

Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Executive summary

**Together, we can recover
nature in Suffolk**



Purpose and context

This Executive Summary gives an overview of Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The strategy sets out how we can bring back more wildlife, improve our natural places, and help people and nature thrive together. The full strategy is a detailed plan for the suggested opportunities and potential for nature recovery in Suffolk. This summary is not a replacement for that. Instead, it provides a short and simple guide, highlighting the main priorities, benefits, and ambitions, and signposting to further detail, maps, and evidence in the full document.

Why a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

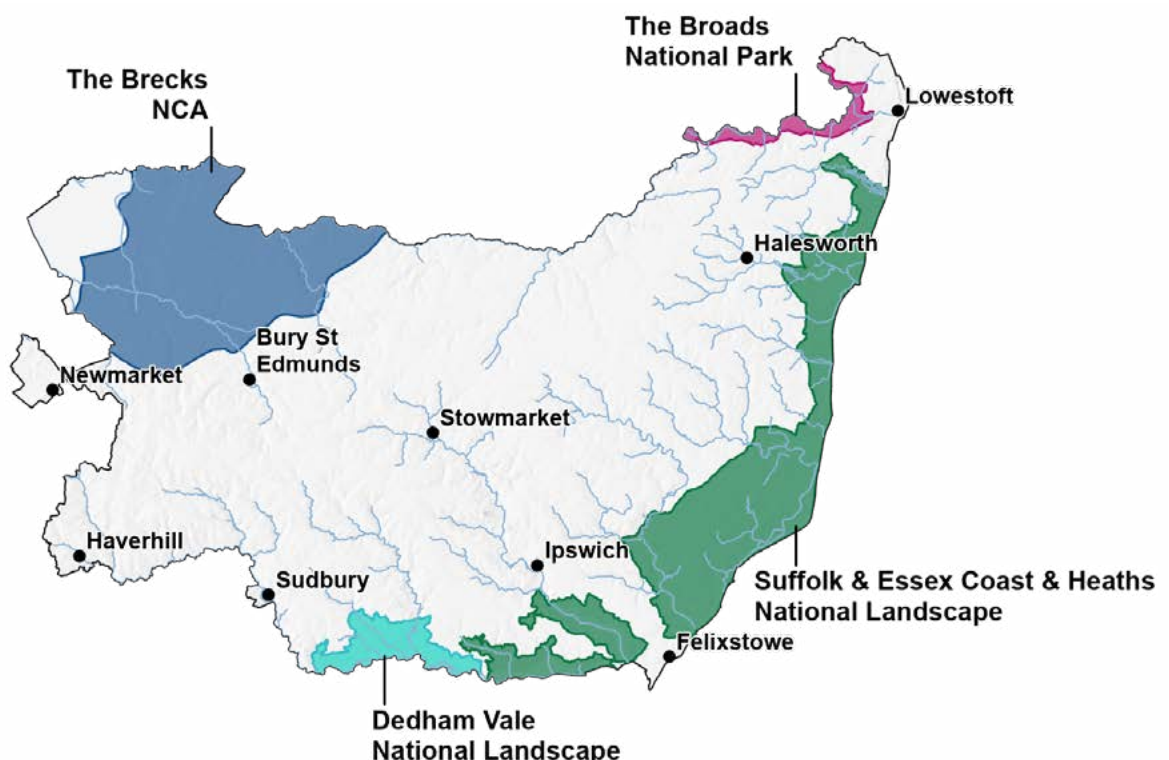
Suffolk is home to some of the UK's most special landscapes, from the estuaries of the dynamic coastline to the wetlands of

the Broads, to the Brecks and heathlands, and across our rivers, fens, woodlands and farmland. These places provide homes for wildlife, clean water and air, fertile soils, natural protection against floods, and spaces for people to relax and recharge.

But nature in Suffolk is under pressure. Like much of the UK, habitats and species have been lost or fragmented over time. Wildlife is less abundant, and natural systems are less resilient to climate change, pollution, and development. This means they are less able to give us the benefits we rely on every day.

The vision for Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy is simple: a county where nature is thriving, well connected, and resilient — supporting healthy communities, a sustainable economy, and a better future for all.

Overview of Suffolk's LNRS area



Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new approach to restoring and protecting nature and this document is part of a national push to give nature more room to grow. It is part of a national programme created by the Environment Act 2021, which requires every county in England to agree a plan for nature recovery. Suffolk's LNRS has been shaped using the best available evidence, maps, and expert advice, alongside thousands of contributions from local people.

