

# Nature Recovery Project



Research Report

Insights on Local Government Delivery of Nature Recovery

September 2025



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## 1. Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the local authority officers who participated in these conversations for their time and expertise. The officers contributed their own opinions, based on experience, and these are not necessarily the formal views of their authority. We would also like to sincerely thank the Association for Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT), Solace and UK100 for their input.

## 2. Executive summary

*This report is the output of research undertaken between autumn 2024 and Spring 2025 to **better understand the barriers to and opportunities for action by local authorities on nature recovery** with a focus on:*

*a. the key conditions that enable action, b. understanding and engagement by senior management and members and c. the relationship between local authorities and Natural England.*

*When we talk about action on nature recovery, we are referring to a wide range of activities that could be classed as delivering benefits for nature, from strategies and partnership working to plans and policies to projects and delivery on the ground.*

*The aim of this research is to capture the local authority perspective to ensure the focus of the Natural England-PAS Nature Recovery Project going forward is on delivering support that is of the most help to local authorities. It is also intended to help Natural England better understand the local authority perspective and therefore how they might work more effectively with local authorities to deliver nature recovery together. It is set in the context of a time of significant change for local authorities, planning and the way that Natural England works, all of which creates additional barriers but also opportunities for action on nature recovery.*

- a. This report is based on desk-based research; interviews with key stakeholders; survey and structured interviews with 18 local planning authorities ranging in size, location and type (i.e. combined authorities, county councils, unitary authorities and district councils); interviews with Natural England staff involved in planning; insights from PAS events, including interim presentations of these research findings, and our wider work programme; and workshops with ADEPT and National Park Authorities.
- b. There are currently 317 local authorities in England with huge differences around how each one works, their priorities and therefore whether and how they engage and act on nature recovery. All are politically led and need to be accountable to their electorate - local communities and to meet national requirements. This variety means that a 'one size fits all' approach to working with local authorities is not the most effective and a customer focused, place-based approach will work best. This rationale is explored further in this report.
- c. We have framed this report around a continuum of action for nature by local authorities from 'poor' to 'good' with consideration given to how we can 'nudge' local authorities along.

d. **Our key insights on the barriers and opportunities** for action by local authorities on nature recovery are:

1. Local authorities who are taking more action for nature recovery do not always have more resource and more capacity but **use what they have more effectively, joining-up activity and collaborating better**. Key staff with drive and enthusiasm can make a real impact – efficacy is not directly correlated to job role and grade. These people/teams need to be adequately supported to maintain energy both internally and externally.
2. **Partnerships are key to building capacity, collaboration and support**. You can see it as a system: no single organisation needs to possess all the skills and knowledge – supporting local partnerships builds relationships, and challenges isolation and staff/project burn out.
3. Most local authorities we spoke to felt that they **lack the evidence they need to demonstrate the importance of taking action for nature recovery**: this is not necessarily about more data, but having information presented in a way that enables local authority officers to use it easily, including to communicate with others in their organisation, and to meet their wider priorities.
4. **High-level support for positive action on nature recovery was deemed important** for most (but not all) local authorities, whether driven by the council's corporate strategy, declaration of a climate and/or nature emergency, members and/or senior management. However, **nature being embedded in a corporate plan does not drive activity by itself**, as these strategies are too high level. The importance of the corporate plan as a hook to support action, alongside inclusion of nature in other strategies and plans signed off by members, was flagged by many.
5. Senior managers are grappling with major social issues. We need to **be realistic on where they can be nudged to**, starting with showing how nature doesn't need to be an add-on, but is integral to their priorities, and challenging the nature versus growth mindset.
6. **Members**, especially those that identify community interest in nature, **are an untapped resource**. The approach to Net Zero, e.g. through UK100, can model ways of engaging and building their interest. A champion can drive significant action. This audience is likely to be easier to engage than senior managers (though we need to bear in mind their capacity to engage through change and when some will no longer have a role as their local authority disappears).
7. **The relationship with Natural England matters** – areas with good relationships feel they are better at delivering for nature. Time spent on informal conversations, e.g. pre-planning application and in shared networks, can save time and difficulties further along the process.
8. We identified lots of **good practice** and examples of local authorities taking significant action despite resource and other constraints, so there is considerable potential to share learning and develop a network of officers, and potentially members across local authorities.

- e. Many of the challenges and barriers local authorities are dealing with are common with Natural England and **working together more effectively** to address these, learning from those places that already do this well, would be hugely beneficial. Natural England has an opportunity to **reframe their relationship with local authorities** with the changes brought about by local government reorganisation, devolution, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There will be fewer local authorities, which will make it easier for Natural England to engage in the future, but a place-based approach will still be needed.
- f. The **changes coming** will mean that engagement and action by local authorities on nature recovery will be challenging over the next few years, as they focus on extensive restructures, mergers and transformation. These challenges will particularly limit opportunities to engage with local authority senior managers and members but also mean that the **drive for collaboration and working together is even greater**.
- g. We set out recommendations for PAS to take forward as part of this project going into 2025-26, alongside how Natural England could work better with local authorities.

A tale of two areas: From our research two local authorities that on the surface are very similar. However, one is successfully delivering, for nature and the other is struggling. This can be explained in part when we look at how they are functioning in four key areas. All local authorities reside somewhere on this poor to good continuum.

	‘Weaker’ AUTHORITY	‘GOOD’ AUTHORITY
<b>EVIDENCE BASE</b>	Out of date and not fit for purpose.	Felt to be adequate for needs, some gaps but they know what these are
<b>ECOLOGICAL RESOURCE</b>	None in-house and no recognition that its needed by senior managers/members. Wildlife Trust no longer has capacity to fill this gap.	None in-house BUT LPA uses Wildlife Trust to provide this both for planning advice and projects
<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>	Officers recognise the importance of nature recovery BUT unable to influence higher up, no budgets or staff with expertise to apply for funding.	Officers use understanding of importance of nature recovery alongside other priorities to influence members & senior managers; ensure funding is allocated; bids for external funding prioritised & won. Space in reporting structure and on committees
<b>NATURAL ENGLAND</b>	No direct relationship and LNRS advisor has no knowledge of the county.	Established relationship and ability to have off the record discussions. NE involved in local partnerships including LNRS development

Figure 1: Example of two local authorities and how they are delivering for nature

### 3. Summary of the project

Natural England have been working with PAS on the [Nature Recovery Project](#) since 2022.

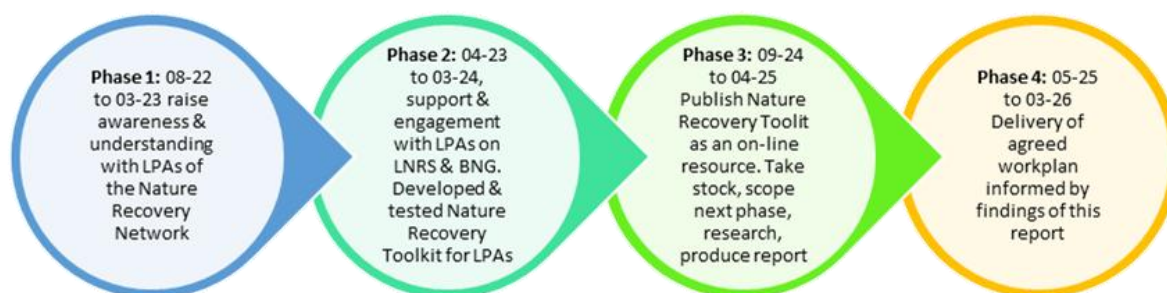


Figure 2: Phases of PAS Nature Recovery Project

Following a short hiatus between March and September 2024, PAS took the opportunity to take stock and scope out what was needed for the next phase of the project taking into account:

- It's a busy world for local authorities - planning reform, new Government, etc.
- PAS has space to think about these issues, but local planning authorities (LPAs) don't – planning services are dealing with a multitude of issues!

From September to November 2024, PAS scoped out the next steps. On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, a workshop was held with key Natural England (NE) staff to agree what is reasonable and deliverable for the project. A survey and [video setting the context](#) were sent ahead of the workshop.

By the end of the workshop, it was agreed to dive deeper and undertake further research to capture the local authority perspective and assist with NE's understanding of where local authorities are, what their issues are and therefore how NE might most effectively support them. This report is the product of the subsequent research with further details can be found in Section 7 Research Approach.

