

Findings of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation

1. Background to the consultation

The first ever Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington has been in development from 2023 to 2025. This sets out the priorities and actions for nature's recovery in Cheshire and Warrington over the next 5-10 years.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a statutory policy document, which Cheshire West and Chester Council has been designated as the responsible authority for the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington with the support of Cheshire East Council, Warrington Borough Council, Peak District National Park Authority and Natural England. The other DEFRA Arms-length bodies (Forestry Commission and Environment Agency) have also contributed alongside the Cheshire Local Nature Partnership. There are 48 responsible authorities across England.

To address the nature emergency, the government has made legally binding commitments to reverse the decline of nature and set it on the path to recovery. This is important for nature and for all the things that we rely on nature for, like clean water and food production. For nature to recover, targeted, co-ordinated and collaborative action will be required. The LNRS will help Cheshire Authorities to meet their enhanced biodiversity duties by steering broader action, beyond the impact of their own services. It will also help all stakeholders to more effectively address nature recovery and work together to achieve targets and delivery.

Cheshire West and Chester Council, having undergone a pre-consultation period of 28 days with the 4 Supporting Authorities, as set out in the LNRS Statutory Regs and Guidance, was able to go to consultation. Under regulations 12 of The Environment Act (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, "A responsible authority must consult on its local nature recovery strategy (subject to regulation 11)."

The vision of the LNRS, "To mainstream nature's recovery into all decisions and activities so that nature, people and businesses thrive", was developed by the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Partnership (LNP)¹. The LNP is a collective of organisations, including Local Planning Authorities, environmental non-governmental organisations, farmers and landowners and DEFRA Arm's Length Bodies. As part of the LNRS process, priorities and actions (measures to support the priorities) were collaboratively developed to help ensure nature's recovery. Some of the proposals put forward included:

- Set up a county-wide 'Future Farming' group to develop solutions and promote good practice to support sustainable food production that aids nature's recovery
- Help to identify and develop a pipeline of BNG mitigation opportunities across the county to support development and major infrastructure
- Encourage an increase in tree cover and green infrastructure in wards of significant inequality
- Encourage more opportunities for people to engage with nature (where appropriate), for the benefit this can bring

¹ <https://cheshirelnp.co.uk/>

- Attract and target additional investment in nature where it can provide a range of eco-system services
- Ensure more, bigger, better, and connected natural landscapes across the county, following the Lawton principles.

Over the past year, there have been other engagement activities that assisted in developing the LNRS. The engagement methods used included an online survey, public workshops, individual meetings and presentations. From February to April 2024, the initial public survey engagement had over 900 participants, where everyone was given the chance to provide their vision for a nature positive future. Once the survey responses were reviewed, the survey respondents were invited to join the LNRS team in public workshops across Cheshire and Warrington, in Chester, Macclesfield and Warrington. In these public workshops, participants put forward priorities and actions for nature's recovery for the next 10 years for five themes (Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees/ Grassland and Heathland/ Watercourses/ Peatland and wetlands/ Nature-based solutions), which later on in the process, developed into seven themes including Farmland and Urban.

Following the public workshops, the LNP met virtually over 5 weeks to discuss the priorities put forward and voted upon which priorities would be most suitable for the strategy. In the latter parts of the priorities and actions development, the LNP members were asked to put forward suitable actions to address the priorities set out from the previous 5 weeks. This work was hosted on a miro board online, which was open from June through to early September in 2024 and managed by the responsible authority.

The LNP agreed the priorities and actions shortlist on the 15th of October 2024. The priorities and actions shortlist were confirmed by the responsible authority (RA)and Supporting authorities prior to submitting the consultation draft for public consultation in early 2025.

2. How the consultation was carried out

The consultation was open for 6 weeks, starting on 14th February 2025 and closing on 31st March 2025. There were multiple ways in which stakeholders could respond to the consultation and ensure their views were heard. These methods included an online survey and drop-in sessions, which were advertised on the Councils' consultation platforms which included [Participate Now](#). The face to face drop-in sessions took place at:

Cheshire West and Chester:

Chester - Storyhouse, Hunter Street, Chester, CH1 2AR

- Friday 28 February 11am - 1pm

Ellesmere Port - Ellesmere Port library, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG

- Wednesday 5 March 9am - 12pm

- Friday 7 March 1pm - 3pm
- Wednesday 12 March 9am - 12pm
- Friday 14 March 12pm - 4pm

Northwich - Northwich Weaver Hall Museum, London Road, Northwich, CW9 8AB

- Tuesday 25 February 10:30am - 12pm
- Wednesday 26 February 10:30am - 12pm and 2 - 4pm
- Thursday 27 February 10:30am - 12pm and 2 - 4pm
- Wednesday 5 March 2 - 4:30pm

Winsford - Winsford library, High Street, Winsford, CW7 2AS

- Monday 24 February 9am - 5pm
- Monday 3 March 9am - 5pm

Cheshire East:

Crewe - Crewe library, Crewe Lifestyle Centre, Moss Square, CW1 2BB

- Tuesday 11 March 10am - 12pm
- Thursday 13 March 2 - 4pm
- Tuesday 18 March 10am - 12pm
- Thursday 20 March 2 - 4pm

Warrington:

1 Time Square, Warrington, WA1 2NT

- Thursday 20 February 10am - 12pm
- Wednesday 26 February 11am - 1pm
- Tuesday 4 March 12pm - 2pm
- Monday 10 March 1pm - 3pm
- Wednesday 19 March 2pm - 4pm
- Friday 28 March 3 - 5pm

Paper copies of the survey were also available on request, and people were also able to respond to the consultation by e-mail, letter or telephone.

Communication methods to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the consultation and given the opportunity to have their say included press releases, emails to key stakeholder groups, Member briefings, social media and the presence of the consultation on the Council websites. Individuals from the Local Nature Partnership and the local authorities shared the consultation on their social media to contacts within the local area too.

3. Response to the consultation

The consultation received 145 online survey responses, 15 participants emailed, telephoned or sent us a letter telling us their views and 57 attendees were at the drop-in sessions.

4. Key messages

The key messages to emerge from the consultation process are as follows:

- There is a need for more detailed priorities and actions in each of the themes provided.
- There was overall support for the priorities and actions put forward for each theme but there was a need for further information to make it more high level and digestible at the same time.
- Hedgerows are a major part of the Cheshire landscape that respondents were very keen to see come back.
- Technical ecological terms in the document need to be separated from others and defined clearly.
- Due to the ambition reflected in the priorities and actions in the document, many of the respondents were worried that it was too ambitious to achieve it all within the next 10 years. A key cause for concern amongst the respondents was that Climate Change was not taken seriously enough within the document, especially with regards to the watercourses, Peat and wetlands and Tree species put forward.
- Another element spoken about throughout the document was the need to educate/raise awareness of the public to becoming better stewards of the natural environment.
- A key species that was highlighted in the species shortlist were Beavers. Although this is a keystone species, due to national policy requirements, there needs to be a discussion with the Local Nature Partnership on how this could potentially be delivered.