The strategy shows:



Where action is needed most, through countywide habitat and opportunity maps.



What matters most, through priorities for habitats, species, and focus areas.



How progress will be measured, through agreed targets and actions.

The LNRS is not a barrier to development or land use change. It does not place new restrictions on landowners. Instead, it provides a shared guide and evidence base that communities, farmers, councils, developers, and businesses can all use to guide funding, inform planning, and focus action for nature.

Delivering this vision cannot be done by one organisation alone. It will take the combined efforts of farmers and landowners, communities, businesses, charities, councils and public bodies. Everyone has a part to play in helping Suffolk's nature recover.



The LNRS is:

- A shared vision and plan for restoring nature in Suffolk.
- A mapping tool showing where action will achieve the greatest benefits.
- A guide for investment, planning, land management, and community projects.
- A framework for collective action across all sectors.
- A guide for the implementation of environmental priorities and funding like Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), by targeting where habitat creation will be of 'high strategic significance'. A 15% uplift in the biodiversity metric (using the strategic significance multiplier) will be applied if the measures and actions set out in the strategy are followed.



The LNRS is not:

- A new designation or set of legal restrictions.
- Prescriptive for landowners; all participation is voluntary.
- A block on development; instead, it informs good planning.
- A fixed list of sites; action is encouraged both within and outside mapped areas.

Why nature matters for Suffolk

Nature is at the heart of Suffolk's identity. From internationally important wetlands and coastline to heathlands, woodlands, and farmland, the county holds some of the most distinctive natural environments in the UK. These places are vital both for the wildlife they support and for the many benefits they bring to people.

For people and communities



Nature provides clean water, fresh air, and fertile soils. It keeps homes and communities safer by storing floodwater and reducing coastal erosion. Access to green and blue spaces is also vital for health and wellbeing. Time outdoors supports both physical and mental health, helping people feel connected, active, and resilient.

For the economy



Suffolk's natural environment underpins farming, which covers the majority of the county, providing food and livelihoods. Our landscapes and wildlife also attract millions of visitors each year, supporting tourism, jobs, and local businesses. A thriving natural environment is essential for a thriving economy.

For climate



Suffolk's nature helps us to adapt to and tackle climate change. Peatlands, woodlands, wetlands, and coastal habitats store carbon, reduce flood risk, and help keep water and soils healthy. Restoring and protecting these habitats will make Suffolk more resilient in the face of changing weather patterns and rising sea levels.

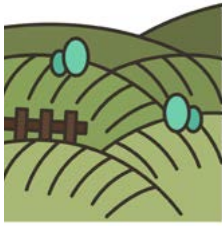
For wildlife itself



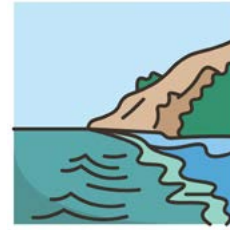
Suffolk is home to species and habitats that are unique, rare, and irreplaceable. From the Suffolk lungwort to the fen raft spider and hazel dormouse, and within the ancient woodlands, fens, hedgerows and coastal saltmarshes, these plants and animals have value in their own right. They are part of our shared natural heritage, and each plays a role in the web of life that keeps ecosystems functioning. Protecting and restoring wildlife is not only about what it gives us, but about safeguarding the right of nature itself to flourish.

10 main aims and ambitions

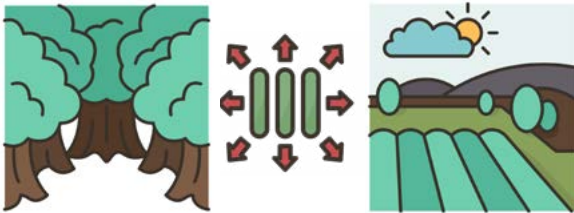
1. Create, enhance and expand priority habitats



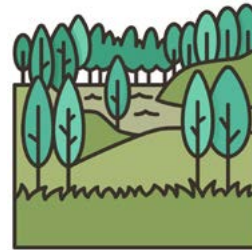
6. Safeguard and enhance coastal habitats



2. Reconnect fragmented landscapes



7. Expand woodland and tree cover



3. Recover and protect key species



8. Integrate nature into towns and cities



4. Support sustainable farming and land management



9. Empower communities and landowners



5. Restore wetlands, rivers, and peatlands



10. Deliver co-benefits for climate, health, and the economy



Nature in Suffolk: Where are we now?

