

South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Improving Places Select
Commission
21st April 2026



What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

❑ Brought into legislation under the Environment Act 2021

❑ In Defra's words, they will...

...“identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment”

... “help communities map out the action needed in their area to restore nature, working closely with local stakeholders, from farmers to school children”

❑ South Yorkshire is one of 48 strategy areas in England. Each one will:

- ✓ agree priorities for nature's recovery
- ✓ map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- ✓ establish shared proposals for what action they should take to recover nature and where

“We desperately need to reverse the loss of wildlife, restore natural habitats and improve the environment in South Yorkshire for generations to come.

Because protecting and restoring our natural habitats isn't simply an added extra; it's central to the ambition I have as South Yorkshire's Mayor.

By working together, we will not only protect our wildlife and green spaces but create a bold, ambitious plan to reverse the loss of wildlife, restore habitats and improve the natural environment that we're so lucky to have on our doorstep.”

**South Yorkshire's Mayor,
Oliver Coppard**



What the LNRS will do

Consider existing strategies, plans and initiatives and aim to align priorities to deliver greater benefits for people and nature.

Be representative of the voices that live and work in the strategy area.

A coordinated response to biodiversity loss across our strategy area.

Encourage action through opportunities for funding and investment such as:

- Informing future government nature recovery funding schemes.
- Guiding private investments in nature and carbon markets.
- Informing where private companies choose to provide corporate donations.



What the LNRS won't do

They do not force the owners and managers of the land identified to make any changes.

They are non-binding and are not delivery plans.

They do not prevent land uses and do not grant permissions.

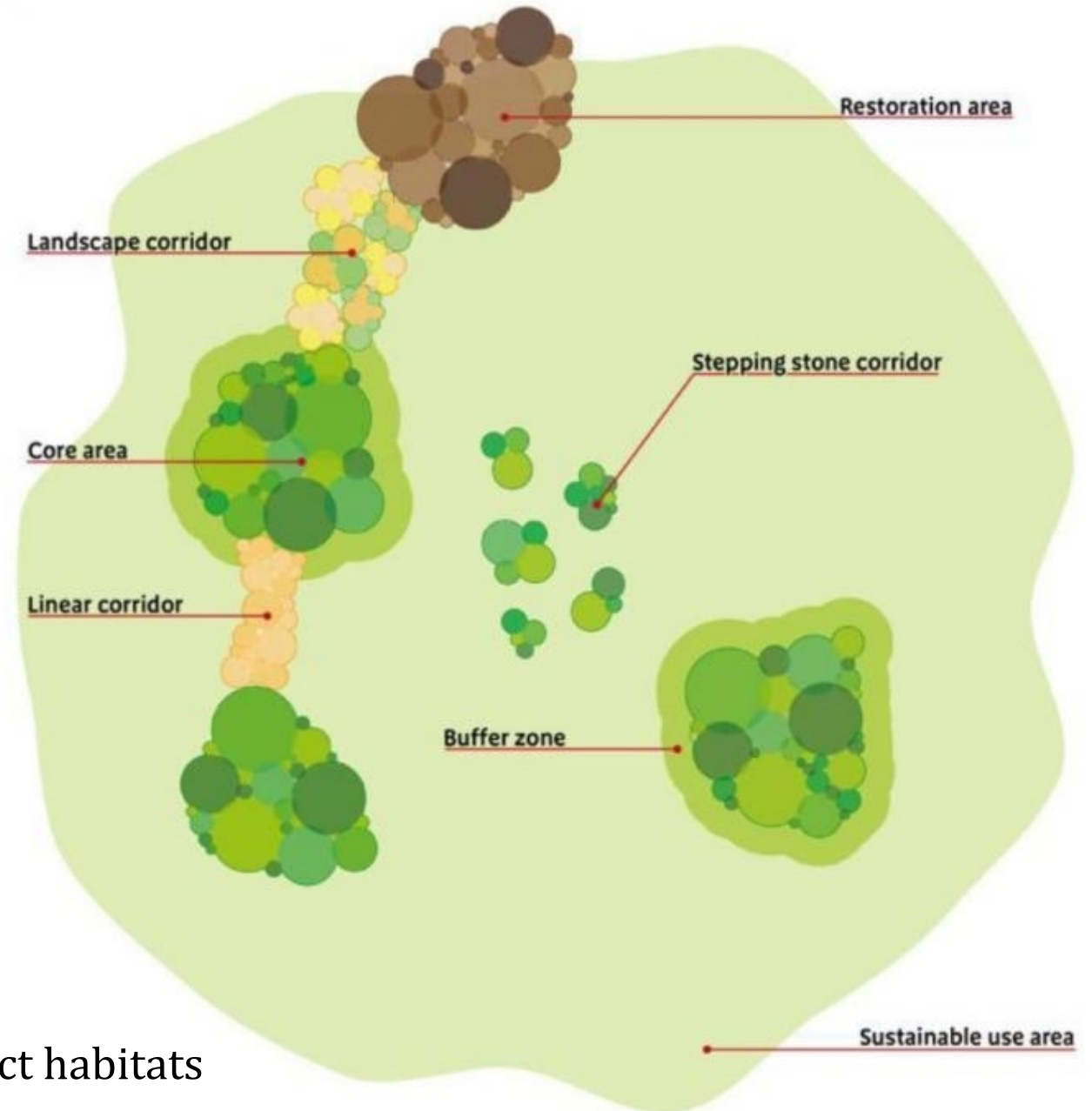
Why nature recovery?