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#### RESEARCH METHODS USED IN PAS NATURE RECOVERY RESEARCH

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Desk-top research - Section 8: References

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Interviews with national bodies – ADEPT; SOLACE; UK 100; Wildlife & Countryside Link; Natural England

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Insights from PAS team & events (e.g. PAS Heads of Planning Conference etc)

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Workshops with ADEPT Natural Capital and Heritage Group members and with National Parks Authorities

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17 Interviews (plus 1 questionnaire only response) with local authorities 1:1 and 1: teams. This included research contribution from Alister Scott, Professor of Environmental Geography and Planning, Department of Geography and Environment Sciences, Northumbria University

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Figure 3: List of research methods used in PAS nature recovery research project

## 4.Context, drivers and opportunities

There are currently 317 councils/LPAs in England. They undertake a vast range of services from adult social care to biodiversity net gain. Most are statutory duties i.e. duties local authorities have to legally perform. 1,294 statutory duties were identified in [review of the statutory duties placed on local government](#). They also own and manage land such as parks and open spaces from allotments and cemeteries to parks and local nature reserves.

Many of the nature-associated statutory functions are linked to planning – hence why planning is a key ‘hook’ for nature recovery action by local authorities.

Though most *new* duties come with ‘burdens funding’ for local authorities most others including their biodiversity duty under the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act](#) get no direct funding from central government.

There are many other functions, programmes and projects that local authorities undertake for nature recovery that are not statutory our research identified some great examples.

In some areas these non-statutory functions, programmes and projects will be vulnerable to ‘cuts’ when budgets get tight or political priorities change and explains in part why there is such a range in capability and capacity to deliver for nature amongst local authorities.

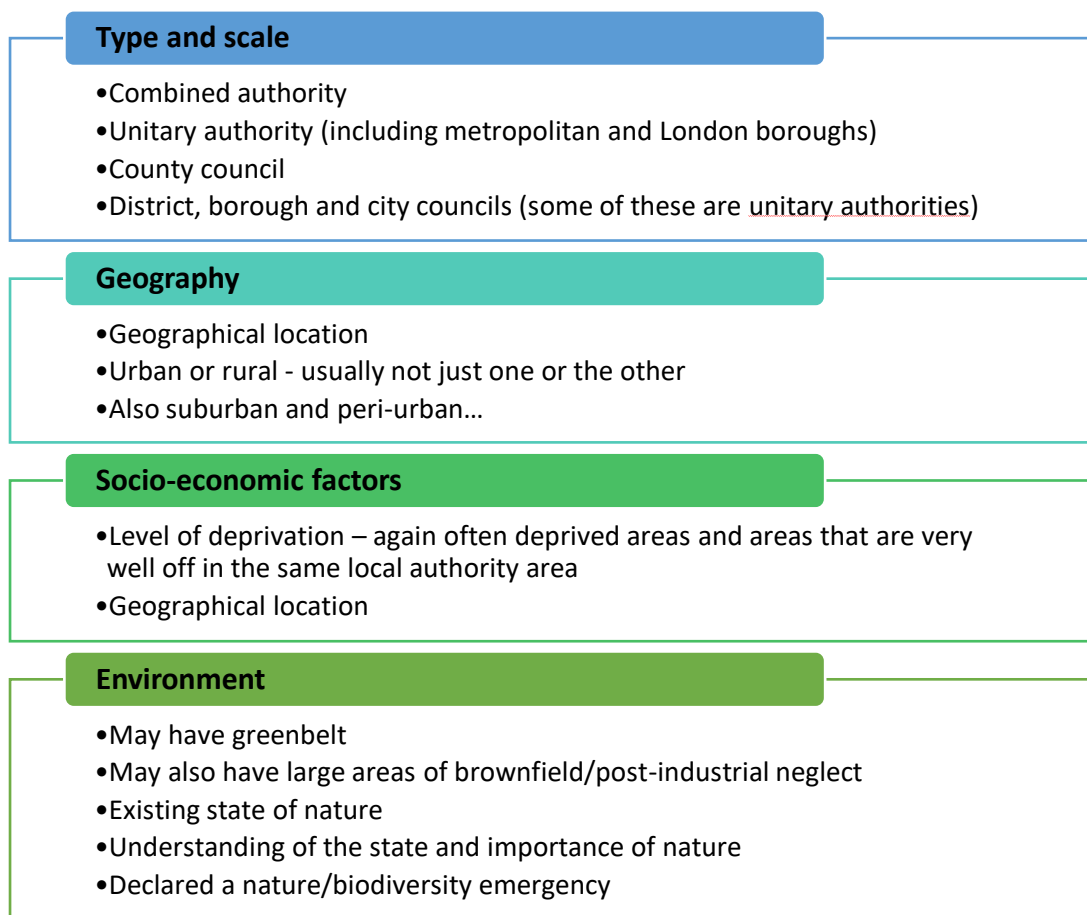


Figure 4: Key factors that determine the priorities in each council/local authority

### 4.i How things are changing for local authorities

A ‘local authority’ is not one thing; there are huge differences around how each local authority works and how/whether they engage in/do nature recovery.

Local authorities operate and respond to both their local context – what is important to the communities in their area - as well as a national context – delivering national policy and priorities at a local level.

Following the publication of the [Devolution White paper](#) in December 2024 huge reforms are reshaping local government through [Local Government Reorganisation and devolution](#). This is set against the background of pre-existing huge resource challenges and new duties and ‘burdens’ relating to planning and nature, from the [Environment Act](#) and the new [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) to new reforms initiated by the Government including local government reorganisation and the [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#).

**National Park Authorities:** There are 10 NPAs in England. They are planning authorities, *and* they have local authorities with planning powers within and around their boundaries. NPAs & LPAs and their wider partners have been working more closely together on nature recovery particularly around the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

We spoke to members of [National Parks England](#) about one of their four strategic priorities [Wildlife & Nature Recovery](#)



Figure 5: Recent and forthcoming changes in local government structure, planning reforms and nature recovery delivery

#### 4.ii Aligning with a 'Place Based Approach'

Local authorities have a challenge of managing all this change. However, could it also be a key opportunity for a 'reset and renewal' of action for nature recovery and Natural England's collaboration with local authorities. It became apparent in the research many of the frustrations and concerns over delivery for nature are shared between both parties, as are the resource challenges. Our research shows in areas where there is greater communication, collaboration and partnership working there appears to be greater action and buy in for nature recovery.

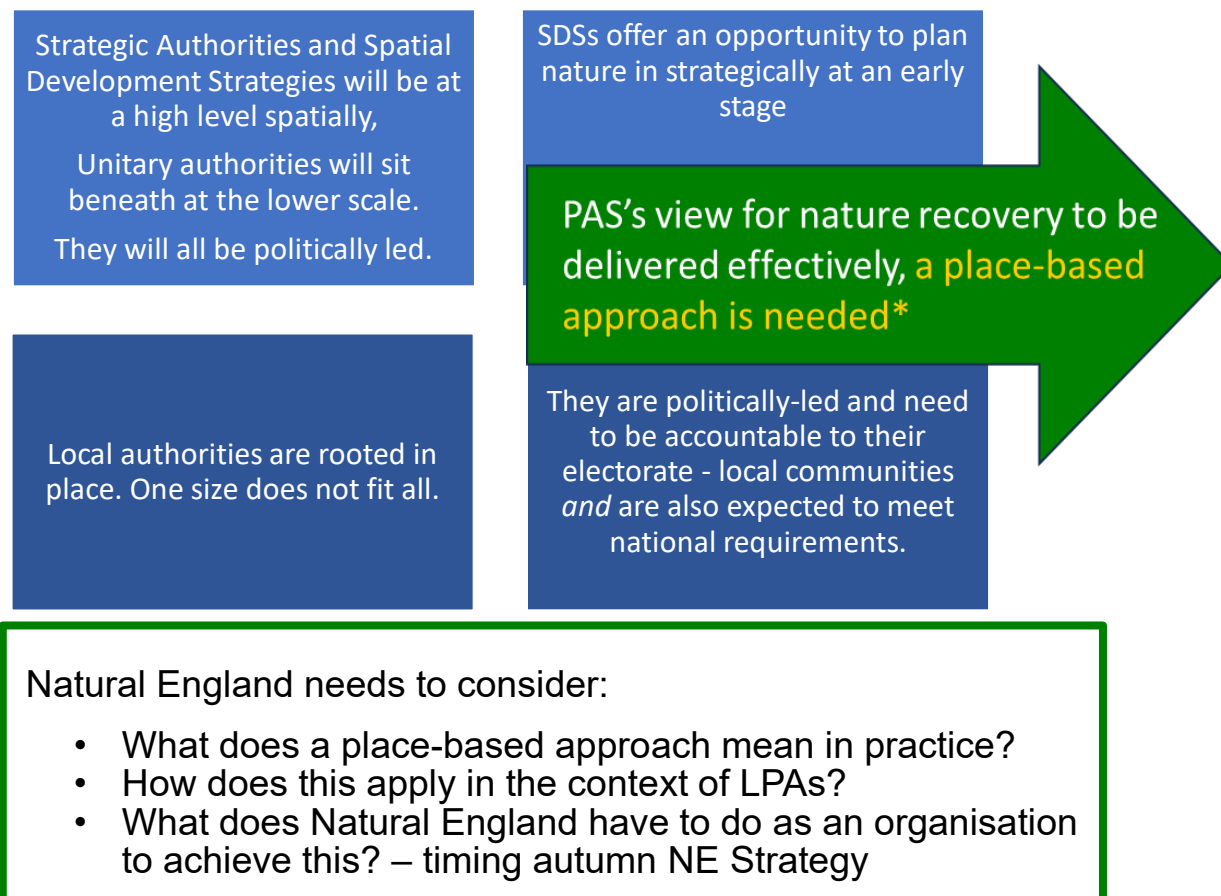


Figure 6: Recent and forthcoming changes in local government favour a 'placed based approach'

Given the research findings that challenge a 'one size fits all' approach for local government the key recommendation presented to the Natural England Urban Landscape Steering Group on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 was for a 'placed based approach'. This aligns with [Natural England's strategic direction 2025-2030](#) they have committed to 'Strong local and regional relationships will ensure we continue to improve Nature for the benefit of all, through place-based delivery. We are committed to working together to identify and implement the best ways to make these changes'.