Suffolk's LNRS is built on mapped evidence and expert input. It shows where areas across the county are recognised for their importance to biodiversity, and where proposed actions and measures could make the biggest difference.

Priority habitats to enhance, expand and create

The strategy identifies the following habitats as priorities for creation, restoration, and expansion.

Woodlands and trees



Mixed deciduous (including ancient woodland), wet woodland, wood-pasture and parkland, scrub, traditional orchards.

Habitats in farmed landscapes



Hedgerows, field margins, and features that improve connectivity.

Urban, built and garden environments



Gardens, verges, green corridors, churchyards, open mosaic habitats.

Heathland and grassland



Acid, neutral and calcareous grasslands, Brecks grass heath, wet grassland, open mosaic on previously developed land.

Wetlands and freshwater



Rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, fens, reedbeds.

Coastal and estuarine



Saltmarsh, intertidal mudflats, sand dunes, vegetated shingle, maritime cliffs and slopes, saline lagoons.

Key species

The LNRS identifies 21 key species for Suffolk, each with a profile of habitats and recovery measures:



**Bark-sulphur
firedot**



**Basil-thyme case-
bearer**



**Crested cow-
wheat**



Dwarf Eelgrass



Eurasian curlew



European eel



Fen raft spider



Hazel dormouse



Kittiwake



Lapwing



**Little whirlpool
ramshorn snail**



**Narrow-mouthed
whorl snail**



**Orange-fruited
elm lichen**



**Rosser's sac-
spider**



Scarce vapourer



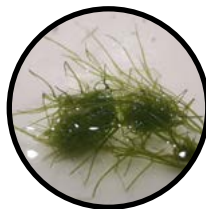
Serotine bat



**Starlet sea
anemone**



Suffolk lungwort



Tassel Stonewort



Water vole



**White-clawed
crayfish**

Key assemblage areas

The LNRS also identifies groups of species (assemblages) associated with a range of habitat areas. In Suffolk, these are:



Coastal Shingle and Dunes



Saltmarshes and Lagoons



Reedbeds and Freshwater Wetlands



Farmed Landscapes



Lowland Meadows and Pastures



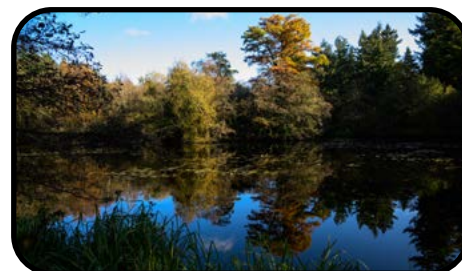
Native Woodland



Trees Outside of Woodland



Scrub and Mosaic



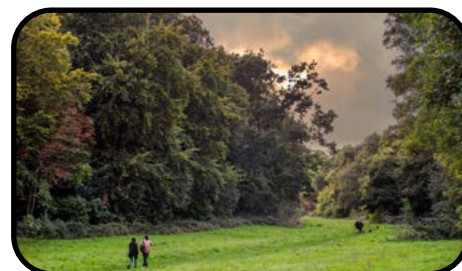
Still Waters



Rivers and Riverside Habitats



Lowland Fen



Chalk Grassland



Brecks Grass Heath



Acid Grassland and Heathland



Urban, Built and Garden Environments

Current pressures on nature

Nature in Suffolk faces familiar pressures that fragment habitats and reduce resilience:

- agricultural intensification and land-use change
- development
- pollution of air, water and soils
- over-abstraction of water
- climate change and coastal erosion
- invasive species and wildlife disease
- habitat fragmentation.

This approach gives Suffolk a clear and shared direction. It sets out where we need to get to: a future where nature is restored and thriving, supported by local innovation and community-led action. It also shows how local delivery will contribute to national goals — including the Environment Act targets for nature recovery, the Environmental Improvement Plan, Wider Environmental Benefits (WEBs), Nature Enhancement Objectives (NEOs), and the non-statutory targets for our Protected Landscapes. The full detail of these targets can be found in the **Suffolk LNRS Appendix 3**.

How the LNRS will help

The strategy provides:



Maps showing where action could deliver the biggest gains for nature and people.