- ❑ UK one of most 'nature depleted' globally – with even 'protected' areas in decline, being “too small and too isolated”
- ❑ Since 1970 species abundance declined by 19% on average, 1 in 6 species threatened with extinction

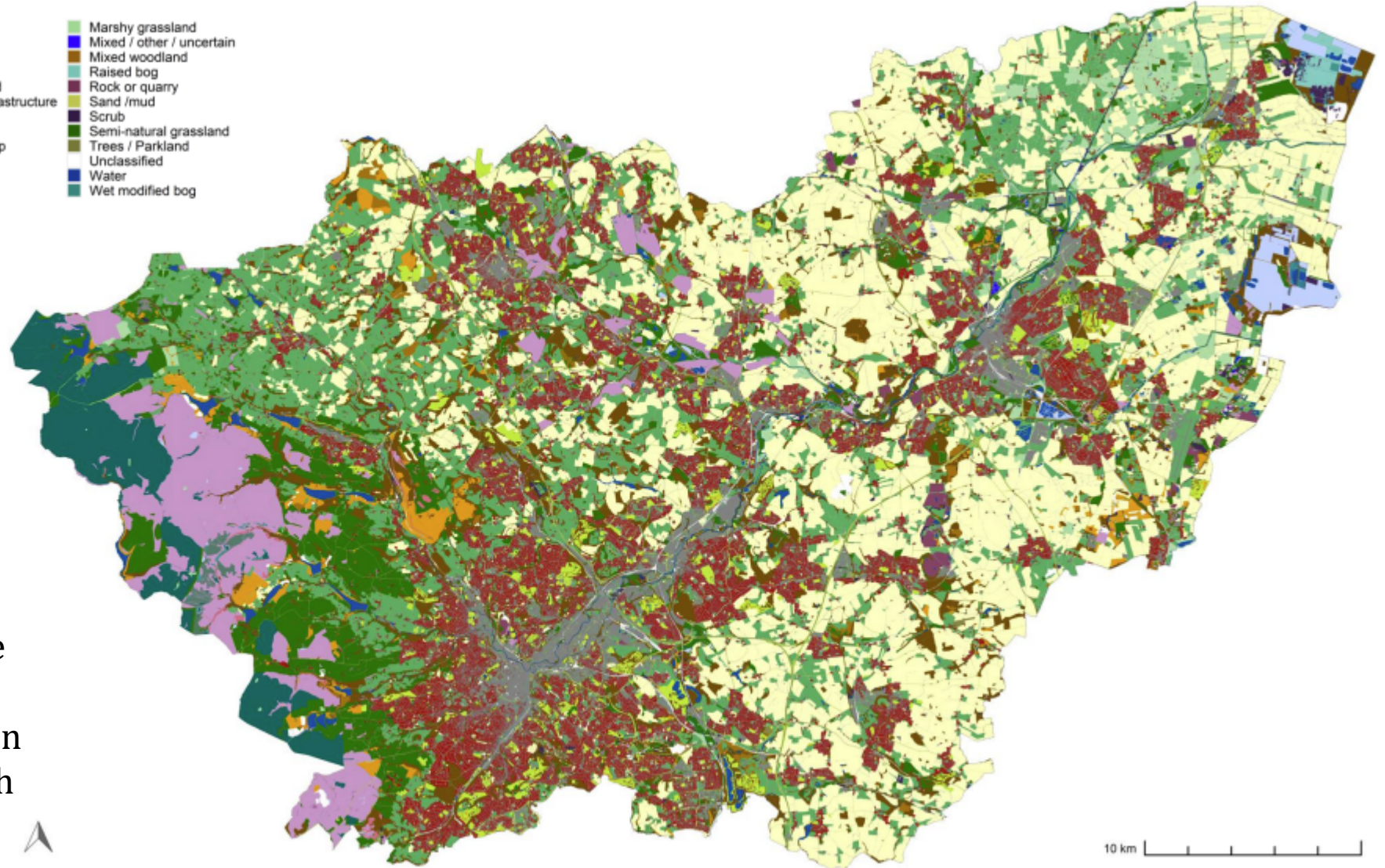
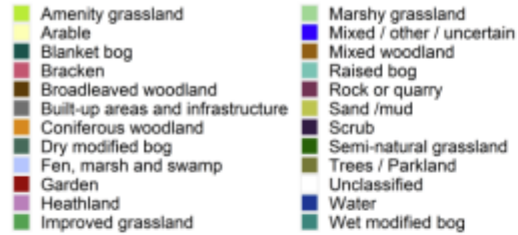
How do we do it?