5. Detailed consultation findings

In the first question, respondents were asked to what extent did they agree or disagree with the vision of the strategy.

Chart 1: Level of agreement with the vision of the LNRS

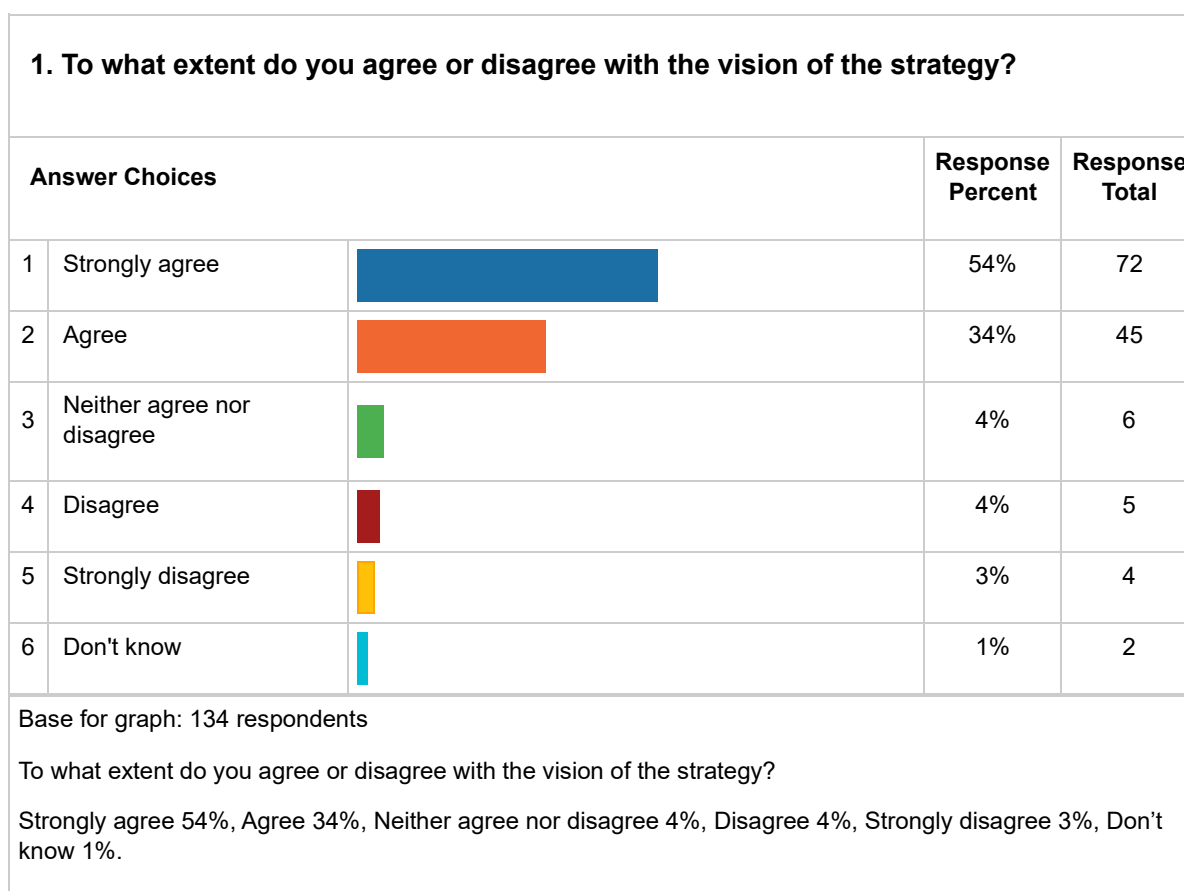


Chart 1 above reflects that majority of the respondents (88%) agreed with the vision of the LNRS (54% strongly agreed, 34% agreed) and 7% disagreed (4% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed).

In the second question regarding the vision, respondents were asked whether they had any comments on the vision to help us fully understand whether the vision was the most suitable for the strategy. 75 comments were received on the vision, with some of the key messages as follows:

- Many people said that nature should be at the forefront of any decision making/planning in the local area.
- Some people commented that they generally agreed with the proposed vision.
- Some people were concerned that developers were not building enough houses on brownfield spaces but more so on the greenfield sites.
- A few people made comments relating to this vision being unachievable.

Following this section, respondents were asked to go through each habitat, theme and the species section within the strategy document. In each section, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the priorities set for each habitat and theme and whether the priorities were clear.

Over the 7 themes, we will also highlight respondents reasons for their answers and the comments given regarding the priorities and actions in its entirety.

Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

Respondents were asked to what extent do they agree or disagree with the priorities set out in the Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees section.

Chart 2: Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees Priorities shortlist level of agreement