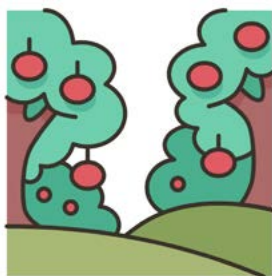
Guidance on actions that are harder to map (such as urban greening).



An evidence base for councils, land managers, developers, communities, and funders to make decisions that support nature recovery.

Where do we need to get to?

To achieve this, the strategy sets out agreed **priorities, targets, and mapped opportunities** that will guide action over the coming years. These are based on the Lawton principles of making nature “**bigger, better and more joined-up**”. In practice, this means:



Creating new areas of priority habitat.



Enhancing existing habitats to improve their condition.



Expanding habitats to reduce fragmentation and connect wildlife.

Our priorities

Through evidence, mapping, and public input, Suffolk’s LNRS identifies:

Priority habitats: including woodlands, heathlands, grasslands, wetlands, rivers, coastal and estuarine habitats, and urban greenspaces.



Key species: 21 species of national or local importance, from fen raft spider and Suffolk lungwort to Eurasian curlew, European eel, and water vole.



Assemblage areas: groups of habitats where targeted action will benefit many species and deliver wider environmental gains.



Where is best for nature in Suffolk?

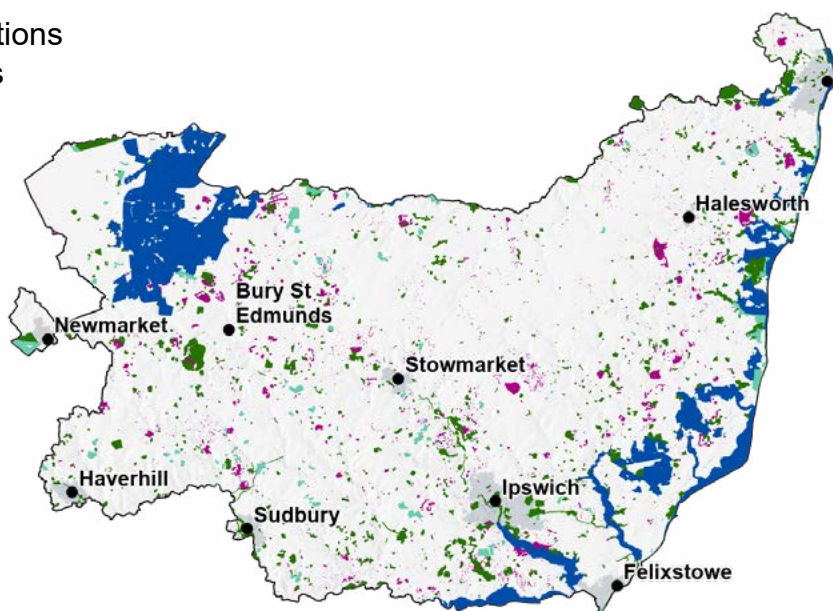
The LNRS highlights the places where action can bring the greatest benefits. Mapping identifies both Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB), such as nature reserves and designated sites, and Areas that Could Become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACB), where restoring or connecting habitats would strengthen Suffolk's ecological network.

Together, these maps show that around 29% of Suffolk's land area has particular potential for recovery. This includes both large landscapes, such as the Brecks and the Broads, and smaller but equally valuable places, such as river valleys, roadside verges and churchyards, which act as stepping stones for wildlife.

Explore the maps at:
www.nsnrp.org/publications

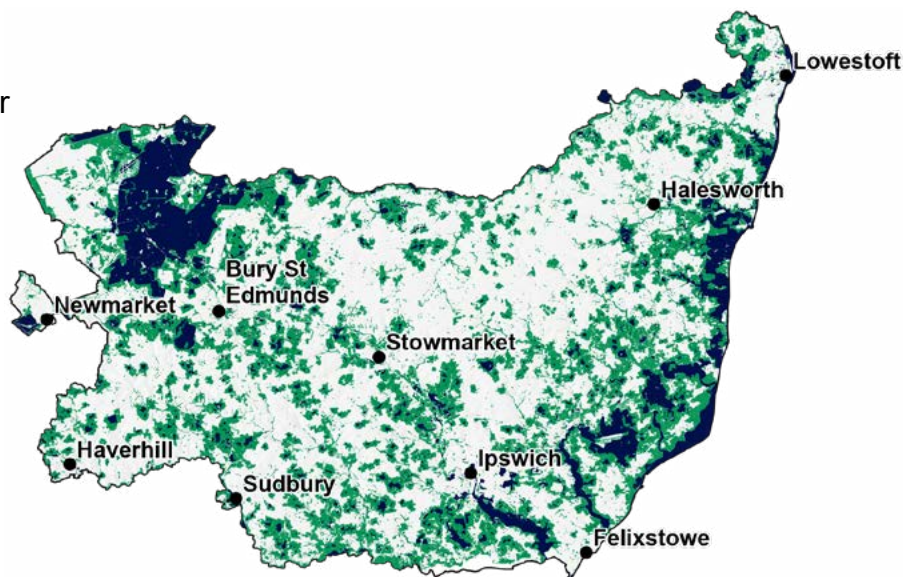
Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)