Coincidentally the '[Corry Review](#)' published on the same day recommended 'regulators to use constrained discretion to deliver desired outcomes, considering place-based dynamics.'

## 5. The key conditions that enable action for nature

As part of the scoping work for this research, we identified three key conditions for local authorities to take action for nature:

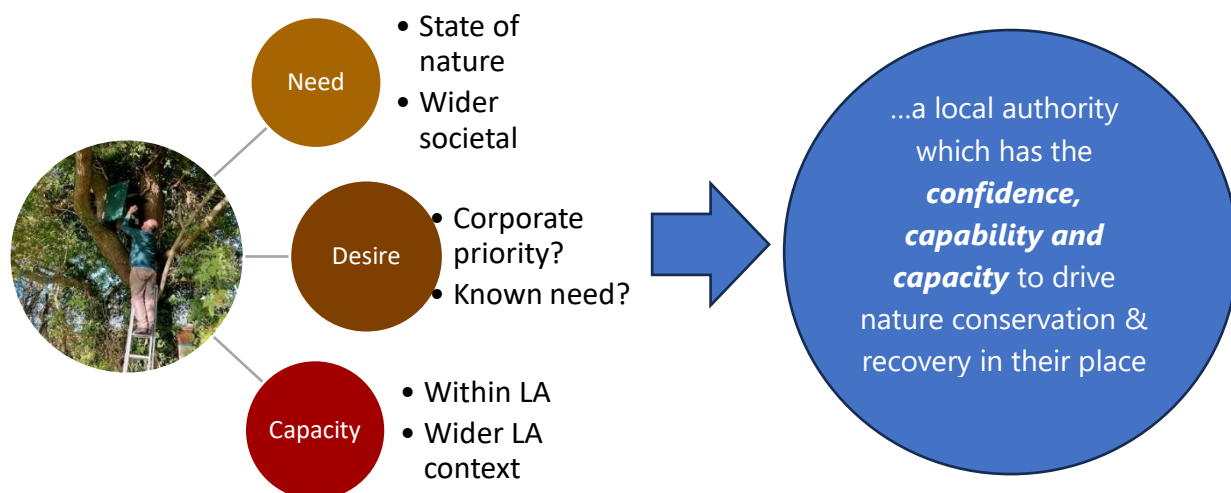


Figure 7: Three key conditions that support local authority action on nature recovery

Through our interviews and wider research, we wanted to understand the wide spectrum across all these conditions amongst local authorities and what that means for taking action, including whether and how local authorities can achieve something even when they don't have all of these 'conditions'.

**5.i. Need - Understanding the need to act**

An adequate evidence base on the state of nature and how communities can benefit from nature in their area is required if local authorities are to properly understand and communicate the need to take action for nature. More than half of those surveyed felt there was not adequate evidence on the state of nature in their area, though most felt they did have some information on the benefits for communities.

It is important in this context to understand what data and evidence is. Data is information that is gathered such as the number of butterflies in a butterfly transect or the type of recreational activity undertaken at a specific site in a given time period. Evidence draws on a body of data to examine a claim or hypothesis such as 'recreational disturbance leads to fewer breeding birds' or 'X land management practice leads to a decline in plant diversity'. When developing the 'case' for nature recovery local authorities refer to building the evidence to prove that action needs to be taken.

Delving into this in the interviews, the following points came out:

- There is often a lack of baseline evidence to measure progress and monitor over time. While there may be a lot of data on the natural environment held by the local record centre, data sets are not comparable.
- Where data are available, it was often felt that it did not meet the local authority's need, for example, in some places, the evidence base is not fine-grained enough to help site-based decision-making, whereas elsewhere it is not strategic enough to compare across the whole area.
- It was mostly felt that the LNRS would not address this need, for example, in some places, the LNRS just used existing best available data, which isn't good enough, whilst it does not capture the state of nature in districts.

- Some local authorities were taking action or involved in partnership projects to address this issue, but there is no coherent approach to how this is being done or funding pot to enable regularly updated baseline datasets to be maintained.

Survey question	Yes definitely	Yes to some extent	No not really	No not at all
Q: Do you feel that there is adequate evidence available on the state of nature in your local authority area?	8%	42%	50%	0%
Q: Do you feel that there is adequate evidence available on how local communities in your area can benefit from nature?	0%	70%	20%	10%

Figure 8: Responses from local authorities on the local evidence for nature

The lack of data has long been highlighted as a major hindrance to building a convincing evidence base necessary to secure adequate support, commitment and resources to take action for nature. How does this seemingly intractable situation get resolved at the pace necessary for nature recovery? Opportunities do arise all the time through project work to gather more data.

Since the Environment Act there are specific opportunities for data generation and evidence gathering through mechanisms such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Nutrient Neutrality and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. New national mechanisms are being launched in 2025 through Protected Site Strategies, Nature Restoration Fund with Environmental Delivery Plans.

Encouraging as this is outside of these opportunities what can be done? How can ways be employed to use what data there is more convincingly through, aggregating and rationalising data. How can the means that could further assist local authorities with their local data and evidence base be helped such as supporting/funding local records centres and partnerships. Are there new opportunities for local area support e.g. LNRS, LNPs Strategic Authorities.

We came across examples of where the situation was better or there were proposals in train to address these issues, generally through individual projects to collate and update evidence bases, but they were the exception rather than the norm.



### 5.ii. Desire - organisational culture and priorities

Local authorities have a variety of [legislative and policy requirements](#) to act for nature. Many of these do not have funding attached to them, or that funding is short-term and insecure (for example, funding from Defra for biodiversity net gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies), as well as the range of statutory duties local authorities have beyond nature, just to deliver these, let alone act above and beyond, it is essential to have the desire within the organisation, and a culture which understands how national requirements translate into local policy and priorities.

*'Some people just see.... "Oh, it's green, it's countryside, it's environment, whatever" and that just points them a certain way rather than them reading the detail.'*

*'We've been driving to try and get involved across the board, so we are well understood or well known within the other departments within the authority.'*

## What does good look like according to local authorities?

### **Collaborative, cross-organisational working is encouraged**

- This is often strongly linked to the skills of the team and individuals that lead on nature recovery-related work. For example, it may sit better with a planning policy team that are used to collaborating with others than in parks and greenspace teams. A multi-faceted planning policy team has an outward focus, engaging at community and agency level and used to bringing it together is likely to do this well.
- Value of collaborative working is recognised corporately.
- Personal relationships are what makes it work - you can work round structural issues if you have good relationships.

### **Consideration of nature is embedded into organisational decision-making**

- There is a mandatory requirement for anyone looking to develop a plan or strategy or project to consider the impact on climate and net zero and now there is also a question related to nature recovery, which makes sure these are considered at the earliest stages.
- There is a clear route for action on nature to be reported on and for escalation (e.g. to allocate resources, approve funding bids) within the authority's structure.

### **High level understanding of why nature recovery matters**

- Quite a lot of high-level evidence and reasonable appreciation of why nature recovery matters across the organisation results in action by highways, parks and recreation.

### **Wider organisational shifts can drive change**

- For example, budget reductions led to an environmental management team changing how they manage greenspace looking to maximise biodiversity. 'I think the biggest driver for change is always the need to save money.'

Figure 9: Research findings showing conditions relating to **organisational culture and priorities** within a local authority that enable action for nature recovery

As laid out earlier in the report, each local authority sits somewhere on the continuum of action for nature recovery. Even when authorities have the desire and resource to employ dedicated staff for example, they are often viewed as specialists who take on the responsibility for the authority for the 'green role' rather than the organisation understanding that nature needs to be embedded across their functions and activities.