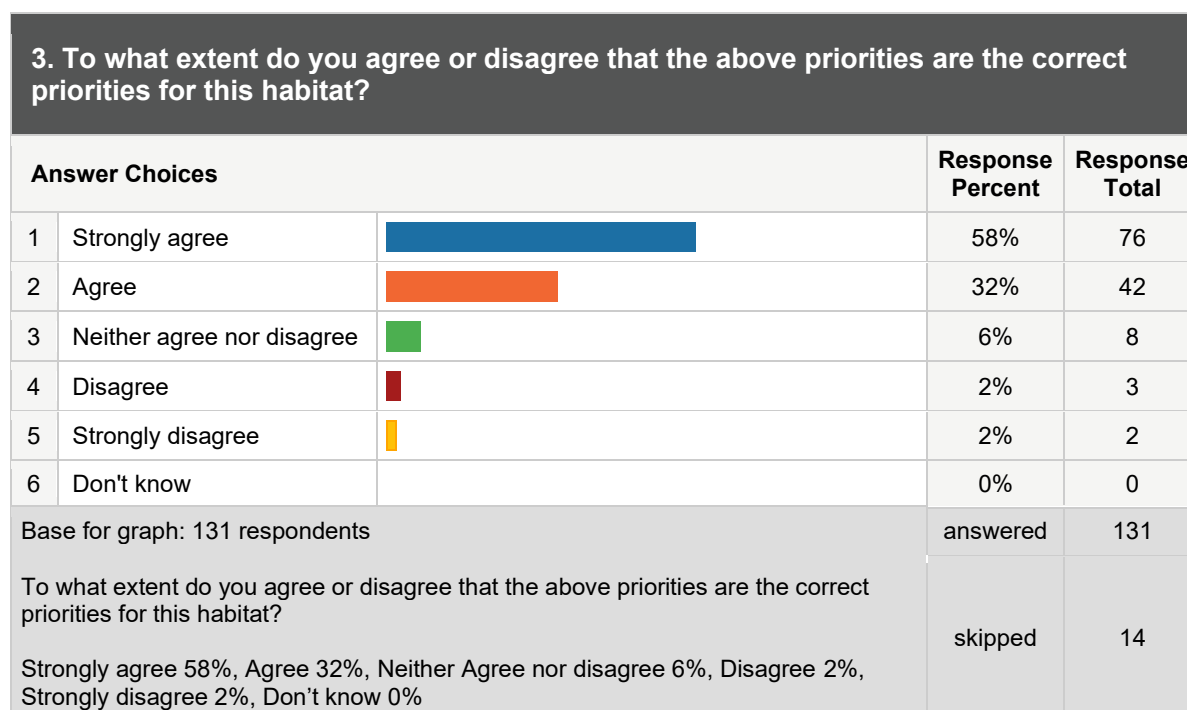
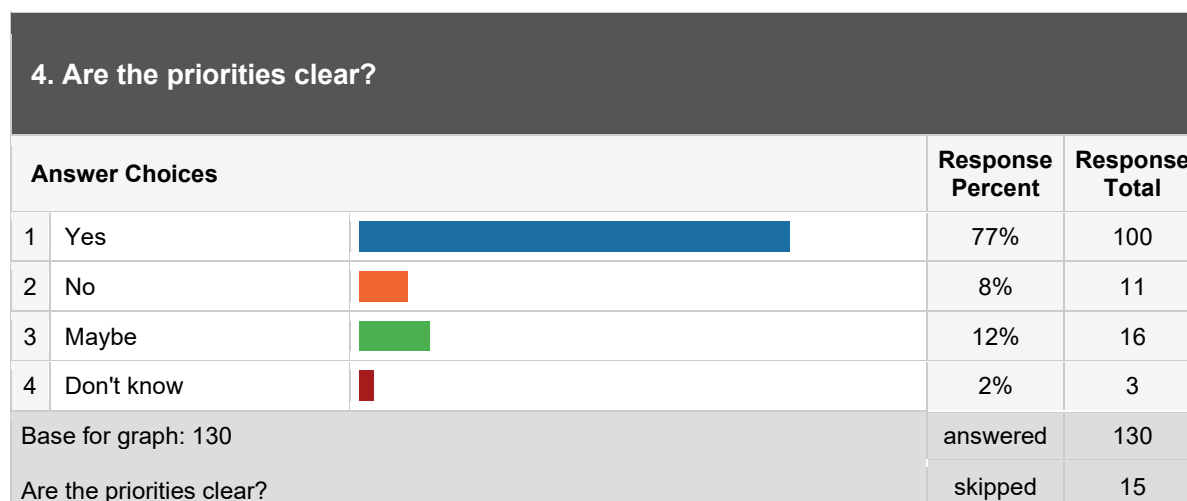


Chart 2 above displays that most respondents (90%) agreed with the priorities set out for the Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees (58% strongly agreed, 32% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 3: Clarity of the Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees priorities



4. Are the priorities clear?

Yes 77%, No 8%, Maybe 12%, Don't Know 2%

If you answered 'No', 'Maybe' or 'Don't know' please tell us why in the box below (29)

Chart 3 demonstrates that majority of the respondents (77%) felt that the priorities are clear and 8% believed that they were not clear.

In total, 27 comments were received, below is a summary of the key messages from these comments:

- Some people commented that they do not understand what the plan is for protecting the existing natural environment.
- A few people commented that there was not enough detail regarding the type of tree species to be planted.
- A few people were concerned that there was no mention of possible partnerships with the private sector.
- A few people made comments that there was no mention of research into the effects of climate change and there is no definition of the word “better”.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Woodland, Hedgerows and trees. 77 respondents commented on the priorities and actions.

- Many people said that the key action needed to improve Cheshire and Warrington's landscape is to reinstate lost hedgerows.
- In addition, there needs to be a maintenance programme for these and existing hedges and to stop developers removing ancient hedgerows and trees.
- Some people commented that we need to plant more trees and ensure both new and existing trees are maintained.
- Some people were concerned that there would be a risk of planting new woodland on productive farmland.
- A few people made comments that there needs to be more work with volunteer groups to speed up the process of planting new woodland, hedgerows and trees.

Grassland and Heathland

Similar to the Woodland, hedgerows and trees habitat section, the following charts will display whether the respondents agreed with the priorities and whether the priorities were clear.

Chart 4: Level of agreement with Grassland and Heathland priorities shortlist

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		54%	70
2	Agree		35%	46
3	Neither agree nor disagree		8%	11
4	Disagree		2%	2
5	Strongly disagree		1%	1
6	Don't know		0.00%	0
Base for graph: 130			answered	130
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	15
Strongly agree 54%, Agree 35%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 8%, Disagree 2%, Strongly disagree 1%, Don't know 0%				

Chart 4 shows that majority of respondents (89%) agreed with the priorities for the grassland and Heathland habitat section (54% strongly agreed, 35% agreed) and 3% disagreed (2% disagreed, 1% strongly disagreed).

Chart 5: Clarity of Grassland and Heathland priorities

7. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		80%	101
2	No		8%	10
3	Maybe		9%	12
4	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 127			answered	127

7. Are the priorities clear?

Are the priorities clear?

Yes 80%, No 8%, Maybe 9%, Don't Know 3%

skipped

18

The chart shows that many of the respondents (80%) felt that the grassland and heathland priorities were clear and 8% felt that they weren't clear.

25 of the respondents who felt that the priorities were not clear or were uncertain whether they were clear enough had the following key messages:

- There was not enough detail.
- A few people commented that semi-natural species-rich grasslands should not be confused with farmed grassland, which is a crop.
- A few people were concerned that the species rich grassland and heathlands were so rare that the coherence of the strategy was not understandable across a mainly developed area.
- A few people made comments relating to the need for more specific statements regarding proposals/targets.

24 respondents commented on the priorities and actions for Grassland and Heathland. Some of the key messages are:

- Some of the respondents stated that they would like to see an increase in biodiverse grasslands and that the sites were maintained for the benefit of people and pollinators.
- Some people commented that there needs to be more detail regarding how and when this will be achieved.
- A few people made comments relating to the fact that there needs to be a reduced amount of mowing and improving the way that species rich grasslands are established and maintained, including ensuring that planning stipulates enough habitat space for wildlife and that there needs to be improvement in agricultural practices to support the aims that the LNRS is looking to hit.