- International Designations
- National Designations
- Local Designations
- Irreplaceable Habitat

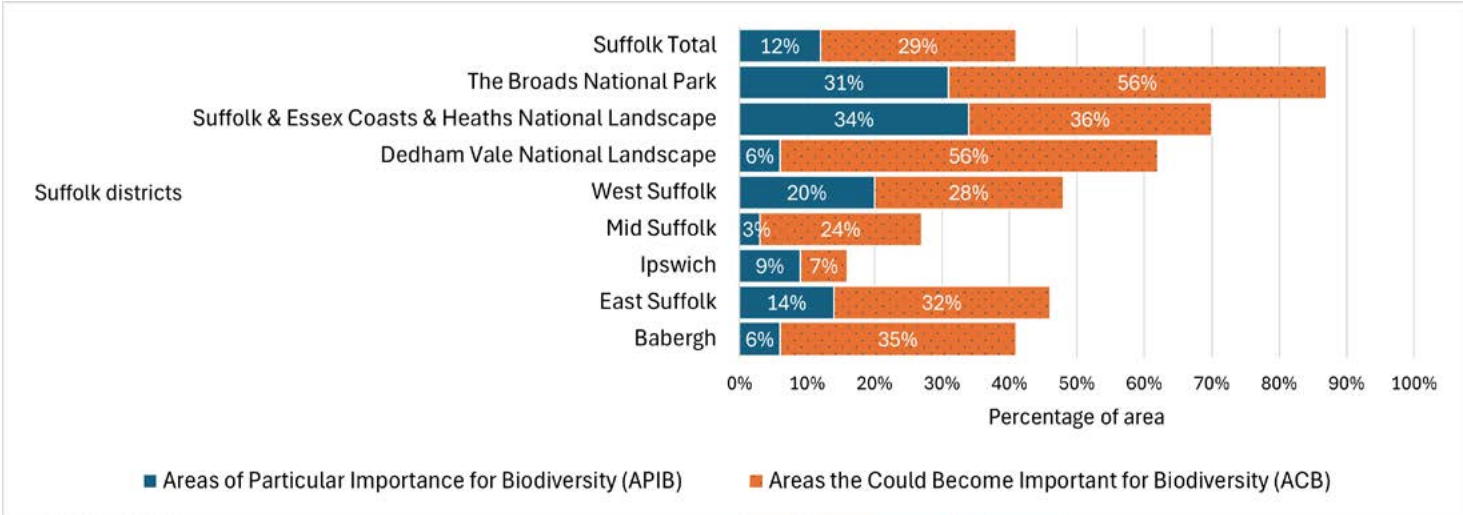


Areas that Could Become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACB)

- APIB
- Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity



Proportions of Suffolk districts and Protected Landscapes allocated to APIB and ACB



Analysis highlights that:

- West Suffolk has 20% of its land already of high biodiversity importance (APIB), with a further 28% identified as ACB.
- The Broads National Park is outstanding, with 31% APIB and a further 56% ACB.
- The Babergh and East Suffolk districts show some of the highest potential, with just over one third of their land identified as ACB.
- The Suffolk & Essex Coasts & Heaths and Dedham Vale National Landscapes also stand out, with an average of 20% APIB and 46% ACB.
- The Mid Suffolk district shows a high potential for change, with only 3% of area already identified as APIB, but the opportunity for 24% of the area to become important for biodiversity.

These mapped opportunities reflect the Lawton principles of creating more, bigger, better and more joined habitats. For Suffolk, this means:

- Expanding wetlands and fens to improve water quality and capture carbon.