How can the desire to act for nature be nurtured and grown in local authorities? The [Local Authority Nature Recovery Toolkit | Local Government Association](#) goes some way to support the growth of this 'desire'. It was designed to help local authorities take full advantage of the opportunities for turning their statutory 'must do' requirements for nature and the environment into opportunities for the whole council to support delivery of their strategic and corporate priorities including on health, air quality, climate change and adaptation. In essence getting wider buy-in for nature recovery across the local authority.

Between November 2023 and March 2024, seven workshops were held to develop the Toolkit with authorities. Three 'Nature Recovery Toolkit Roadshow' sessions were run with 50 local authorities attending.

Of those attending there was overwhelming support for the toolkit by participants with the potential to be an invaluable tool for those officers to use. However, following the roadshow few authorities delivered this first version of the toolkit (x3 1-hour workshops) possibly because getting the commitment of non-specialist officer time to attend these workshops was a challenge.

Survey question	Yes most of them	Yes, to some extent	No, very few do	No not at all
Q: Do you think staff beyond those that have a specialist environment role in your local authority understand the importance of acting for nature recovery?	0%	65%	31%	4%

Figure 10: Roles in LPAs championing nature are still dominated by specialists, but the feeling of 65% of local authorities in our research sample was that staff beyond these roles do have some understanding of the importance of action for nature recovery

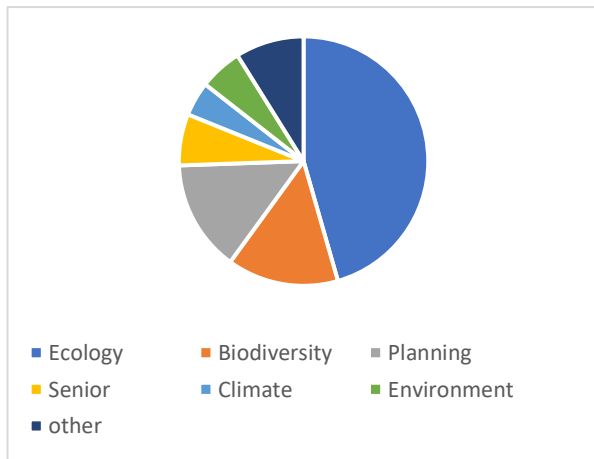


Figure 11: Roles of the current members of the PAS Nature Network for LPAs

*'A lot of this is about personal relationships, isn't it?' 'If you looked at the structure in black and white... you might say, well, there's a bit of a gap there. How's that picked up? But I think we work around it because we've got such good working relationships'*

*'Our assistant director doesn't always see that bigger picture. It's always about the bottom line. How can we save money or how this is costing us, but he doesn't see the fact that to spend it then saves money elsewhere.'*

*'At Chorley, we have a Corporate Project to deliver a Biodiversity Strategy, this formality works to be a key driver to engage wider services across the council and increase the profile of nature recovery internally and externally. The project includes creating provision for off-site BNG, and this area has gained high level support given the potential income generation and has member support as it would minimise the 'exportation' of Biodiversity from the borough.'*

Catie Haworth [Biodiversity – Chorley](#)  
 Biodiversity Gain Project Lead, Chorley Council

### 5.ii.a Local Authority Members

**UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS**

- **Talking to constituents** by phone, email and letter, social media, home visits, drop-in sessions, street or community meetings, and local events.
- **Responding to queries and issues** from local people, **investigating concerns, helping with solutions** (this is called casework).
- **Keeping the community informed** about local issues and events - for example through email, newsletters, blogs, social media and in person.
- Reading council meeting agendas and reports, research and evidence to **understand issues and participate in discussions and decisions**.
- Attending formal council meetings as well as meetings with local partners and organisations.
- **Working collaboratively with local people**, voluntary and community organisations, police, health partners, and businesses to shape the future of the local area. Building strong relationships and encouraging people to get involved and share their views and ideas.
- Some councillors have **extra responsibilities**, for example specific council projects, or positions in the cabinet, committees or regulation boards

[Be a Councillor | Local Government Association](#)

Local authority councillors are elected members of their local council. Councillors serve and represent the community in many ways, as the text box to the left shows.

They can play a crucial role in supporting local authorities' action for nature recovery.

274 members signed up to PAS's two on-line events for members in April 2025:

[Addressing the Nature Emergency for Local Planning Authority Councillors | Local Government Association](#)

When asked why members are important in the response to the nature emergency, as the word cloud below shows 'local knowledge' came up top. Members are an invaluable asset in delivering a 'placed based' approach.

#### Investment & savings

**LNRS – with teeth**

**Health & well-being**

**Climate & net zero**

**Growth & Jobs**

**Simple wins**



Figure 12: The key 'hooks' for engaging members on nature recovery identified in the research

The key hooks for members to engage in nature recovery were identified by officers in the research. Prior work as part of the PAS Nature Recovery project [How can Nature Help](#) showed similar incentives and has been incorporated into the [Nature Recovery Toolkit](#).

The most effective hooks clearly link into the wider local authority remit and priorities for place, i.e. demonstrate the wider benefits nature has to public health, the local economy and placemaking. These hooks also help challenge the narrative of nature being seen as a separate function or nature v growth.

*'...there aren't going to be any magic pots of funding for a period of time. But how we use what we've already got can significantly be improved'*

Climate and net zero is a key hook for members and senior officers alike – [over 300 local authorities have declared a climate emergency](#), and nearly two thirds of councils in England are aiming to be carbon neutral 20 years before the national target.

Centralised toolkits and resources can go some way but to make the case locally it must be tailored to the area – this takes time, resources and capacity within local authorities to build the case all of which are often in short supply as our research shows.

### What does good look like according to local authorities?

#### Political champion & place to report to

- Having somewhere (board, committee) to get members' approval and report and track action on nature recovery - it doesn't have to be an environment focused one, e.g. could be planning.
- Portfolio holder with nature in their remit - raising status and importance of nature
- Sufficient seniority to effectively challenge and advocate for nature.

#### Positive relationship with officers

- Unified approach more likely to get member support.
- Ecological skills from partners, e.g. Wildlife Trusts (but not all have the capacity/willingness to do this).

#### Understanding the wider value of nature

- It's not an either - or but integrated into thinking and approach e.g. into housing
- Value nature has in placemaking.  
Sound business cases for nature - show the savings made to the council in various sectors such as health.

Figure 13: Research findings showing the conditions within a local authority that enable **member support for nature recovery**.

*'Darlington Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 along with the majority of councils. Our target is for council emissions only. At the time, the date was set for 2050. In 2023, following local elections, the date was brought forward to 2040.*

*This year, 2025 the Labour Party and Green Party came together to declare a joint climate and nature restoration emergency. This recognises that the UK's nature is now severely depleted, but that two topics are inextricably linked.*

*The council's 2040 net zero target stands but is now joined by a 2040 target for strategic nature recovery goals.*

*A joint climate change and nature restoration strategy will be presented to Council in September 2025. This will be followed by two supporting action plans: one for climate change activity and one for nature recovery actions, but with clear threads where actions meet both ambitions. Reporting will be delivered jointly every six months'*

Margaret Enstone [Darlington BC - Climate change](#)

Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer, Darlington Borough Council

### 5.ii.b Local Authority Senior Management

Local authority senior management as referred to here is the senior leadership team. The structure will differ across different local authorities but tends to be made up of Corporate Directors and the Chief Executive. Senior management may also include Heads of Service and assistant Directors, who sit at the next level down in the structure.

#### What does good look like according to local authorities?

**Key 'hooks' for nature built in**

- Clear nature objectives included in the corporate plan
- Declared a biodiversity emergency

**Member support for officers acting for nature**

- A key member and/or a critical mass of members believe consideration of nature is important.
- 'Even though senior leaders don't prioritise nature they are not a blocker as its important to some members'

**Understanding the wider value of nature**

- Its not an either - or but integrated value in placemaking
- Sound business cases for nature - show the savings made to the council in various sectors such as health
- Value the positive image to the council action for nature can give (not just green-washing)

Figure 14: Research findings showing the conditions within a local authority that enable **senior support for nature recovery**

Survey question	Yes, definitely	Yes, to some extent	No, not really	No not at all
Q: Do you feel that a lack of senior level buy-in causes a block to action on nature recovery?	27%	54%	15%	54%
Q: Does your Corporate Plan include environmental priorities	85%	0%	10%	5%

Figure 15: Corporate Plan and Senior Officer buy-in

**The Corporate Plan:** 'Most important thing is that it's there to make sure it has budget allocated to it. It has broad areas that set the context for action - this corporate steer is vital. Gives confidence to put in a proposal/business case.' This doesn't happen everywhere - in some LPAs it's just words and 'it doesn't deal with conflicts'. The point being that the Corporate Plan is high-level broad statements – useful to hook policy and actions on to but not a guarantee specific commitment will follow. So, on balance it is better to have something than nothing in the plan.

