

# Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

## Public Consultation Report and Analysis

### Executive Summary



# Executive summary



The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Public Consultation was open from 18 July to 11 September 2025 and received 358 completed survey responses. In addition, a total of 46 email or letter responses were submitted to the LNRS team by way of input to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough LNRS. Of these, 30 email and letter responses warranted full review (alongside 5 additional survey submissions as detailed below), and this feedback was summarised as part of the Additional submissions analysis in the main report.

There were also 5 survey submissions that were submitted after the closing date for submissions. While not included in the quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the main report, these have also been reviewed within the Additional submissions analysis.

The consultation sought to gather views on the vision, priorities, actions and mapping to shape the final strategy. This report summarises emerging themes, notable trends and key findings.

## **General support for the LNRS**

Feedback shows a strong level of support for the LNRS, with 74.0% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that the strategy clearly sets out how to improve nature recovery in the region. Many respondents praised its ambition, clarity of aims and recognition of local priorities, and offered additional sites, species and actions for inclusion.

Support for habitat actions and priorities was also prevalent, with a strong trend of agreement across the various habitat types, particularly rivers, streams and drains (89.4% total agreement with priorities, 84.8% with actions), while urban landscapes had the lowest but still substantial agreement (77.7% total for priorities, 78.0% for actions).

The responses suggest endorsement of the proposed framework and indicates that the priorities and actions were broadly correct. The frequency of additional suggestions shows that respondents wish to see priorities expanded and refined to capture locally relevant opportunities, with some additional actions proposed to strengthen the LNRS. Suggestions included the need for joined-up approaches across habitats, greater emphasis on chalk streams, floodplain meadows, hedgerows, urban green spaces, and more ambitious support for regenerative farming practices.

Strong endorsement for species priorities and actions was also received, with 82.2% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposed species list, and 80.3% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the associated actions. Multiple recommendations for additional species are highlighted for exploration, including suggestions for added species groups, such as invertebrates, fungi and amphibians, demonstrating the value of focusing on habitats to support species recovery. Only a small number of responses suggested removals from the species lists, generally relating to feasibility or local presence.

The high levels of agreement across habitats and species priorities/actions demonstrate notable approval for the strategy's objectives and underscore a positive public appetite for ambitious nature recovery efforts in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

### **From vision to delivery**

While figures indicate a high level of support for the overall vision of the LNRS, reservations were consistently raised about funding, delivery mechanisms, accountability, and enforcement, as well as pressures from housing and infrastructure development. These issues point to a gap between broad public endorsement of the LNRS' aims and the level of trust in its implementation, potentially highlighting the need for stronger assurances and practical detail on how actions will be achieved.

### **Demographic patterns**

The majority of the 358 survey responses (69.6%) were submitted by individuals, with 30.4% submitted on behalf of organisations. Of the 35 additional submissions reviewed (30 email and letter responses combined with 5 survey submissions submitted after the closing date of 11 September 2025), 6 were submitted by individuals and 29 were submitted on behalf of organisations. Quantitative results in the main report do not include additional submissions.

- **Disparity in responses across sectors:** there is a notable difference in response levels across sectors, with low engagement from utilities or infrastructure providers and from developers / house builders.
- **Age:** the majority of respondents were aged 45 or older (79.2%), with very limited engagement from younger age groups (0.6% under 24). The distribution of demographic age points to the need for targeted outreach to specifically engage younger audiences moving forward.
- **Gender:** it is noted there was a slightly higher participation from females (51.8%) than males (39.3%), with an additional number of respondents preferring not to say, or to self-describe.
- **Ethnicity:** there appears to be limited diversity in respondents' indicated ethnicities, with 86.0% of respondents identified as 'White'. Further outreach could help to diversify responses and ensure broader representation in future consultations, as well as in nature recovery activity moving forward.

- **Locations:** all districts/locations were represented, with the largest proportion from South Cambridgeshire (38.8%), followed by Peterborough City (14.8%) and Cambridge City (13.1%).

## **Demographic feedback**

As a demographic, individuals generally expressed a higher agreement that the strategy clearly sets out how to improve nature recovery in the region (77.1% strongly agreeing or agreeing), compared with organisations (66.7%). While the figures differ, both remain broadly supportive, though this should be seen in the context of a much higher proportion of organisations selecting neutral responses (22.9% compared with 13.9% of individuals). Levels of disagreement were similar across the two groups, at around 10% (total 9.0% of individuals and 10.5% of organisations), suggesting that the main difference lies not in opposition but in the greater caution or neutrality shown by organisations.

Farmers and landowners are a key stakeholder group given their central role in delivery, with responses from this stakeholder group representing 18.3% of organisational respondents, and 5.6% of all respondents. Feedback showed varied levels of support, with a total 35.0% agreeing that the LNRS sets out how to improve nature recovery, 35.0% indicating neutrality, and 30.0% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. Comments frequently emphasised the need for more direct consultation with landowners, alongside concerns about mapping accuracy, the practical deliverability of proposals, and the wider implications of the strategy.

## **Response rates**

The consultation survey was designed to be flexible, allowing respondents to choose which sections to complete and whether to continue after the initial questions. Of the 358 respondents, 64.0% chose to continue with further questions while 36.0% opted out at question 5. As a result, not all sections were completed by all respondents. Additionally non-response rates varied across the remainder of the survey, with the lowest response rate being 5.6% on a later mapping question. This variation is typical of public consultations and reflects different levels of confidence, relevance, or engagement with the topics. It is important to take these patterns into account when interpreting the results, as non-responses may indicate consensus, neutrality, or even survey fatigue.