Watercourses

Chart 6: Level of agreement with Watercourses priorities

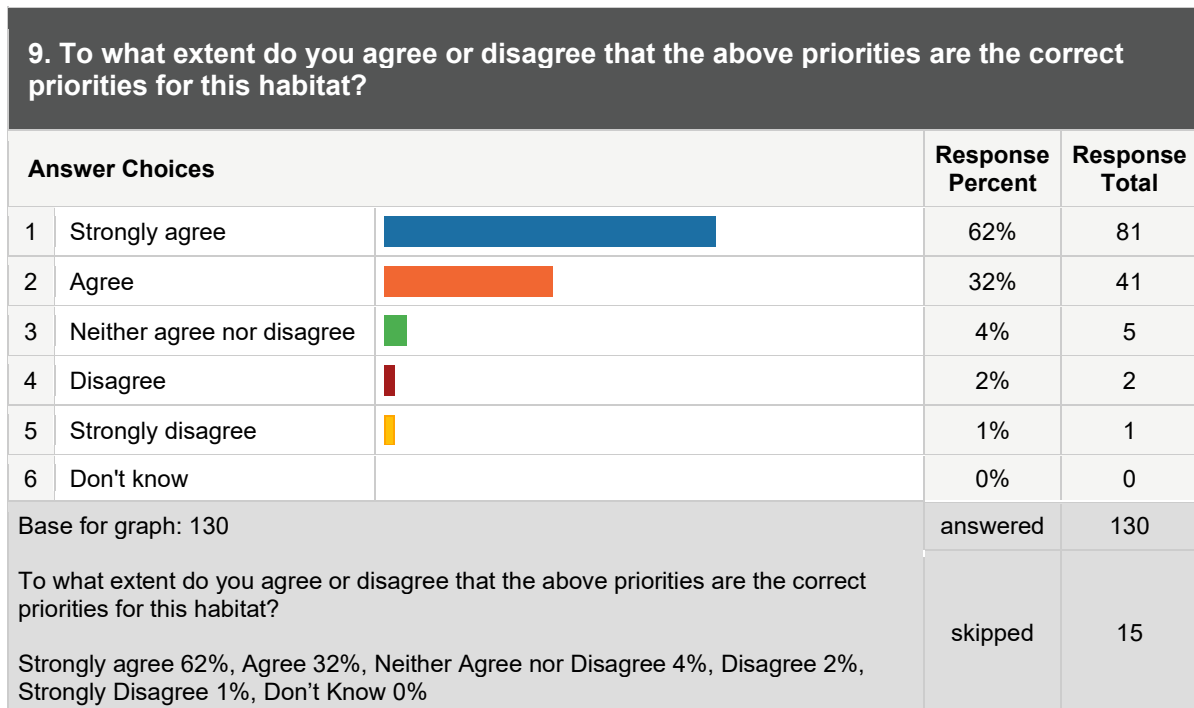
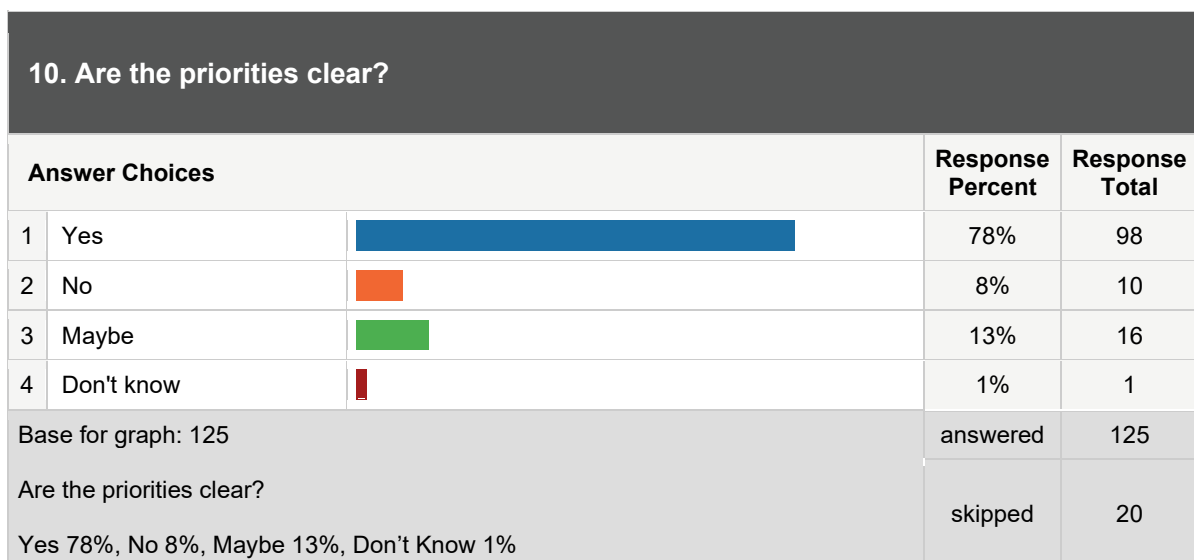


Chart 6 shows that majority of respondents (94%) agreed with the priorities for watercourses (62% strongly agreed, 32% agreed) and 3% disagreed (2% disagreed, 1% strongly disagreed).

Chart 7: Clarity of Watercourses priorities



The chart shows that the majority of respondents (78%) agreed that the watercourses priorities are clear and 8% disagreed. The number of respondents who weren't sure whether the priorities were clear were slightly higher to the previous two sections (13%).

23 comments were received about the clarity of the priorities. The key messages included:

- Some people commented that all waterways require better maintenance and monitoring
- Some people suggested that we need better enforcement of laws regarding pollution and litter
- Respondents wanted more specific detail included.
- A few people commented that there was a vagueness about the “functions as naturally as possible” priority, such as is it too canal-centric or does that mean that there will be a reintroduction of species into the watercourses.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Watercourses. 58 respondents commented in more detail regarding the priorities and actions for the watercourses section of the document. The key messages received were as follows:

- Some respondents felt that agriculture and industry should be held to account for pollution.
- Some people commented that they would like to have more emphasis on managing flooding and need more detailed information regarding the proposed actions
- Some people were concerned that we need to promote nature focused solutions.

Peatland and wetlands

Chart 8: Level of agreement with Peat and Wetland priorities

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		60%	78
2	Agree		27%	35
3	Neither agree nor disagree		8%	10
4	Disagree		2%	3
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		1%	1
Base for graph: 129			answered	129
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	16
Strongly agree 60%, Agree 27%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 8%, Disagree 2%, Strongly Disagree 2%, Don't know 1%				

The chart shows that the majority of respondents (87%) agreed with the Peatland and wetland priorities (60% strongly agreed, 27% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 9: Clarity of Peatland and Wetland Priorities

13. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		85%	105
2	No		4%	5
3	Maybe		7%	9
4	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 123			answered	123
Are the priorities clear?			skipped	22
Yes 85%, No 4%, Maybe 7%, Don't know 3%				

The chart shows that the majority of respondents felt that the priorities were clear (85%) and 4% disagreed.