#### Housing

##### Local issues

##### Align with statutory duties

##### Climate & net zero

##### Growth & Jobs

##### Align with council plans & priorities

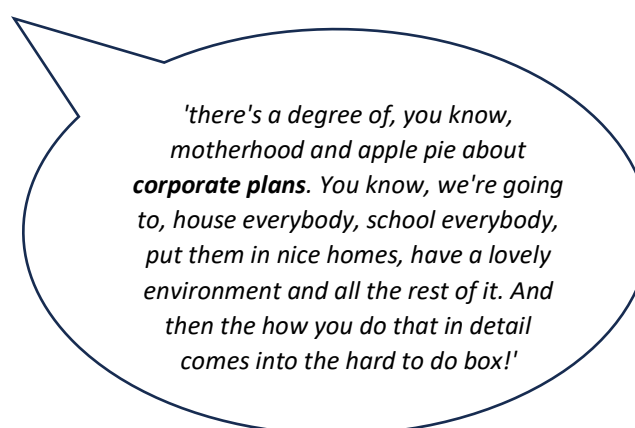


Figure 16: Key hooks for engaging senior management with nature recovery identified by interviewees

Survey question	Yes	No
Q: Has your local authority declared a <i>nature</i> emergency?	55%	45%
Q: Has your local authority declared a <i>climate</i> emergency?	90%	10%

Figure 17: Climate & nature emergency responses

There is an opportunity to link nature more overtly to climate action and net zero that has greater leverage e.g. [over 300 councils have declared a climate emergency](#) whereas according to the Woodand Trust only [92 have declared a nature emergency](#).

Can Natural England help support senior level buy-in? Despite high levels of [public awareness, understanding and support for \(nature\) conservation](#) this concern is arguably not translated adequately into corporate priorities and action by enough local authorities. As nature has so often been siloed it's all too easy for local authority senior management to adopt the 'other people and organisations are taking care of this', be it eNGOs or Natural England.

For Natural England is therefore a 'placed based approach' which is a blend of helping to build the capacity of the local 'system' that local authorities are a part of through LNRS and LNPs that will be tailored to suit local circumstances for nature, whilst also proving themselves 'useful' by providing excellent direct services to local authorities see figure 25 p24.

**Table 18: Which, if any, of the following adaptation project areas has your authority delivered in the last ten years, is delivering currently, or has plans to deliver in future?**

	Have previously delivered in the last 10 years	Delivering currently	Plan to deliver in the next two years	Plan to deliver in the longer term	Have not delivered and have no current plans to deliver	Don't know
Flooding	34%	50%	25%	30%	0%	10%
Heat	7%	19%	18%	45%	15%	18%
Retrofitting (housing)	33%	50%	28%	31%	6%	10%
Wildlife protection and biodiversity	34%	64%	42%	25%	0%	4%

Base: all respondents who answered this question (92 respondents).

Figure 18: Response from local authority regarding the measures they are taking in adapting to climate change

In terms of wildlife protection and biodiversity project areas, 34 per cent of respondents said they had previously delivered these in the last 10 years. Sixty-four per cent of respondents said they were delivering it currently. Forty-two per cent of respondents said they planned to deliver it in the next two years, with a further 25 per cent planning to deliver it in the longer term. Four per cent were unsure. The results for these are shown in Table 18.

In January 2024, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted a [Sustainability Survey 2024](#)

of all councils to identify the key issues they are facing in delivering sustainability in their local area as well as the progress being made. A total of 96 responses were received from individual local authorities, resulting in a final response rate of 30 per cent.



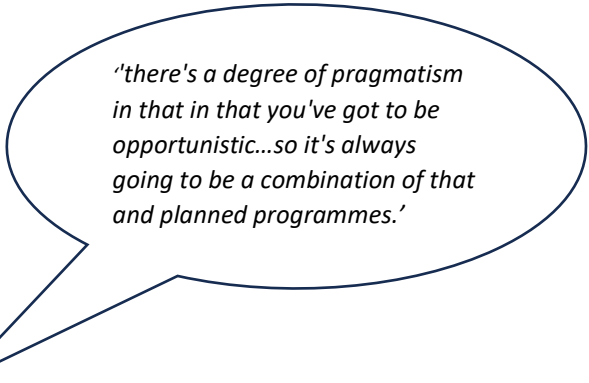
### 5. iii. Capability and capacity

Lack of **capacity and capability** was highlighted as one of the main barriers to action by nearly all the local authorities we spoke to and even where action for nature recovery was taking

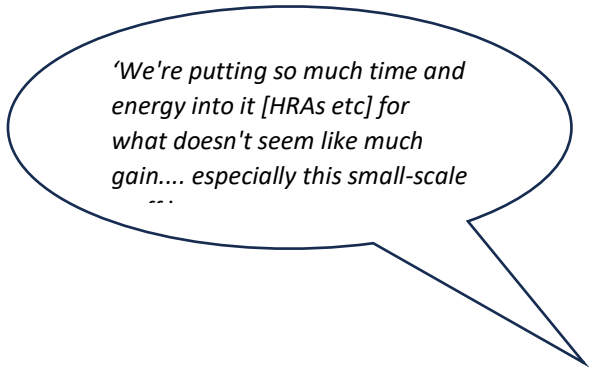
place, there was a feeling that more could be done, especially in meeting the [NERC Biodiversity Duty](#). The issues with capacity and capability are very much linked to others outlined in this report, in particular the culture and priorities of the local authority. However it is important to recognise that the officers who do hold these posts are usually highly motivated informed and eager to make a real impact in their areas for nature.

There is significant variety between local authorities on whether they have staff working directly for nature, for example a third have staff who are members of the [Association of Local Government Ecologists](#). Some authorities have other roles relating to nature such as Biodiversity Officers and Natural Capital Coordinators, many just have roles relating to the wider environment or climate change. Some will have blended roles such as planning policy and green infrastructure.

In addition, those with their own estates will usually have 'traditional' countryside and parks and open spaces roles. If there are multiple roles in one authority e.g. an Ecologist and Countryside Manager, they often sit within different departments. These roles also sit at different levels of seniority. Typically, they are seen as 'specialist' and therefore middle tier and are reliant for strategic influence on a champion higher up in the authority.



*'there's a degree of pragmatism in that in that you've got to be opportunistic...so it's always going to be a combination of that and planned programmes.'*



*'We're putting so much time and energy into it [HRAs etc] for what doesn't seem like much gain.... especially this small-scale ...'*

### What does good look like according to local authorities?

#### **Being flexible and pragmatic:**

- Using external and internal resources flexibly, plus mix of funding sources.
- Managing expectations is key; being very firm about what you can and can't do. Focusing time and effort – using experience, instinct - when to use what process.

#### **Sourcing skills beyond in-house**

- Arms-length body (that is part of the county council) providing relevant expertise.
- Ecological skills from partners, e.g. Wildlife Trusts (but not all have the capacity/willingness to do this).

#### **Working with partners**

- Local Nature Partnerships are key (see separate box on the value of LNPs and other partners).
- Partners vary locally and there are gaps in some places.

#### **Understanding what skills are needed**

- Advocacy and influencing skills can be as important as natural environment expertise in getting others on-side to enable action: from members approving funding to persuading local farmers to change their land management practices.
- These skills may not sit in the teams traditionally seen as relating to the environment, e.g. may be in planning policy

Figure 19: Research findings showing the conditions within a local authority that enable the **best use of capability and capacity**.

Local authorities will link a role where possible to a statutory function such as [Nutrient Neutrality](#), [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) (BNG) or [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) (LNRS) - where there has been funding from [MHCLG](#) or [Defra](#) (albeit it short-term). In many cases, especially most smaller districts and unitary authorities (including metropolitan boroughs), there will be no specialist roles focusing on the natural environment. In these places, the nature recovery agenda will be either allocated to an officer or officers with an interest, for example in planning policy, or left to whoever happens to pick it up at the time.

Over the decades following funding and government policy there has been a cycle of expansion and contraction in local government and no less so for nature and environment-based roles. Although there has been a recent expansion phase impacting these roles, due to nutrient neutrality, BNG and LNRS, some authorities are still rebounding from the last 'contraction'. This means some authorities don't have in-house expertise to take advantage of funding and project opportunities – or even to be aware that such opportunities even exist. As planning is a statutory function with nature and place making planning authorities will at least have even if they don't have specific roles and expertise.