Lawton Review (2010)

- ❑ **More** – create new protected sites
- ❑ **Bigger** – enlarge existing areas
- ❑ **Better** – improve existing biodiverse areas
- ❑ **More joined up** – wildlife corridors to connect habitats



Map 1 Broad habitats across South Yorkshire.



South Yorkshire is geographically and ecologically diverse, featuring (west to east):

- Pennine uplands storing significant carbon in peat
- Ancient woodlands with industrial/cultural heritage
- Arterial river Don with recent ecological restoration
- Fertile arable farmland with hedgerow networks
- Internationally significant lowland bog



High-level timeline for 2026

- **Jan-Apr.** Developing final strategy content with key partners, drafting the document, completing commissioned mapping and engaging with directors and elected members.
- **Apr-May.** Process for Supporting Authorities to approve a public consultation draft.
- **Jun-Jul.** Statutory consultation period.
- **Jul-Aug.** Refining strategy to address public consultation comments.
- **Sept-Dec.** Process for Supporting Authorities to approve a final draft.
- **Dec.** Publication.

Introducing wording from the Statutory Guidance

Priorities - the end results that the strategy is seeking to achieve – *or the ‘**what**’ and the ‘**why**’*

Measures - the specific practical actions to achieve those priorities – *or the ‘**how**’ and the ‘**where**’*



Mission, Vision and Principles

Draft Mission

Our local nature mission is to not only restore thriving, connected natural habitats across South Yorkshire, but to create new ones and to reverse the decline of species, and to do these urgently for people in South Yorkshire.

Draft Vision

To deliver nature recovery activity at pace in South Yorkshire, maximising the Region's contribution to the UK's commitment to positively manage 30% of land and sea in England by 2030.

Draft Principles

- 1. **Improve the quality and extent of habitats** – better, bigger, more connected.*
- 2. **Build climate resilience** – using nature to manage heat, drought, flooding and wildfire risk.*
- 3. **Work in partnership** – recognising that every landowner, community and organisation has a role.*
- 4. **Value wildlife everywhere** – not only in designated sites, but across urban, farmed and post-industrial landscapes.*
- 5. **Connect people with nature** – prioritising places with greatest need and supporting responsible access.*

Habitat categories for 'Priorities' and 'Measures'

5 broad categories:

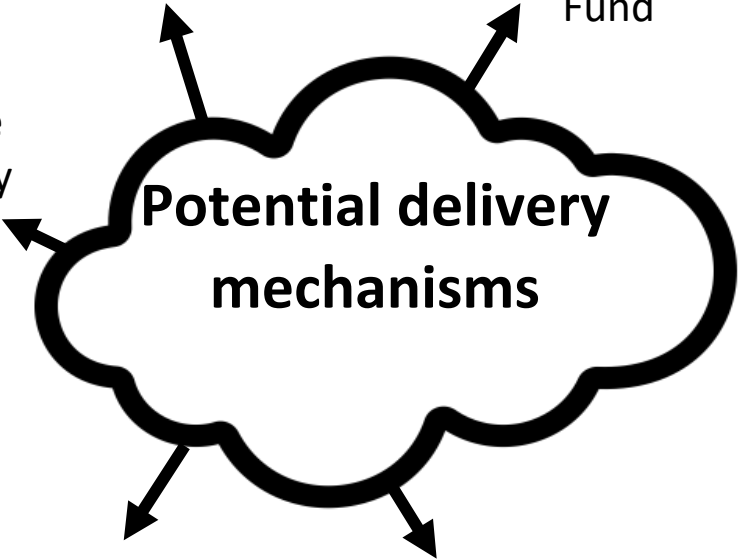
- ❑ **'Overarching'** – these include issues common to all habitats such as invasive non-native species
- ❑ **'Watercourses, waterbodies and wetlands'** – including rivers, watercourse, streams and canals, bogs, ponds, lakes, mires, flushes
- ❑ **'Woodlands and trees'** – such as ancient woodland and productive woodland
- ❑ **'Grasslands and heathlands'** – calcareous, neutral and acid grasslands along with upland and lowland heath, including farmed landscapes
- ❑ **'Urban nature'** – infrastructure, development and previously developed land