11 comments were received. The key messages from these comments were:

- Most comments referenced that they would like more detailed information.
- A few people commented that they would support peat restoration.
- Some people are wanting no development allowed on peat bearing areas.
- A few people commented that climate change could prevent wetland expansion plans.

37 respondents shared comments about the priorities and actions for Peat and wetland. The key messages are as follows:

- Some respondents stated that Peatland and wetland habitats must be restored as a priority.
- Some respondents wanted us to promote awareness of peat's ability to capture and store carbon.
- Some respondents were asking for Peatland and wetland areas to have protection.
- A few respondents commented that Peat free alternatives for gardening must be encouraged.

Nature-based solutions

Chart 10: Level of agreement with nature-based solutions priorities

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		57%	73

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
2	Agree		30%	39
3	Neither agree nor disagree		9%	12
4	Disagree		2%	2
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		0%	0
Base for graph: 128			answered	128
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	17
Strongly Agree 57%, Agree 30%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 9%, Disagree 2%, Strongly Disagree 2%, Don't know 0%				

Chart 10 displays that the majority of respondents (87%) agree with the Nature-based solutions priorities (57% strongly agreed, 30% agreed) and 4% disagreed with them (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 11: Clarity of Nature-Based solutions priorities

16. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		80%	98
2	No		3%	4
3	Maybe		15%	19
4	Don't know		2%	2
Base for graph: 123			answered	123
Are the priorities clear?			skipped	22
Yes 80%, No 3%, Maybe 15%, Don't Know 2%				

The chart shows that the majority of respondents think that the priorities are clear (80%) whilst 3% don't think that they are clear.

When asked for further comments, 18 comments were received. Key messages from these comments were:

- Some respondents felt that there needs to be more detail about the priorities.
- A few respondents commented that the wildlife corridors must be maintained and improved.

- A few of the respondents commented that there were undertones of urbanisation in the priorities.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Nature-based solutions. 51 respondents commented on the priorities and actions relating to the nature-based solutions. Key messages included:

- Some people said they want existing natural areas to be enhanced, improved and maintained.
- Some people commented that there needs to be better control of pollution and litter.
- Some people want planning decisions based on supporting nature.
- A few people made comments that they would like to see more native species re-introduced in areas where populations are depleted.

Farmland

Chart 12: Level of agreement with the Farmland priority

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		56%	74
2	Agree		31%	40
3	Neither agree nor disagree		6%	8
4	Disagree		2%	3
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 131			answered	131
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?			skipped	14
Strongly Agree 56%, Agree 31%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 6%, Disagree 2%, Strongly Disagree 2%, Don't know 3%.				

Chart 12 demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (87%) agreed with the priority proposed (56% strongly agreed, 31% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 13: Clarity of the Farmland Priority

19. Is the priority clear?		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total

19. Is the priority clear?				
1	Yes		77%	97
2	No		7%	9
3	Maybe		12%	15
4	Don't know		4%	5
Base for graph: 126			answered	126
Is the priority clear?			skipped	19
Yes 77%, No 7%, Maybe 12%, Don't Know 4%				

Chart 13 shows that over three quarters of respondents agreed that the priority was clear (77%), with 7% not agreeing that it was.

24 comments were received; the key messages were:

- Some people said that Nature friendly farming needs to be encouraged.
- Some people commented that productive farmland should not be built on and sustainable, local food production must be encouraged.
- Some people were concerned about the livestock density and pollution.
- A few people made comments relating to how will farmers/growers be encouraged to do this.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Farmland. 59 comments were received; the key messages were:

- Many people said that they would like more encouragement of nature-friendly farming.
- Some people commented that there should be subsidies provided for farmers who adopt good practices.
- Some people were concerned that there needs to be more support for local food producers/growers over large firms,
- A few people made comments relating to the fact that there needs to be discouragement of the use of pesticides and chemicals.

Urban

Chart 14: Level of agreement with the Urban priority

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		50%	66
2	Agree		27%	35
3	Neither agree nor disagree		12%	16
4	Disagree		8%	10
5	Strongly disagree		2%	3
6	Don't know		1%	1
Base for graph: 131			answered	131
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?			skipped	14
Strongly agree 50%, Agree 27%, Neither agree nor disagree 12%, Disagree 8%, Strongly disagree 2%, Don't know 1%				

Chart 14 shows that 77% of respondents agreed that the Urban priority is the correct priority for this theme (50% strongly agreed, 27% agreed) and 10% disagreed (8% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 15: Clarity of the urban priority

22. Is the priority clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		73%	92
2	No		13%	16
3	Maybe		11%	14
4	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 126			answered	126
Is the priority clear? Yes 73%, No 13%, Maybe 11%, Don't know 3%			skipped	19

Chart 15 shows that the majority of respondents (73%) said that the priority is clear, whereas 13% disagreed.

27 comments were received. Key messages taken from the comments were:

- Some people said that there needs to be more detail and explanation of the priority.
- Some people said that they don't know which species this will encourage/ benefit
- Some people wanted the wording to be Connectivity related rather than movement- and to create wildlife corridors.
- A few people commented that they were unsure how this will be achieved.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Urban. 56 comments were received; the key messages were:

- Some people commented that safe wildlife corridors must be provided and maintained in the urban areas.
- Some people commented that we need to increase opportunities for active, green travel options to enhance people's connectivity with nature.
- Some people were concerned that the priority/actions do not focus on wildlife/nature in the existing urban environment.
- A few people commented that better publicity and education is needed.
- A few people commented that we must do more wildlife friendly building i.e. green roofs, warmer lighting.

