

## Local Nature Partnership Meeting Minutes 21/11/2025

**Present:** Claire Wilson, Tom Wild, Melissa Masarella, Nicky Rivers, Roy Mosley, Ruth Brearley, Jim Smith, Dan Brown, Andy Dalton, Sean Davey, Brian Tinnion,

**Apologies:** Anthony Downing, Erika Phoenix, Mike Winstanley, Alison Holt, Nick Selwood,

- **LNRS Progress and Mapping Update:** Claire, Melissa, Ruth and others provided a comprehensive update on the South Yorkshire LNRS, including progress on base mapping by Natural Capital Solutions, ongoing refinement of habitat data, mapping of measures and the scheduling of further meetings to finalise mapping and prepare for stakeholder consultation.
  - **Base Map Completion and Review:** Natural Capital Solutions have completed the LNRS base map, which has been posted on the online platform to allow members of the working and steering group to review and make comments. Claire and Melissa, among others, have reviewed the map and identified a few anomalies, particularly with baseline heathland habitats. Feedback has been provided to address these issues.
  - **Mapping Measures and Meeting Scheduling:** Following a recent meeting, it was agreed that Laurie would organise additional meetings beyond the regular biweekly sessions to accelerate progress before Christmas. These meetings aim to finalise mapping of the measures, with information and comments to be shared via SharePoint.
  - **Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation:** Plans were made to consult on the refined map with stakeholders in the New Year. The group intends to set up a system for collaborative commenting on the map to avoid duplication and ensure all data gaps are captured for future action.
  - **Timeline Adjustments and Delays:** Ruth noted that mapping, originally scheduled for completion by December, has been delayed, with Natural Capital Solutions now expecting to finish by the end of February. This delay affects pre-consultation with supporting authorities but is not expected to impact the public consultation timeline.
  - **Regional Mapping Context:** Tom raised the relevance of regional-scale mapping work done in Yorkshire and Humber, suggesting that understanding this broader context could inform South Yorkshire's approach. Ruth agreed to help Tom connect with Simon Pickles for further information on this regional work.
- **LNP and LNRS Delivery Group Merger Discussion:** Tom, Ruth, Nicky, Roy, Claire, and Melissa discussed the potential merger of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) with the LNRS delivery group, considering governance implications, the need for clear communication with the wider network, and learning from other regions' experiences.
  - **Governance and Terms of Reference:** Tom explained the historical bottom-up structure of the LNP and highlighted the importance of maintaining legitimacy and broad partner engagement if merging with the more formal

LNRS delivery group. He emphasised the need for conscious decision-making and transparent communication.

- **Experiences from Other Regions:** Ruth shared that in some areas, strong LNPs have become part of LNRS steering groups, while in others, the bodies remain separate but work closely together. She cited Manchester and Cheshire as examples of collaborative models and noted that West Yorkshire is still determining its approach.
- **Funding and Delivery Implications:** Ruth confirmed that funding will be available for LNRS delivery, though amounts are not yet known. The funding is intended to support setup and its allocation may influence the structure and engagement of delivery groups.
- **Communication and Stakeholder Engagement:** Nicky and Tom stressed the importance of communicating any structural changes to the wider LNP network, ensuring that all partners have opportunities to engage with any new or evolving group. The group agreed that decisions should be made at a higher level, such as the LNRS steering group.
- **Beaver Reintroduction and Mink Eradication Initiatives:** Roy, Nicky, Sean, Andy, and others provided updates on beaver reintroduction efforts across the Humber Basin and South Yorkshire, as well as the Water Life Recovery Trust's plans for mink eradication to support water vole recovery, highlighting collaboration needs and upcoming meetings.
  - **Beaver Reintroduction Progress:** Roy reported on a recent event covering beaver reintroduction across the Humber Basin, noting that five or six catchments have successfully passed the expression of interest stage with Natural England. South Yorkshire is slightly behind but has aspirations to join these efforts.
  - **Catchment Overlaps and Coordination:** Roy described discussions with a Derbyshire group regarding overlapping catchments, particularly where the Derwent and Rother intersect, and the need for meetings to resolve these overlaps and coordinate reintroduction plans.
  - **Upcoming Reports and Meetings:** Nicky shared that a report from the Beaver Trust consultants is expected by 12 December, with a follow-up online meeting planned for 17 December to discuss next steps. Sarah Newman is coordinating meeting arrangements.
  - **Mink Eradication for Water Vole Recovery:** Roy and Sean detailed the Water Life Recovery Trust's plans to begin mink eradication in the Don catchment, using GPS-enabled traps and requiring landowner cooperation. Sean is liaising with the Trust to identify trapping sites, particularly in Sheffield, and sharing water vole records to aid targeting.
  - **Partnerships and Funding:** Andy mentioned broader efforts to replicate East Anglia's success in Yorkshire, with potential for a north of England lottery bid. Nicky suggested the Don and Rother Catchment Partnership could convene a

special meeting to ensure coordination, and Sean confirmed Yorkshire Water's funding support for the initiative.