## **Further insights**

### **Mapping**

While over half (56.1%) agreed that the Local Habitat Map reflects important areas, 21.8% expressed disagreement and 22.2% were neutral. Respondents identified omissions, corrections, and classification issues. The feedback suggests the mapping was largely 'on the right track' but required refinement including the recognition of additional locations and sites such as chalk streams, urban green spaces, allotments and churchyards.

232 respondents provided shapefiles or comments on mapping additions or removals. There were significantly more suggested additions (120 shapefiles, 127 comments) than removals (37 shapefiles, 46 comments), indicating an active interest in improving the evidence base. The number of suggested additions compared with removals appears to indicate that respondents see the maps as a useful tool but want them to be more comprehensive and locally accurate.

The LNRS team have reviewed all the mapping submissions from the consultation and shapefiles were collated into a single QGIS project for analysis. Evaluation panels, including representatives from the Combined Authority, County Council, local ecologists and the Wildlife Trust BCN, reviewed each proposed addition and removal, against criteria and recording decisions and rationale. A number of mapping changes have been agreed, and these will be detailed on the finalise LNRS.

In addition to the mapping submissions, numerous references to sites and locations were made across other sections of the survey. These have all been captured and tagged for review.

### **Mapping challenges**

A number of comments focused on usability of the mapping software, with some finding the maps difficult to interpret at local scale or when zooming in, and others calling for clearer presentation of overlapping habitat actions. Many emphasised the need for regular updates, ground-truthing and consultation with farmers, landowners, conservation groups and other stakeholders to ensure greater accuracy as well as collaboration. Alongside these concerns, several respondents praised the maps for their strategic intent and the value of identifying areas of opportunity, recognising them as a useful foundation to guide future action.

### **Agreement vs confidence**

The majority of respondents supported the LNRS vision, with 74.0% strongly agreeing or agreeing that the strategy clearly sets out how to improve nature recovery in the region. In contrast, 9.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 16.6% expressed neutrality. The consultation appears to highlight a gap between support for the vision, priorities, and actions, and the level of confidence expressed in their delivery. The high proportion of supportive responses indicates that the LNRS vision is broadly understood and welcomed, however, concerns about deliverability and clarity of responsibilities are consistent and warrant attention in the next iteration of the strategy.

### **Barriers to delivery**

Funding, resourcing, monitoring, and enforcement were consistent concerns expressed by respondents, alongside doubts about integration with wider planning and development pressures.

### **Engagement and inclusivity**

Responses were weighted towards older and White demographics, with limited engagement from younger people or diverse communities. Targeted outreach is suggested in order to engage underrepresented groups. Calls were also made for stronger involvement of public entities such as schools, communities, and local groups.

### Strategy presentation

Feedback on the presentation of the LNRS was mixed. Some praised the document as comprehensive, detailed, and well thought-out but many others criticised its length, complexity, and perceived repetition, describing it as difficult to navigate and unclear in places. Several respondents suggested that this may reduce accessibility and limit engagement, with calls for shorter summaries, clearer wording, and additional supporting materials to make the strategy more user-friendly.

### Conclusion

The consultation shows strong public and stakeholder support for the ambition of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough LNRS. Confidence in delivery appears lower, reflecting widespread concerns about funding, enforcement and competing land-use pressures. Moving forward, collaboration, targeted outreach, and practical mechanisms for implementation will be essential to realise the strategy's ambitious nature recovery goals.

#### **Please note:**

*Rounding has been applied to data within both the executive summary and main report. Percentages shown are calculated out of the response numbers for each given specific survey question and may not always be calculated out of a total 358 survey responses. Please refer to the main report Public Consultation Report and Analysis for more details.*

*The executive summary is intended as an overview. Please also refer to the Public Consultation Report and Analysis.*



Photo: Eddington, © Paul England

### **Footnote: clarification, error and omissions**

It is important to note that while responses provide valuable insights, they may not represent the views of all stakeholders or the wider public and are individually representative of those that completed the survey or submitted direct responses by emails/letters.

Some feedback was detailed, while other responses were brief or vague, which can create variation in the depth and interpretability of responses. Another limitation is the potential for survey fatigue, given comments on the length and complexity of the consultation, which may have impacted response rates, or the level of detail provided. It should be noted that the feedback provided by respondents does not always directly align with the specific questions asked in the consultation. In some instances, responses included information or opinions beyond the scope of the questions, addressing broader issues or expressing general sentiments. This has necessitated some interpretation to ensure that the analysis remains as consistent as possible with the survey's original intent.

The findings presented in this document are based on the interpretations and judgements of the review team. While every effort has been made to ensure objectivity and accuracy, some subjective interpretation of responses was necessary to categorise and summarise themes effectively. Different reviewers might interpret certain responses or sentiments differently, particularly where feedback was ambiguous or varied in tone. Therefore, the analysis reflects both the collective insights and the professional discretion of the team. This should be considered when referencing the findings, especially where direct input from respondents is summarised or simplified for clarity. Please refer to the data spreadsheets for full details.