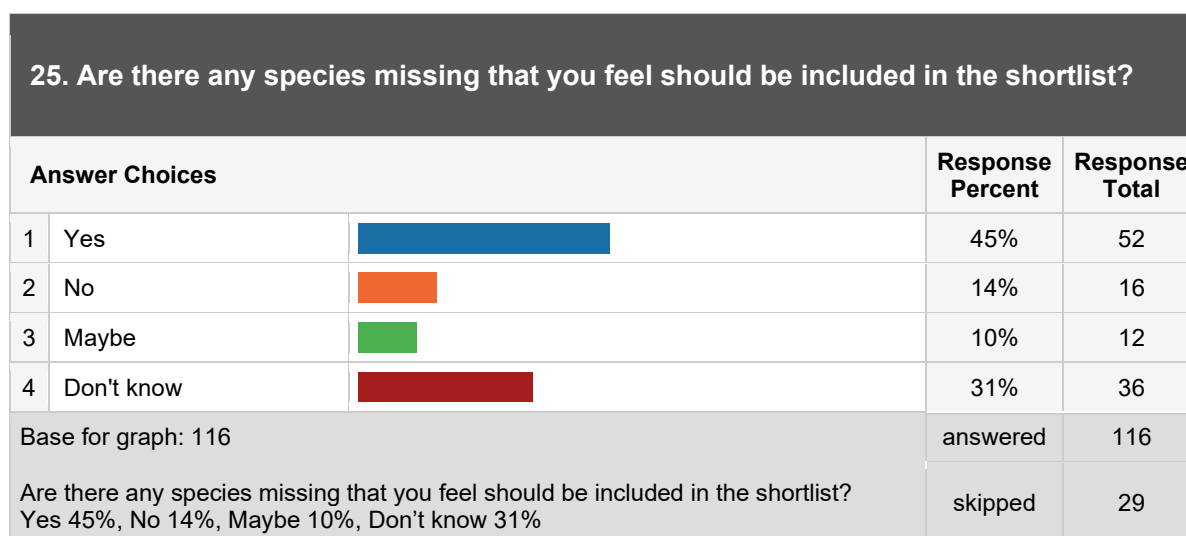
Species Shortlist

Chart 16: Level of agreement with species shortlist

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above Species shortlist?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		35%	45
2	Agree		31%	40
3	Neither agree nor disagree		24%	31
4	Disagree		2%	2
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		6%	8
Base for graph: 128			answered	128
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above Species shortlist?			skipped	17
Strongly agree 35%, Agree 31%, Neither agree nor disagree 24%, Disagree 2%, Strongly disagree 2%, Don't know 6%				

Chart 16 shows that two-thirds of respondents (66%) agreed with the species shortlist (35% strongly agreed, 31% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 17: Are there any missing species in the shortlist



The chart shows that just under half of respondents (45%) believe that there are species missing from the shortlist, whereas 14% felt that there weren't any missing. Almost a third of respondents (31%) said that they didn't know if any were missing.

Respondents were asked to provide species they believe were missing from the species shortlist. In total, 50 respondents provided specific species or a group of species that they would like highlighted in the shortlist. Key species that were put forward were:

- Many people put forward garden birds
- Some people put forward Beavers
- Other species included: Newts/ Owls/ Curlew/ Wildflowers/ Lapwing/ Swift/Swallow/ Hedgehogs/ Hawks/Native crayfish/Slow worm.

Respondents were asked for further comments regarding the entire strategy document, with 43 respondents completing this section. The main points given were that:

- Many people were in general support of the document in its current format.
- Some people commented that there needs to be better public awareness about the document.
- Some people were sceptical that this will come to fruition.
- A few people commented that there needs to be more emphasis on the need to involve local interest/ volunteer groups in these plans.

6. E-mails/ drop-in sessions responses

In addition to the LNRS online survey responses, respondents were able to send in e-mail responses or join the Local authority officers at the face to face drop-in sessions.

Due to the timing of the drop-in sessions, there were many community organisations that attended the drop-in sessions rather than individuals. 15 organisations decided to send e-mail

responses providing their feedback on the draft document and local habitat map and over 54 attended the drop-in sessions in Chester, Winsford, Northwich, Crewe and Warrington.

The drop-in sessions key messages were that the residents wanted less housing and more nature in Cheshire and Warrington and there was an interest in how the LNRS was going to be delivered.

The key discussion that was had in Cheshire East was mainly centred around development and nature, especially certain legislative bills Government introduced during the consultation and the LNRS's relationship to those changes in policy was not clear at that point. Furthermore, other discussions centred around the species put forward on the shortlist, what plans were being put forward for the attendees specific locations and farming

7. What happens next?

Following the submission of this feedback report to the webpage of each respective council in the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region, the LNRS will follow the next steps:

1. A pre-publication draft of the document and map will be shared with the officer steering group (OSG) for final review.
2. Once the OSG have reviewed both parts of the LNRS and there is a full agreement on the consultation changes, then the LNRS will move into the pre-publication period.
3. The Pre-publication period is a statutory 28 day period, where the supporting authorities can object to the LNRS, as per regulation 13(1) of the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.
4. Once the pre-publication period has passed, the LNRS will be submitted to each local authority's cabinet for agreement to publish and the RA will submit a letter to the DEFRA Secretary of State on our intention to publish.

Finally, the Cheshire & Warrington LNRS will be published in November. Once the LNRS is published, the delivery and monitoring/reporting process will begin.

8. Appendix 1: Who took part

This section contains information from the 'About you' section of the survey.

Chart 1: About you

27. Are you responding as.....? (Please select all that apply)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A resident of Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East or Warrington		75%	101
2	An employee of the local planning authorities		1%	1
3	A representative of a local business		3%	4
4	An elected member of the Local Authorities		1%	2
5	A Local Town or Parish Councillor		6%	8
6	A representative of a voluntary or community organisation		18%	24
7	A member of a local group with a specific interest in nature conservation		18%	24
8	A Farmer or Landowner		7%	10
9	Prefer not to say		0%	0
10	Other (please specify):		10%	13
Base for graph: 135			answered	135
Are you responding as.....? (Please select all that apply)				
A resident of Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East or Warrington 75%, An employee of the local planning authorities 1%, a representative of a local business 3%, An elected member of the local authorities 1%, A Local Town or Parish councillor 6%, A representative of a voluntary or community organisation 18%, A member of a local group with a specific interest in nature conservation 18%, A Farmer or a Landowner 7%, Prefer not to say 0%, Other (Please specify) 10%			skipped	10

The above table shows that the majority of respondents were residents (75%), with representatives of community and voluntary organisations, and Members of local groups with a specific interest in nature and conservation also making up 18% of the respondents, followed by farmers and landowners (7%) and local town or parish councillors (6%).

Chart 2: Gender

30. Are you....?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		40%	48
2	Female		53%	63
3	Prefer not to say		7%	8
4	Prefer to use own term		0%	0
Base for graph: 119			answered	119
Are you....? Male 40%, Female 53%, Prefer not to say 7%, Prefer to use own term 0%			skipped	26

The above table shows that just over half of respondents are Female (53%) with 40% responding being Male. 7% preferred not to say.

Chart 3: Age

31. Which age group do you belong to? (Please select one option only) Please note that if you are aged under 16 you need the permission of a parent, guardian or teacher to take part in this survey.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 16 (please provide the name or email address of your parent/guardian/teacher below)		0%	0
2	16-24		1%	1
3	25-34		11%	12
4	35-44		7%	8
5	45-54		23%	26
6	55-64		30%	34
7	65-74		20%	23
8	75+		8%	9
Base for graph: 113			answered	113
Which age group do you belong to? 16-24 1%, 25-34 11%, 35-44 7%, 45-54 23%, 55-64 30%, 65-74 20%, 75+ 8%			skipped	32

Almost three-quarters of respondents were aged 45 and over (73%). The lowest responding age group was 16-24.

Chart 4: Disability

32. Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		13%	15
2	No		80%	94
3	Prefer not to say		8%	9
Base for graph: 118			answered	118
Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? (Please select one option only)			skipped	27
Yes 13%, No 80%, Prefer not to say 8%				

The majority of respondents (80%) said that they have not got a disability or long-term health issue or illness whilst 13% said that they did.

