RW stressed the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest and fostering close collaboration. Technical advisors contribute expertise to the process.

RW discussed the need to align principles, objectives, and visions. Board membership is suggested to be reviewed annually, with flexibility. Nature Connected acts as the secretariat. RW emphasized transparency and encouraged members to bring conflicts of interest to the group's attention. The governance structure involves ultimate approval from the combined authority.

The terms also address the non-lobbying nature of the group, focusing on delivering the LNRS. Confidentiality measures were discussed. RW concluded by referencing the governance structure diagram provided in the terms of reference.

RW detailed the internal governance structure supporting the Advisory Board and Technical Advisory Panel. A senior steering group oversees progress, reporting to the Net Zero Delivery Board. The Net Zero Delivery Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, meets every six weeks.

Decisions move to the portfolio board, led by Councillor David Baines. The combined authority is the final approving body. RW acknowledged the need for commitment from all six local authorities.

A core project team, led by RW and Emma, oversees the LNRS delivery. Work is organized into four packages. RW holds ultimate accountability for delivery.

AC raised the consideration of including expectations for partners to commit to delivering LNRS priorities. AC suggested exploring language looking beyond March 2025.

DS echoed the importance of a strong implementation focus. DS highlighted the relevance of biodiversity net gain and suggested representation from land managers on the Advisory Board.

AC expressed appreciation for the overview and raised a question about the potential inclusion of MEAS in a supporting role.

TB shared insights from the LNRS process in Greater Manchester. He mentioned the establishment of a separate sounding board for the farming community. TB also emphasized broadening the perspective of LNRS beyond spatial strategies.

DS mentioned an action item to refresh the Green Paper for NHS in Cheshire Mersey.

RW introduced EG as the LNRS lead. EG provided background information on the LNRS, a new statutory duty focused on nature recovery. The LNRS is evidence-based, locally led, with key objectives of agreeing priorities, mapping valuable areas, and identifying opportunities.

The LNRS is expected to support local authorities with biodiversity duties and biodiversity net gain. Recent amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill also require all tiers of planning to consider local nature recovery strategies. The strategy completion deadline is March 2025, with funding provided for two years of development.

Collaboration with stakeholders in the public, private, and voluntary sectors is crucial. The combined authority is the responsible authority, and supporting authorities include local authorities, Natural England, Environment Agency, and the Forestry Commission.

The strategy development process involves mapping important biodiversity areas, describing the current state, identifying challenges and opportunities, determining priorities, specifying measures for nature recovery, compiling a species shortlist, and mapping potential important areas.

EG provided an update on the progress of the LNRS, including the completion of the phase one map of the most valuable existing areas for nature. The public engagement phase has received around 650 responses. Efforts to engage farmers, underrepresented groups, and involve the Youth Combined Authority are underway.

The timeline outlines key phases of work, with the final draft expected by the end of next year and approval targeted for March 2025.

RW emphasized the LNRS development is in its early stages. The ongoing lobbying efforts for funding beyond publication are crucial. RW proposed that the board could consider this aspect in their current work.

DS raised the question of conversations with the team producing the strategic spatial plan for the combined authority.

AC expressed agreement with DS's comment about the need for coordination between the SDS policy and the LNRS strategy.

GBT summarized the meeting, emphasizing the need to enhance the terms of reference for practical implementation. The next meeting will involve finalizing the terms, discussing species prioritization, reviewing public engagement outcomes, and exploring the link between LNRS and the SDS.

TB highlighted challenges in organizing meetings and the need for adjustments in membership to ensure comprehensive engagement.

The participants expressed positive feedback about the meeting, noting valuable contributions. The plan to reassess membership after the next meeting was deemed appropriate.

TB discussed the marine environment's representation in the LNRS, suggesting a proactive engagement approach.

TB expressed apprehension about the upcoming technical group meeting, requesting a briefing beforehand.

The discussion involved clarifying the role of the technical panel and the importance of using participants' time wisely.

Date of next meeting: 23rd of January 2024 12:30-13:30

Action Log

Owner

Refresh the Green Paper for NHS in Cheshire Mersey, aligning it with national requirements.	DS / RW
The LNRS link is to be shared	EG