

LNRS Advisory Board Board Meeting Minutes & Actions

Date: Tuesday 23rd January 12:30-2.00

Venue: Via Teams

Attendees:

Gideon Ben-Tovim (Chair)	GBT	Nature Connected
Andrea O'Connor	AC	Sefton Council
Andrew Clark	AC	MEAS
Paul Boardman	PB	Halton BC
Isobel Bond	IB	LCR CA
Judy Clavey	JC	Forestry Commission
Emma Galbraith	EG	LCR CA
Anna Wright	AW	NFU
Kate Martin	KM	National Trust
Katie Finkill- Coombs	KFC	Natural England
Sion Roberts	SR	Crown Estate
Andy Martin	AM	Mersey Rivers Trust
Elina-Marielle doss	ED	BioBank
Rachel Waggett	RW	LCR CA
Petrina Brown	PB	Environment Agency
Michelle Whalley	MW	Nature Connected

3) Summary of State of Nature Report – Andrew Clark (MEAS)

The LCR State of Nature report was circulated in advance of the meeting, AC

This inaugural State of Nature seeks to provide an environmental baseline for the LCR to inform the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and an ambitious strategic policy approach to shape local nature recovery for future generations. The State of Nature report is evidence and data led and has assembled primary and secondary data derived from a wider range of sources. The report makes a number of recommendations (Part II) to halt this decline through local nature recovery and to inform SDS policy, which we request the LCR Combined Authority consider and adopt. It is intended that this State of Nature report is the first of many reports for the LCR as a robust approach to measuring nature recovery within the LCR. This is essential as we progress towards reversing the climate and ecological emergency

Key headlines as follows

Trends in species, habitats and designated sites are clear, they show that biodiversity within the LCR is in a state of decline and urgent action is required.

- Designated sites cover 41% of LCR area. It is our coastal and intertidal habitat which is recognised as internationally and nationally important and these areas form 66% of our designated site network. They protect sand dunes, saltmarsh and mudflats which provide habitat for specialist plant and animal species as well as providing important refuges for migrating and wintering birds. They represent a significant biodiversity resource within the LCR.
- The most recent assessment of condition of these sites found that only 37% of SSSIs are in favourable conservation status and many locally designated sites are not in positive conservation management. Factors affecting the condition and quality of designated sites and habitats include; lack of management, scrub encroachment, climate change, pollution transfer, impacts from invasive species and plant disease, impacts from recreational pressure.
- Since the early 1980's there has been approximately 5% loss of all habitats due to development pressure, notably 10% of our most biodiverse grasslands have been lost. This is considered to be an underestimate and does not reflect pre 1980s losses. Since 2000, however woodland cover has increased by 12%.
- Priority Habitat and NMBAP Habitat accounts for approximately 11% of total terrestrial land area. This is lower than national Priority Habitat cover (14%).
- Lowland raised bog, the most effective habitat for storing carbon, was once more widespread but is now critically rare and heavily degraded. This habitat now covers just 0.02% of all recorded habitat in the LCR. Yet 1,955 ha of the LCR is underlain by peat and if restored could increase habitat extent significantly and positively contribute to carbon storage.
- The LCR Natural Capital Baseline provides a strong basis from which to access ecosystem service capacity and demand. Designated sites provide high levels of ecosystems services and will underpin local nature recovery.

- Rivers within the LCR are heavily modified, and less than 1% are in good ecological status, compared to 14% nationally. This reflects declines in other urban areas which are occurring due to pressures from various sectors including: commerce and industry, agriculture, water industry, urban and transport (The Rivers Trust, 2019). LCR State of Nature Report: Part I Spatial Development Strategy version 10
 - The LCR is a stronghold and of conservation importance for species such as water vole, natterjack toad, sand lizard, pink-footed goose, whooper swan, red squirrel and highly specialised coastal plants and invertebrates.
 - 15% of Priority Species recorded in the LCR, are likely to have gone locally extinct while a further 14% have not been re-recorded since 1990.
 - Climate change is influencing and will continue to influence the natural environment within the LCR with a number of case studies showing the impacts of changing climate on species, notably natterjack toad, bats and birds. From 1975 around three new Priority Species have arrived in the LCR each year.
 - Species of farmland habitats are showing the most substantial declines in occurrence and abundance. Species of woodland habitat in the LCR have also shown historic decline but with some recent recovery.
 - The 'Engagement in Nature Liverpool City Region Survey' found that 40% of respondents spend their daily free time in greenspaces. 50% of respondents are spending more time in greenspaces since the coronavirus pandemic. Over 50% of those surveyed said they visited greenspaces to benefit their mental health. Of those surveyed nearly 45% actively engage with local or national environmental groups.
 - Merseyside has a long history of naturalists, it is only because of the continued work of these naturalists, biological recorders and largely voluntary nature conservation groups who spend their free time surveying, recording and analysing data that we have been able to produce this report.
- 4) Advisory Panel Terms of reference sign off – Gideon Ben-Tovim OBE (Nature Connected) – The TOR were agreed and officially signed off by the Board.
 - 5) Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting: 13rd of March 2024 12:30-2:00

Action Log

Owner

Refresh the Green Paper for NHS in Cheshire Mersey, aligning it with national requirements.

DS / RW