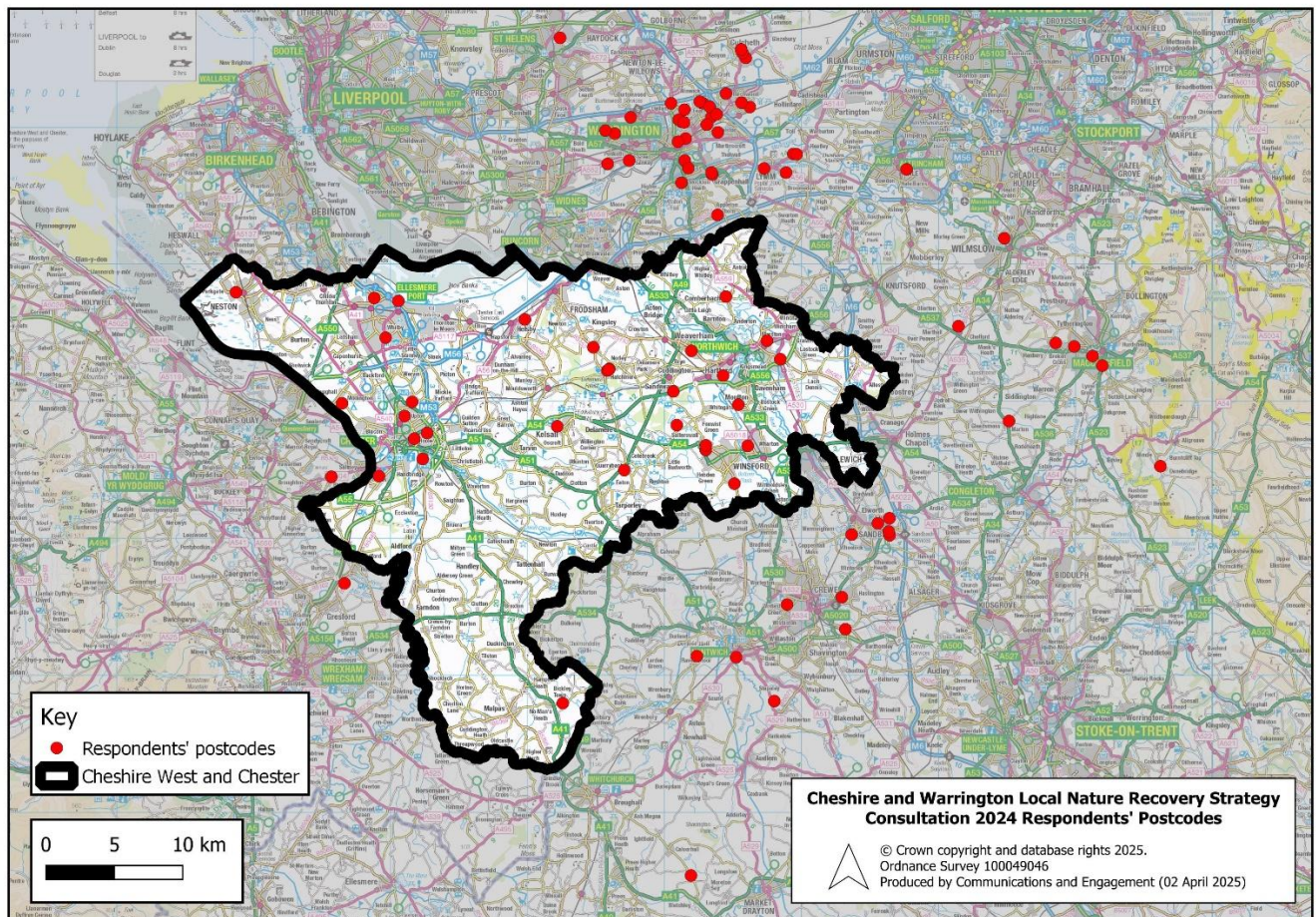
Chart 5: Type of disability

33. If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? (Please select all that apply)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user		28%	5
2	Visual impairment		0%	0
3	Hearing impairment		11%	2
4	Learning disability or difficulty		0%	0
5	Mental Health issue		17%	3
6	Long standing illness or health condition		33%	6
7	Prefer not to say		28%	5
8	Other (please specify):		11%	2
Base for graph: 18			answered	18
. If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? (Please select all that apply)			skipped	127
Physical impairment that causes mobility issues e.g. wheelchair user: 28%, Visual impairment 0%, Hearing impairment 11%, Learning disability or difficulty 0%, Mental health issue 17%, Long standing illness or health condition 33%, Prefer not to say 28%, Other (please specify) 11%.				

Out of the respondents that did respond “Yes” in Chart 4 above, a third said they had a long standing illness or health condition (33%). 28% said they had a physical impairment (28%), 28% preferred not to say and 17% had a mental health issue. 11% had a hearing impairment.

Figure 1: Map of respondents



The map above shows the postcodes provided by 92 respondents that were complete and could be mapped within the outline of the West Cheshire boundary. As is seen in the map, there were responses from Cheshire East and Warrington as well. The boundary for West Cheshire is highlighted due to it being a computer generated map from Cheshire West and Chester Council’s website.

9. Appendix 2: Organisation responses

Good afternoon,

Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

With regard to the consultation in connection with draft Cheshire & Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy, please find below comments from the [REDACTED].

I have also uploaded some comments to the portal.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. It includes designated habitats and protected species and is also home to everyday wildlife and plants.

As well as being an important space for nature in its own right, it links isolated habitats, gives wildlife room to flourish, and provides nearly 9 million people with access and connection to nature on their doorstep.

Cheshire and Warrington LNRS

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and Local Habitat Map for Cheshire and Warrington, set out the priorities and actions for nature's recovery in this area over the next 5-10 years.

The LNRS sets out the main priorities for nature recovery across

[REDACTED] has reviewed the draft strategy and has the following comments to make to help shape the final local nature recovery strategy. Comments on the Local Habitat map have been made under separate cover.

Watercourse

With regard to the Priorities and Actions outlined for Watercourse, it is welcomed that canals are recognised as watercourses in the LNRS.

There is a section on page 42 that outlines brief characteristics of canals. [REDACTED] request that the document recognises that canals offer unique, diverse biodiversity habitats and provide broad ecological networks, along with their sustainable use as recreational corridors and multifunctional role which are important recreational corridors for a wide range of uses.

With regard to page 44, and the table for 'Priorities and Actions for Watercourses', please find my comments for the respective sections below:

'Cleaner and resilient watercourses with more abundant native wildlife'

- [REDACTED] request that 'Create and restore a variety of riverside (riparian) habitats' would be replaced with 'Create and restore a variety of watercourse or waterside (riparian) habitats', so that it refers to all watercourses.