No one party/organisation must have the answers/be the expert - its systems approach with the potential for each party to recognise the unique skills, contacts, expertise, understanding to the table - you know probably my number one recommendation would be to support partnerships!!!

### 5.iii.a Working together to build capacity – the value of partnerships

Partnerships were flagged by the majority of local authorities as being a key mechanism to help them deliver for nature recovery, alongside being a way to positively engage with Natural England. In particular, Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) were identified by a significant number of the local authorities we surveyed as being key to enabling them to deliver for nature recovery and in aiding with strategic join-up. LNPs performed a range of functions.

#### THE BENEFITS OF A WELL-FUNCTIONING LNP

Help lever more funding for local authority work and /or positions and get in external funding and interest, e.g. helped set up environment team at strategic level. joint funding bids with partners

Co-ordinate joint approaches, including LNRS and funding programmes that demand a partnership e.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund

Pioneer work on nature recovery planning.

Provide & collate evidence at strategic level, including the following examples: a state of nature baseline for the county; a biodiversity audit; 'ecological network maps

Help with Local Plan, data and evidence

Help improve the local authority's 'environmental credentials by linking to people that live locally.

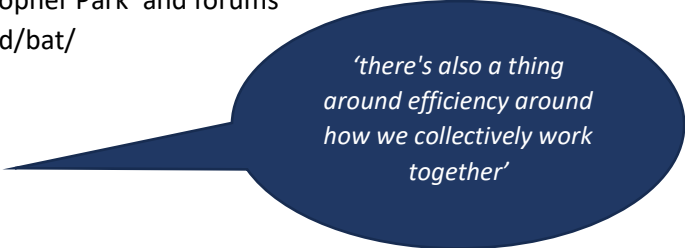
Bring wider representaiton and diversity into nature recovery planning & programmes especially if the LNP has non specialist groups but with a wide interest in nature and the local environment

Figure 20: The benefits of an LNP identified by local authorities

In some places, LNPs are working less well and inconsistently. Like much in the nature/environment sector the national inconsistency is largely due to capability and capacity issues often linked to funding challenges even for core staff. Despite the clear mutual value to partnership working some

LNPs do not have local authorities as core members. In other places, e.g. London, there is no LNP, but partnerships have been formed in different ways to perform similar functions. It was also highlighted that LNPs are great at the strategic level, but do not have the capacity to help with day-to-day resourcing issues. Various other partnerships were highlighted as important and the functionality of these varied from place-to-place. This affirms the 'placed based approach' Key partners include:

- Other Defra bodies - [Environment Agency](#): especially on flooding and nature-based solutions & 'the good thing is that they fund maintenance too.' [Forestry Commission](#)
- [The Wildlife Trusts](#)
- Local green spaces groups e.g. 'Friends of Ropner Park' and forums
- Local specialist interest groups e.g. local bird/bat/
- [Catchment Partnerships](#)
- Other eNGOs e.g. RSPB, National Trust,
- Universities
- Water Companies
- FWAG
- [Combined Authorities](#): 'support a lot of nature work and also part-fund posts.'
- [National Park Authorities](#) (they are also planning authorities) & [National Landscapes](#)
- Coastal and marine organisations ([MMO](#), [IFCAs](#), eNGOs etc) where appropriate.



THE BENEFITS OF WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
'Cap & cap': sharing & making the best use of limited resources & skills, avoiding duplication.
Co-ordination of joint approaches, especially at a more strategic level.
Leverage of funding.
Greater understanding - shared knowlege and insights
Oppourtunites for better EDI
Systems approach no one organisation has to 'do' nature recovery
Networks, contacts and allies

Figure 21: The benefits more generally of working in partnership identified by local authorities

**National Park Authorities where they exist in an area can be key allies:**

'NPA's have the advantage of more organisational commitment to nature recovery how do we then connect that up to everywhere else through like local nature recovery strategies or other mechanisms'

They have their own specific mechanism through the [Protected Landscape's Targets and Outcomes Framework](#) 'we want to provide a united front... where nature recovery can happen at a landscape scale alongside other things such as planning'

NPA identified they have 'The power of persuasion 'facilitation and convening rather than necessarily having regulatory powers'

## 5.iv The relationship with Natural England

Natural England's relationship with local authorities is key to enabling them to act effectively for nature recovery. More than half of local authorities felt they had a good or excellent relationship with local authorities. We also interviewed key Natural England staff working with the planning function of local authorities.

The range of quality of relationship across the weak to good continuum is for a variety of reasons both on the part of Natural England and the local authority. With 12 area teams interacting with 317 local authorities this is to be expected. Half of the Natural England area teams have 25 to 38 councils in their areas; all cover large geographical areas. Natural England also has national programmes and support for local authorities to draw on.

There is reportedly a range of experiences local authorities have with their area teams from direct relationships between individuals to no contact at all. Some area teams help to connect national programmes with the local area however in at least one example a national initiative driven by Natural England has just landed in an area without any prior engagement with the local authority ecologist.

Natural England has potentially multiple ways they engage with local authorities mostly through their corresponding area team but there are also national programmes of functions too.

### NATURAL ENGLAND ACTING IN MULTIPLE CAPACITIES:

- **Acting as SSSI regulator**, determining requests for consent, assent and advice under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- **A competent authority** for the purpose of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- **The licencing authority** in relation to protected species and/or has published a species conservation strategy.
- **The Register Operator for the purpose of BNG** and has registered a site (or part of a site) as a biodiversity gain site and/or any other BNG obligations.
- **A Responsible Body for the purpose of a Conservation Covenant**, securing part of a site.
- Required to act as a **statutory consultee** in any capacity, for example in relation to a planning application or in relation to a proposed NSIP (*also development plans*)
- Has **provided a grant/financial award** under statutory scheme, such as a Landscape Recovery agreement.
- **A responsible authority** in relation to advising on an LNRS.
- Any roles/responsibilities as part of the Nature Restoration Fund; and/or
- Acting in any other capacity. [including all other **non-statutory projects** e.g. NNRs, access & PROW, farm advice, specific projects]

*From a presentation on Protected Site Strategies & the Law 04-02-25 Helen Gill [brownejacobson.com](http://brownejacobson.com)*

Figure 22: Natural England has potentially multiple ways they can engage with local authorities

Potentially there could be multiple Natural England representatives with different agendas approaching a local authority, which invariable will be the same person within the authority.

Our research shows this can sometimes come across as a lack of consistency from Natural England and in the worse cases conflicting advice.

However, in places where partnerships such as LNPs that have both the local authority and Natural England area team in this inconsistent approach doesn't appear instead the Natural England


representative acts a conduit between area team and national team specialists giving both the local authority and Natural England opportunities for joined up collaborative working.

A senior officer from Natural England's National Urban Landscapes Steering Group commented '*as an organisation we need to approach local authorities with humility*'. Just as the local authority members identified they have the local knowledge and understanding. Natural England can bring invaluable information and expertise and together this gives a great foundation for nature recovery that will be appropriate and 'owned' by the place.

Again, this points to a 'placed based approach' to nature recovery as we have explored in this report.

This is not to say that Natural England's strategic approach to planning & planning case work as laid out in the letter to local authorities in August 2024 [Improving our service to Local Planning Authorities for nature, people and climate](#) cannot work alongside a placed based approach. As always, it's not an either-or choice. How this blended approach could work for each area and for the new Strategic Authorities can be explored and developed in the next stage of the PAS Nature Recovery Project.

In many ways Natural England as an organisation has parallels with local government. Both are in a period of significant challenge and change (rather like nature itself). As the government body for nature there are inherent challenges dealing with the impact of human activities at scale over many generations in a highly populated island with multiple demands on land use.



*'We need Natural England to be that **sounding board**... to be there with the **specialists they can consult with in the national team**...give us the advice we need to **support us (with) those technical processes** where we don't have the resources in-house to be able to make those judgement calls. And **it can't be a toolkit. It needs to be in person**'.*

- NE receives approximately 33k consultations each year across planning and NSIPs. A 37% increase since 2016.
- 88% are responded to in statutory or otherwise agreed timescales
- NE receives a high proportion of unnecessary consultations from Local planning Authorities
- 60% of casework is considered lower risk and retained in our Casework Hubs.
- The remaining are responded to in Area Teams, which includes approximately 500 high risk/high opportunity cases.
- About 30% of all planning related cases are fast tracked through our systems as unnecessary consultations we didn't need to receive.
- Variable quality of planning applications.
- About 10% of all consultations require further information before we can provide a substantive response, e.g. need for HRA (Habitat Regulations Assessment).
- Poor development/infrastructure pipeline which means NE can't effectively plan to meet demand.
- Lack of consistent and sustainable funding for services, with deficiencies in skills and capacity and limited resources for upstream input into strategic plans.