Species-specific measures are still being developed and will be incorporated in due course.

Through the planning system: **Biodiversity Net Gain** agreements

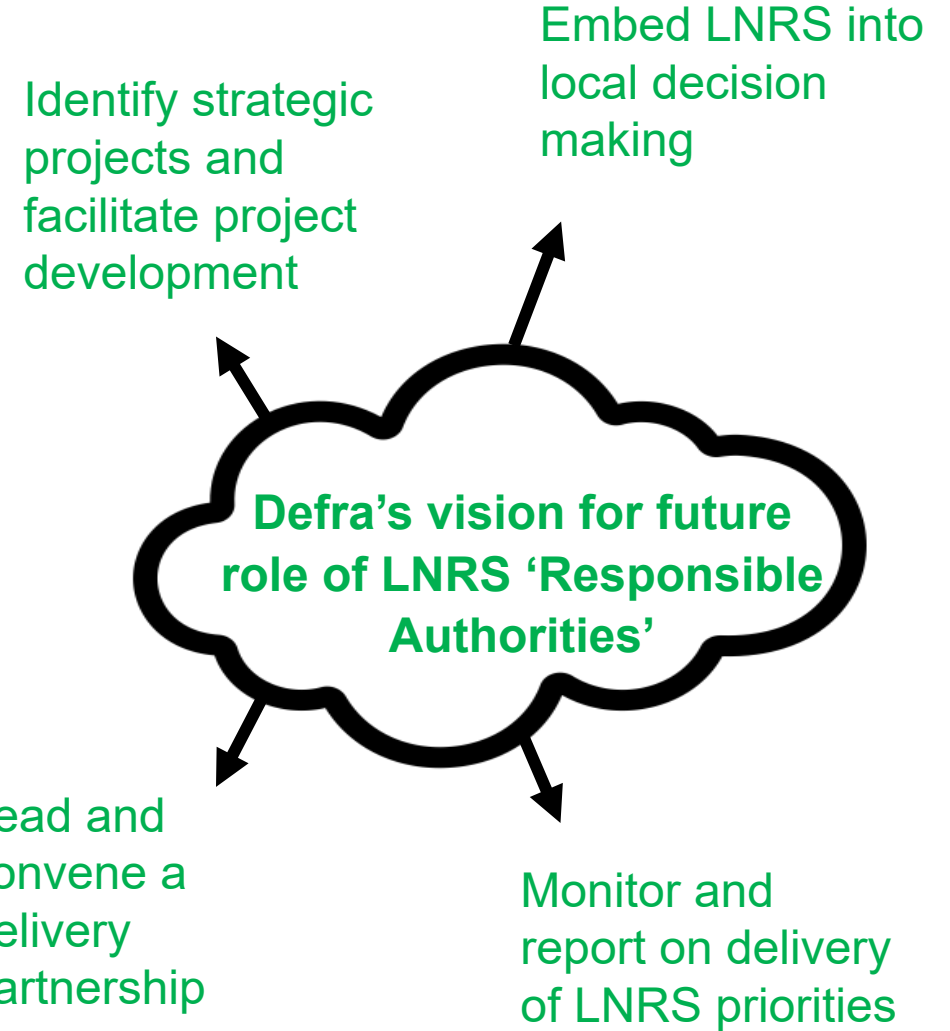
Other public funding – e.g.
(a) Competitive ring-fenced funding from Defra
(b) Local/regional e.g. Greater Manchester Environment Fund

Private finance
e.g. biodiversity offsetting, Peatland Code, Carbon Code



Voluntary paid schemes for farmers/land managers:
Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)

Communities – supporting/promoting voluntary approaches



Overarching governance