- The table should make it clear and clarify that measures to improve water quality and address pollution sources, should be aimed at all watercourses. E.g. [REDACTED] suggest the inclusion of ‘reduce pollution of watercourses and catchments’.
- We request the inclusion of ‘Enhance canals by improving and creating better habitats for nature’ in this first section.
- We request consideration is given to reducing pollution during construction phase The whole river catchment, from source to sea, functions as naturally as possible.
- [REDACTED] request the removal of ‘Re-engineer canal banks using more natural materials and to encourage mix of planting’. The stability of canals and their supporting infrastructure can be affected by construction works, land management and drainage in proximity to them, and it is critical that any works do not impact the stability of such structures. [REDACTED] request the removal of this Action on the grounds of potential impact to the stability of the canal infrastructure.

At page 45, in the section ‘ How could we deliver cleaner and resilient watercourses with more abundant native wildlife’ the Trust has the following comments:

- [REDACTED] request amending to ‘ Create a variety of river and riverside adjacent habitats’ to Create a variety of ‘watercourse and waterside adjacent habitats’.
- [REDACTED] support the use and planned management of SUDS. It’s early consideration in the planning process helps its inclusion in the development process.
- [REDACTED] support reference to ‘Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is correctly implemented, monitored and strictly maintained’ and suggest the inclusion of advice that planning applications that include land within the site boundary that is within 10m of a canal or river must be supported by an assessment of the baseline condition of the watercourse

At page 64, with regard to the role that urban areas can do for nature recovery, [REDACTED] would suggest reference to the role that the waterway network can play is included, as a ready-made blue-green infrastructure network, that can maintain and bolster ecological networks to support restoring natural systems., alongside delivering co-benefits for climate change adaptation and health and well being.

Within the context of Natural England’s ‘Green Infrastructure Framework’ (advocating the provision of green/blue space in new development) and the government’s Environmental Improvement Plan (advocating that the public should be able to access green space or water, within a 15-minute walk from their home) [REDACTED] can evidence the benefit of the green/blue infrastructure offer of our network (within 1km of our assets) and the multifunctional health and well-being offer of our network to its users and adjacent communities.

[REDACTED] has recently published our Impact Report which shows how individuals and communities are benefitting from using and engaging with our network of canals. Our network, is one of the UK’s largest free-to-access blue spaces, with 10.3 million users that visit regularly, and 888 million unique visits recorded during 2022/23. The annual social value being generated by our network and activities is £4.6 billion including £1.1 billion cost savings to NHS derived from active use of the waterways and the towpaths. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Our network can therefore provide ready and easy access to blue-green space, the outdoors and nature, opportunities to connect people to place, nature and each other.

Nature based solutions

On page 69 of the draft LNRS, different types of nature based solutions are outlined. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would request the inclusion of the benefits of green and blue infrastructure and/or watercourses to be included in this section. The waterway network can contribute to supporting ecological habitats whilst providing access to nature for health and well-being and mitigating climate change. Blue and Green infrastructure can help mitigate climate change by balancing measures such as water transfers, mitigating the impact of flooding through providing flooding relief, water storage and surface water management.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bigger and better joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure is referred to in the Priorities and Actions table for Nature Based Solutions. [REDACTED] would suggest that watercourses should be recognised on page 69 -under the title 'Nature Recovery Opportunities For Nature Through Nature Based Solutions In The Urban and Rural Environment' For example, we suggest inclusion of Strategic planning of a multi-functional nature-rich green and blue space, especially in new developments, enables nature to recover and people to become more connected with nature. Watercourses, at the same time as supporting biodiversity enhancement, provide green/blue spaces that deliver co-benefits of climate change adaptation, and helping people connect with nature.

At page 69, [REDACTED] support reference to how 'Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is correctly implemented, monitored and strictly maintained' and suggest inclusion of advice of how BNG guidance requires having to include watercourse assessment with 10m of riparian zone.

Page 70 – with regard to the table for 'Priorities and Actions for Nature Based Solutions'

- [REDACTED] strongly support the priority of 'bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure'.
 - Within the first section 'Nature, people and economy thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure' – no reference is made to aquatic species however it refers green/blue infrastructure. (This is the same for other sections referring to blue/green infrastructure).
 - We suggest the inclusion of 'mitigate impact of polluting run-off' as well as 'Mitigate the impacts of pollution from waste, transport and landfill'.
 - [REDACTED] support 'Install more Blue and Green Infrastructure in new developments' and we suggest the inclusion of 'installation of and connection between Green and Blue infrastructure
 - [REDACTED] support 'Design buildings and infrastructure with nature benefits and improved placemaking in mind'. The Trust advocate that it is important that development maximises the potential benefit of green and blue infrastructure, along with greater access to nature.
- Water quality can be improved in the development process through construction management and drainage management plans

In the section entitled 'Better functioning watercourses for nature, people and a thriving economy', [REDACTED] support 'Promote the benefits of functional green and blue spaces for a vibrant economy' and suggest additional reference to 'along with access to green and blue infrastructure for fostering social interaction, physical activity, connection with nature and health and well-being.'

At page 71, In section entitled 'Nature, people and economy thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure', [REDACTED] has the following comments:

- [REDACTED] suggest the inclusion of blue space e. g Create communal green and blue space with natural features to support stronger connections between nature and people, particularly in areas of inequality
- Within the context of Natural England's 'Green Infrastructure Framework' (advocating the provision of green/blue space in new development) and the government's Environmental Improvement Plan (advocating that the public should be able to access green space or water, within a 15-minute walk from their home) [REDACTED] can evidence the benefit of the green/blue infrastructure offer of our network (within 1km of our assets) and the multifunctional health and well-being offer of our network to its users and adjacent communities - [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] Our network can therefore provide ready and easy access to blue-green space, the outdoors and nature, opportunities to connect people to place, nature and each other.

At page 72, in the section entitled 'How could we ensure nature, people and economy are thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure', [REDACTED] has the following comments:

- [REDACTED] would suggest the inclusion of 'Promote the positive role of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas for nature, to provide environmental, economic and social benefits such as aiding urban cooling, protecting people from pollution and particulates from roads.

Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species

At page 75 [REDACTED] suggest replacing 'Eradicate' with 'Reduce' or 'Minimise' harmful Invasive Non-Native Species across all watercourses in Cheshire and Warrington.

At page 76 - [REDACTED] suggest replacing 'Require and support landowners to eradicate invasive non-native species' with 'Require and support landowners to manage, reduce extent of and minimise invasive non-native species.'

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

[REDACTED] welcome the proposed LNRS and inclusion of the benefits that waterways can bring in the document.

We would like to be kept informed of the progress of this document and be included on future consultations for this document as it evolves.

Kind regards

10. Appendix 3: Consultation information

Cheshire and Warrington LNRS consultation draft