= Restricts our ability to offer a consistent, high-quality service to customers and secure nature recovery outcomes

Figure 24: Natural England's Planning Casework [Source Natural England Stakeholder workshop May 2025 'Planning Reform: Opportunities and Risks for Nature Recovery and Economic Growth']

This environmental impact from development is complex and not easily resolved. The current approach evolved over decades is of environmental protection – think ‘nature conservation’. These focus on neutrality or not getting worse leaving limited resource for enhancement, nature recovery or nature-based solutions. Achieving this ‘at-scale’ is a further challenge though new legislated mechanisms such as Protected Sites Strategies and the Nature Restoration Fund open up new opportunities for larger scale recovery.

As local authorities know, when resources allow for the creation of new greenspaces as part of development then the issues with ongoing management follow and have still not been resolved and are often viewed as a liability

If nature is to be restored, it is vital that this is a shared journey. There is a sense the system has to evolve and adapt. With this awareness Natural England are making efforts to examine their role and approach including a recent stakeholder workshop referred to in figure 24.

The feedback from our research reflected much of the awareness Natural England currently has about its planning casework. There were key areas on the ‘poor/not functioning’ end of the continuum that were identified which could help inform the efforts to evolve and adapt. These include:

- more consistency in both messaging and approach received from Natural England and wider government
- continuity of Natural England expertise and skills to ensure advice is based on how things can actually be delivered not always generic standing advice.
- ensure information is shared to LPAs from both regional and national teams e.g. strategic approaches to mitigation, site history etc.

On the good to thriving end of the continuum however local authorities highlighted a relationship with Natural England where they were engaged and proactive with trusted stable organisational relationships offering continuity, collaboration and reciprocity enabling local authorities to have the confidence to go further.

### **NATURAL ENGLANDS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES - What does good look like according to local authorities?**

#### **Engaged**

- they (Natural England) will jump on calls with developers to talk matters through
- one key person over last 5 or so years which is good for continuity
- Senior level proactive involvement in key casework can help resolve issues quickly and bring balance and pragmatism

#### **Relationships**

- High level of trust of ecologists by NE, so work together. Listening is important.
- the ability to have 'off the record conversations' - supported & informed - saves time & better outcome
- Stability within the NE provides the support we need
- Staff continuity helps build trusted relationships

#### **Expertise**

- Proactive in resolving difficulties outside the local plan
- Proactive - talking to local Developers Forum

#### **Partnerships & collaboration**

- working together really recognise what's important locally
- Collaboration with the GI framework work. Reciprocity learning on both sides
- Pushing LPA to do more external force to put pressure on others.

## 6. Conclusions

Now more than ever we need to join up and work together for nature. We have seen over recent years how eNGOs have galvanised their efforts and messaging. How can local government more effectively join together and perhaps just as importantly join up with other networks in a system that values nature and supports and resources the people and systems to work for its recovery. Could this be 'placed based approach' and what could that look like now as we face a joint climate and nature emergency?

Local authorities as part of the system along *with* their local partner organisations, their networks and ability to reach out to communities know and understand their areas intimately – they are the local 'experts' but they need policy, regulatory and technical support as well as capability, capacity and resources. Biodiversity Net Gain, Nutrient Neutrality and especially Local Nature Recovery Strategies are steps to developing a placed based approach however to maintain momentum consistent support is needed. Local government reorganisation and devolution could well be the opportunity to join-up, support and resources the people and systems to work for more effective nature recovery.

Main insights covered in the Executive Summary

- Not just more resource, more effectively, joining-up activity and collaborating better.
- Partnerships are key to building capacity, collaboration and support.
- High-level support for positive action on nature recovery was deemed important.
- Be realistic on where they (local authorities) can be nudged to.
- Members, especially those that identify community interest in nature, are an untapped resource.
- The relationship with Natural England matters.
- Lots of good practice and examples of local authorities taking significant action.

## 7. Recommendations

Theme	ACTIONS
<b>Communication</b>	<p><b>PAS</b> - Build <b>LPA Nature Network</b> – host member events. <b>Integrate</b> the nature recovery work in with PAS’s wider programme and networks.</p> <p><b>Natural England</b> to engender greater consistency of approach and maintain open channels between NE &amp; LPAs</p>
<b>Resources</b>	<p><b>PAS</b> - <b>Case studies &amp; examples of good practice</b>. Build on existing resource on PAS website</p> <p><b>Nature Recovery Toolkit</b>: launch event and promotion. Further testing of the toolkit to ensure its meeting user needs. Iterate if needed.</p> <p><b>Natural England - Guidance</b> directed at local authorities and other relevant stakeholders (non-environmental) on how nature links to other priorities; benefits of taking action for nature recovery and demonstrate how it pays to act, ideally with a way to measure the benefits.</p> <p><b>Nature Towns and Cities</b> link to PAS Nature Recovery programme</p>
<b>Build Capacity</b>	<p><b>PAS</b> - <b>Events</b> for the network (and wider) on how to develop a unified voice across members, senior management and officers; how to embed nature recovery as part of business as usual.</p> <p><b>Natural England</b> - Contribution to &amp; attendance at PAS events Explore how to include nature in the <b>mandatory Planning Committee training</b> that is part of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Examine ways to <b>support existing place-based partnerships</b> to help build their capacity.</p> <p><b>Seek opportunities for training for NE staff on local authorities and the planning system to help raise understanding</b></p>
<b>Adapt &amp; respond</b>	<p><b>PAS Support NE</b> with new relationships with Strategic Authorities – build on trust</p> <p><b>Support local authorities</b> on how nature recovery fits with devolution and planning reforms</p> <p><b>Members</b> - What can we learn from the approach to net zero? Collaborate with UK100 explore a Nature Network for Members</p> <p><b>Enhanced biodiversity duty first reporting January 2026</b> – opportunity to raise profile – PAS and others could help e.g. events, case studies.</p>

Figure 26: Table of recommendations based on the research findings and insights. To form the basis on project work plan.

## PAS Nature Recovery Programme

### Agreed Scope for 2025/26:

- I. Continue work that provides support to all local authorities through sharing of information and guidance, including ensuring the use of the NR Toolkit.
- II. Develop work in focused places across several NE workstreams including NRN, LNRS, integrating nature into strategic planning, Green Infrastructure Standards, regulatory reform pilots and Strategic Solutions.
- III. Provide a reliable line of communication between NE and local authorities to inform how and where to continue to target support.

NE will engage PAS in the selection of the places we focus drawing on insights and established relationships to feed into the process of determining the focused places NE targets resources.

### Deliverables:

- I. Update PAS Nature Recovery toolkit and Nature Recovery Network project webpages, and produce articles featured in PAS newsletters and social media
- II. Launch event and promote Nature Recovery Toolkit
- III. Deliver a minimum of two workshops to LA's including Senior Leaders utilising the tool kit
- IV. Deliver a minimum of two training sessions for Elected Members post Local election, could target Planning Committee training and wider training of Councillors to cover differ portfolios for e.g. Public Health and Highways etc.
- V. Build the Nature Network for LPAs by hosting member events
- VI. Draft and disseminate example of, technical advice notes, design guide, NR Case studies & examples of good practice
  - a. Case studies from Combined Authorities and disseminate to other CAs and emerging CAs
  - b. Case study for multidisciplinary working across Local Authorities and where nature has gone alongside growth, specifically focused on integrating nature, via LNRS and GI Standards.
  - c. Build on existing work around key drivers i.e. how nature can help with alleviate Climate Crisis and how nature can support growth and save money for public purse i.e. better health outcomes more attractive places for people to visit
- VII. Support NE with new relationships with Strategic Authorities

## 8. Research approach

Research conducted and report produced by:

Rachel Murtagh and Rebecca Moberly - Principal Consultants, PAS

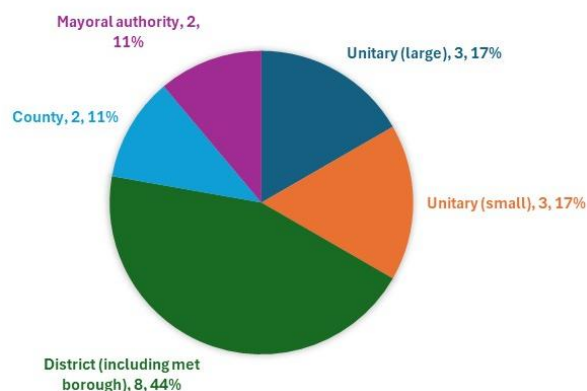
With input from:

[Professor Alister Scott](#) - Professor of Environmental Geography and Planning, Department of Geography and Environment Sciences, University of Northumbria

And insights from the rest of [PAS team](#)

- Desk-top research – [UK100 launches new Powers in Place: Nature report | UK100](#); [Climate change resources | Local Government Association](#); [Wilder By Design](#)...
- Interviews with national bodies – ADEPT; SOLACE; UK 100; Wildlife & Countryside Link; Natural England
- Insights from [PAS team](#) & events (e.g. [Heads of Planning Conference](#) etc)
- Workshops with [ADEPT](#) Natural Capital and Heritage Group members and with National Parks Authorities
- 17 Interviews (plus 1 questionnaire only response) with local authorities 1:1 and 1: teams. This included research contribution from Alister Scott
- Workshop with representatives from three National Park Authorities.