- Restoring river corridors, including chalk streams, which are globally rare.
- Strengthening links between heathlands, grasslands and farmland in the Brecks.
- Enhancing woodlands and hedgerows so that wildlife can move more freely across the county.

While these priority areas highlight where evidence suggests the biggest gains are possible, nature recovery can happen anywhere, and anyone can contribute. From creating a garden pond or planting a wildflower strip to managing farmland more sustainably or restoring a wetland, every action helps build a healthier natural network.

The LNRS maps are therefore a guide, not a blueprint. They provide a shared evidence base to help land managers, communities, councils, developers and conservation groups focus effort where it will count most, while recognising that local knowledge and initiative are essential.

How the LNRS should be used

For everyone



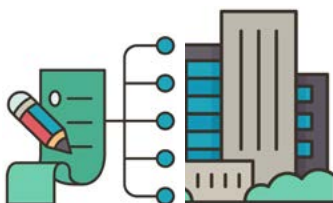
Inspiration and guidance on how nature recovery supports health, wellbeing, and access to green space.

For land managers



A spatial guide for Biodiversity Net Gain investment and use of agri-environmental schemes.

For planners and developers



Evidence for local plans and green infrastructure.

For businesses



A signal that Suffolk is open to green investment.

For communities



Evidence to support local projects and funding applications.

Using the measures and actions within the LNRS

The way in which the LNRS measures will be delivered will vary based on situation, location, funding opportunities and support available.

Many species and habitats are expected to be supported by actions across Suffolk to create a developing Nature Recovery Network. Before any planned nature recovery action, a sufficient site-specific review should be carried out to determine the suitability of nature recovery actions. This should include a range of advice such as:

- hydrological surveys
- reviews of the historic environment
- reviews of the Landscape Character Assessment
- climate change adaptation possibilities.

And consider consents from:

- the local planning authority
- relevant historic environment team
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Natural England.

This review should also consider any consents that may be required, for example from the local planning authority, relevant historic environment team, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission or Natural England.

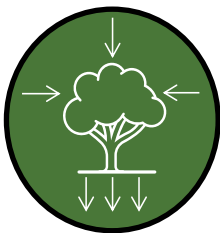
Any individual or organisation looking to use the LNRS is invited to contact the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership for support as required, by visiting www.nsnrp.org

10 wider environmental benefits

The LNRS identifies 10 wider environmental benefits that nature recovery can provide:



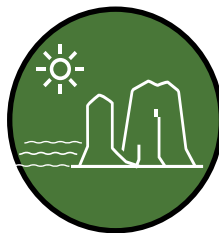
Air quality



Capturing carbon



Clean water source



Erosion prevention



Flood mitigation



Improving marine environment



Managing climate resilience



Nutrient cycling



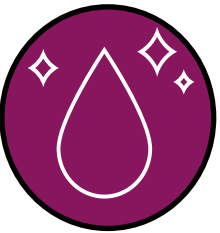
Pollination



Soil health

10 co-benefits

The LNRS identifies 10 wider environmental benefits that nature recovery can provide:



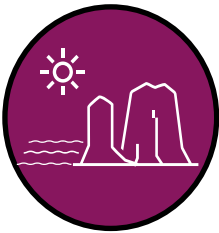
Clean water source



Cooling urban areas



Cultural, heritage and aesthetic services



Erosion prevention



Flood mitigation



Food provision



Pest and disease control



Physical and mental wellbeing



Pollination



Raw materials

Next steps

Suffolk's LNRS will guide local action, funding, and planning in the years ahead. Its success depends on everyone working together — individuals, communities, businesses, farmers, and public bodies. The Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership (NSNRP) will play a key role in bringing partners together, supporting collaboration, and monitoring progress.

The strategy will be reviewed as defined by Defra, to ensure it can reflect new evidence, opportunities, and challenges, and to monitor success across the region where appropriate.

By acting now, we can recover nature in Suffolk and build a healthier, more resilient county for future generations.

Suffolk County Council and the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership are very grateful for the generosity and insight of everyone who helped shape this Local Nature Recovery Strategy.





Suffolk County Council exists to represent and serve the people of Suffolk, linking to four ambitions. To look after our health and wellbeing, to strengthen our local economy, to protect and enhance our environment and to provide value for money for our residents.

For further details visit www.suffolk.gov.uk.