- **Strategic Projects Directory and Data Sharing Solutions:** Roy, Claire, Nicky, Tom, and Melissa discussed the development and sharing of a Strategic Projects Directory, exploring options for a centralised, accessible platform, and considering SharePoint and the Wildlife Trust website as potential solutions.
  - **Directory Draft and Input Needs:** Roy shared that an initial draft of the Strategic Projects Directory has been created, based on internal documents, but requires further input from others to be comprehensive.
  - **Central Repository Options:** The group discussed technical challenges in sharing the directory across different systems. Suggestions included using SharePoint, possibly linked to the LNRS, or revisiting the Wildlife Trust website's LNP page for document downloads.
  - **Access and Permissions:** Nicky noted that access to SharePoint may be restricted and require individual permissions, and that a separate folder might be needed for LNP members. Roy agreed to raise these questions with Laurie and explore the best solution.
- **Updates on Farmer Engagement and Funding Schemes:** Sean provided updates on farmer engagement actions, including the status of workshops and funding schemes, and Sean clarified the availability of the Beyond Nature scheme for Yorkshire Water tenant farmers.
  - **Workshop and Funding Updates:** Sean explained that Yorkshire Water does not have a general farming grant but offers the Beyond Nature scheme for tenant farmers and will connect Erika with relevant contacts.
- **Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) and LNRS Alignment:** Melissa discussed the ongoing development of the SDS by SYMCA and local authorities, suggesting that LNRS delivery should be incorporated into the SDS due to overlapping priorities and landscape coverage.
  - **SDS Scope and Integration:** Melissa relayed that planning colleagues are working on the SDS, and she has recommended that LNRS delivery be included within its scope, given the shared priorities of economic development, infrastructure, and landscape coverage.
  - **Steering Group Engagement:** The group agreed that the SDS and LNRS alignment should be raised with the LNRS steering group, with the next meeting scheduled for 13 January. Melissa and Nicky discussed the importance of ensuring delivery and monitoring are considered in the SDS.
- **Other Business: Yorkshire Nature Blueprint Workshops:** Andy informed the group about the upcoming launch of the 'Bringing Back Yorkshire's Nature' blueprint and associated workshops, inviting participants to attend and contact Mike for further information.
  - **Blueprint Launch and Workshops:** Andy announced the launch of the new blueprint, which builds on previous work and will inform future priorities and

measures. Workshops are scheduled, and participants were encouraged to look out for invites or contact Mike for details.

- **Chairing Arrangements and Meeting Administration:** Claire, Tom, Roy, and others discussed future chairing arrangements for the group, proposing a rotating chair system with shorter terms to distribute responsibilities, and agreed on practical steps for meeting scheduling and minute-taking.
  - **Rotating Chair Proposal:** Claire suggested moving to a six-month or single-meeting rotating chair system to reduce the burden on any one individual. Tom and Roy expressed willingness to take turns, with Tom proposing to chair the next two meetings and Roy to follow.
  - **Support for Administration:** Claire offered to continue handling meeting setup and minute-taking using Co-pilot, ensuring continuity and reducing pressure on rotating chairs. The group agreed to plan chairing duties in advance for better organisation.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Strategic Projects Directory Platform:** Ask Laurie whether the Strategic Projects Directory can be hosted on the LNRS SharePoint system for LNP access. (Roy)
- **Farmer Support and Funding Contacts:** Put Erika in touch with the Beyond Nature scheme contact and follow up regarding wider farm incentive funding options. (Sean)
- **Planning for Nature Project Contacts:** Find a Natural England contact for the Planning for Nature Project or ask Liam to provide one. (Ruth)
- **LNRS Delivery Group Merger Discussion:** Add the discussion about a potential merger between the LNP and LNRS delivery group as an agenda item for a future meeting (Tom)
- **LNRS Regional Mapping Context:** Liaise with Simon Pickles to obtain background information on the Yorkshire and Humber regional agile mapping work and its commissioning. (Tom)