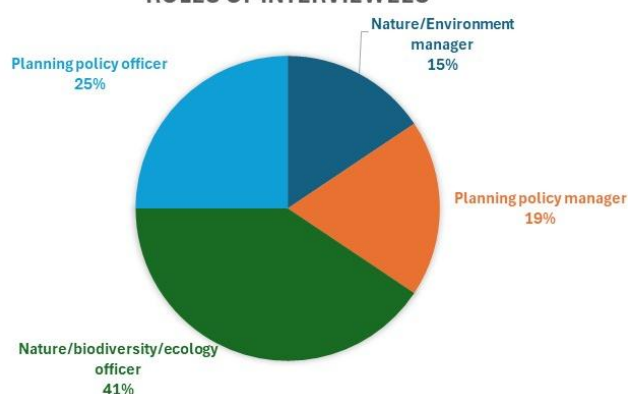
**LOCAL AUTHORITY INTERVIEWS BY TYPE**



Local authority by type	% in our sample
Mayoral authority	11%
County council	11%
Unitary authority (large)	17%
Unitary authority (small)	17%
District	44%

Figure 27: Type of local authority the interviewees work for (excluding National Park Authorities)

**ROLES OF INTERVIEWEES**



Roles of interviewees	% in our sample
Planning policy Manager	19%
Planning Policy Officer	25%
Nature/Environment Manager	15%
Nature/environment Officer	41%

Figure 28: The roles of the interviewees have within their authority,

## Collating, grouping and rationalising the research

The research drew on a range of methodologies, that were collated into a giant on-line work board. This enabled us to collate responses according to the research questions and draw out patterns and themes.

- i. interview transcripts,
- ii. questionnaires,
- iii. meeting notes
- iv. workshop notes and feedback
- v. reports & web research

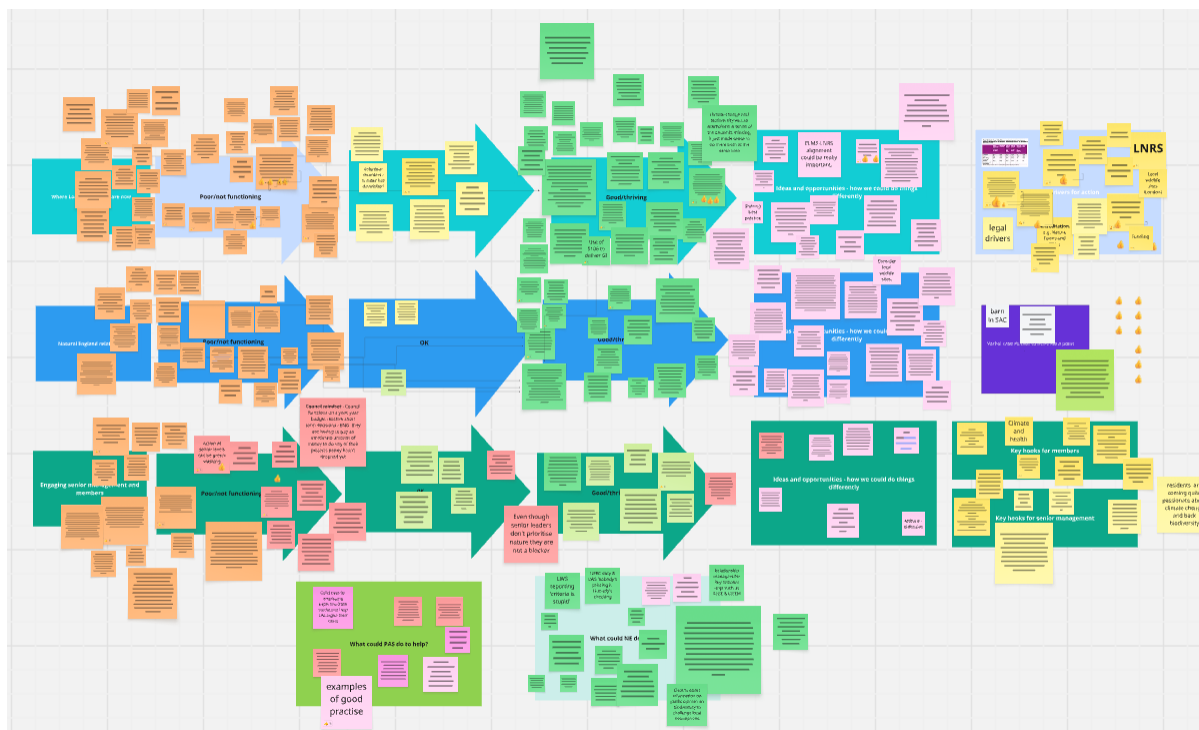


Figure 29: Workspace showing the collation of research. Top line, where LPAs are now; middle line, Natural England relationship; bottom line, engaging senior officers and members. A continuum of poor to good was identified in this process as well as ideas, opportunities, hooks and drivers for action.

## 9. References

[Nature Recovery Emerging Insights Snapshot - In conversation with early adopter local authorities |](#)

[Local Government Association](#) PAS Research from 2022

[UK100 launches new Powers in Place: Nature report | UK100;](#)

[Climate change resources | Local Government Association;](#)

[Wilder By Design](#)

[Number of local authority employees, full time \(headcount\) in England LGA](#)

<https://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/social-accountability-for-place-based-nature-recovery/>

[National Parks England](#)

[NPPF Webinars Jan to Mar 2025 | Local Government Association](#)

[Environmental Improvement Plan rapid review - GOV.UK](#)

LGA [Sustainability Survey 2024](#)

[Public awareness, understanding and support for conservation - GOV.UK](#)

## Appendix 1: What does a local authority do

[Understand how your council works: Types of council - GOV.UK](#)

[How is local government organised? | Local Government Association](#)



# Local Government – where does planning fit?



Statutory duties placed on local Govt. <i>Latest data from 2011!</i> <a href="#">Statutory duties placed on local government - data.gov.uk</a>			
Housing - 54	Doorstep collection - 2	Waste - 26	Taxis - 38
Accountability - 32	Monuments - 4	Data - 16	
Executive arrangements - 8	Listed buildings - 12	Food - 36	Highways - 58
Functions & Responsibilities - 4	Conservation areas - 4	Chem & Pesticides - 4	Traffic management - 26
LG Finance - 13	Libraries & Museums - 4	Water & Floods - 4	Public Transport - 8
Council Tax - 11	Gambling - 6	Marine - 8	Environment & Transport - 8
Accounting & Finance - 14	Licensing - 24	Public Health – 36 +?	Transport + 68
Planning – 70	Environmental Protection - 34	Children & Young People - 23	Mental Health - 16
Fire & Rescue auth. - 10	Biodiversity - 14	Education - 108	Medicines & Food - 11
Other - 28	Commons - 14	Looked After Children - 24	Adult Social Care - 36
Provision of services - 10	PROW - 12	Adoption - 17	Benefits - 28
Env & Product Safety - 31	Designated Landscapes (NPs & NLS/AONB) - 2	Child centres/early years - 11	Food Safety -31
Related to Trading Standards - 20	Animal welfare - 9	Safeguarding - 12	Crime & Disorder - 16
Registrars - 22	Young Offenders - 21	Coroners - 10	Borders & Immigration - 7

NOTE: Some functions sit with counties and unitary councils only

## Appendix 2: Local Authority Interviews

### [PAS Nature Recovery pre-meeting survey](#)

#### **List of councils interviewed:**

Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Council  
Bedford Borough Council  
Bolsover District Council  
Broadland and South Norfolk District Council  
Dorset County Council  
Durham County Council  
East Devon District Council  
Essex County Council  
Gateshead Council  
Greater London Authority  
London Borough of Lambeth Council  
London Borough of Wandsworth Council  
North Lincolnshire District Council  
Northumberland National Park Authority  
North Yorkshire Council (questionnaire response not full interview)  
North York Moors National Park Authority  
Redcar and Cleveland Council Borough Council  
Rochdale Borough Council  
Salford City Council  
South Downs National Park Authority  
Westmorland and Furness Council