

Attendees:

Cathy Slater	Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Cassa Townsend	Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Peter Hague	Social Prescribing Link Worker - Barnsley Healthcare Federation
Chloe Smith	Canal & Rivers Trust (CRT) Yorkshire & NE
Helen Todd	Forest Bathing Practitioner & Facilitator
Alice Jones	Green Estate - Head of Green Communities
Diane Cairns	Manor Castle Development Trust (MCDT)
Helen Taylor	SOAR

Main topic: South Yorkshire's Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Relevant links:

[South Yorkshire combined Mayoral Authority's website on the LNRS](#)

[Help us to get more responses](#)

[Complete a survey](#)

[LNRS consultation slides](#)

Cathy presented slides around the current consultation on the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery strategy. There is time to have your say via the SYMCA website (links above) and if you are able to spread these links and the messages contained in the slides to any of the groups that you work with (by July 31st) that would be great. If you'd like a further conversation about how you could do this, or some tips on how to engage people with the strategy, please send an email to Cathy and Cassa on greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com

Discussion points included the following:

Diane, MCDT:

- To reach S2 communities in Sheffield we need to use simple language, some people don't know what "habitat" means. People feel under pressure when they don't understand the language. People are interested, but how do you translate the 'strategy language' into the things that people feel are important to them?
- Paper surveys with freepost envelopes can be helpful when working with groups
- S2 has some great success stories - Manor Fields Park and Green Estate - but these take many years to achieve their success, and cost is a major factor.

- Unadopted pieces of land could be opportunities to support nature - some smaller areas were developed at one time, with funding and effort but are now neglected and full of litter, local people are trying to help with litter clearing etc but don't always have the resources and tools to do more.
- Many people don't feel confident to have their say and speak to the Council or Councillors about local issues. We have to shout to be heard and are often ignored and nothing happens.

Chloe Smith, CRT:

- Have looked at the Strategy, and considering what resources are needed to make these things a reality - what is realistic to achieve and progress with. Keeping the canals open is the basic priority of CRT working with local communities and volunteers.
- Are there opportunities to tap into places we currently don't work in eg businesses adjacent to the waterways and nature spots, educating them and supporting them to reduce any environmental damage - how can we work together to limit impact?
- There is a thirst and interest from schools in nature education sessions and rewilding - lots of requests for CRT sessions.
- Lots of people enjoy nature in their own time and when out walking etcx - can we create more "self-guides" where people can learn about what they can do when they are enjoying nature independently eg spotting and reporting invasive species, wildlife surveys
- Ideally if dreaming big, CRT would have its own Ecologist dedicated to making the LNRS goals happen as there is so much that could be more achieved with a higher level of resource.

Alice Jones, Green Estate:

- Important for the voices to be heard, of those that wouldn't normally input to this sort of strategy.
- Resources need to go into partnerships that already exist rather than setting up new bodies.
- Go with areas that can already run with it and have some activity happening already
- Work with areas that have greenspace but that doesn't get as much attention as other areas eg Skye Edge (where people live that aren't readily accessing the Peak District for example)
- GE are keen to look at "urban resilience" in Manor Castle ward (and will be putting a team response into the consultation) and how we can showcase the "LNRS in action" at a ward level.

Peter Hague, Link Worker:

- Work with small groups locally, work to engage more excluded people.
- Establish more local groups doing this work

- Small budgets can achieve a lot - not everything is expensive

Chloe added her previous experiences of social prescribing:

- Biggest barriers are travel and time - these things stop people from going to places and joining in so do things at a hyper local level - so people can walk to it, or even better see it from home - or hold activities in a place they are going to anyway.
- Pride in place is important - most CRT volunteers are very local to the areas that they volunteer, as it is places that are important and they love, and want to care for. This is what motivates people.

Diane: being creative about talking to people - find out what makes people tick.

- Some people don't have the family background or life experience to appreciate nature and the environment but we can try to create those experiences for people.
- Sometimes need to start with the basics - getting the bins emptied and having basic facilities, many people have disabilities and won't go to an area if it doesn't have eg toilets, or a bench.

Helen Todd added that sometimes people need help to slow down and appreciate nature

Additional feedback comments in the chat, relating to the LNRS consultation:

On organisational level local councils could do more with things like roadside wildflower wildlife corridors, rewilding/nature developing neglected areas. When looking at planning incorporate putting things back for nature. I see lots of large new build estates in Barnsley at loss of green space with nothing being put back.

Feeling more connected with the nature around them - peer connections could help with this.

The direct ask to do their little bit no matter how small

Helping people feel more confident and better communication/signage so people know what is out there

Understanding what simple things they can do in their local area, and what that action will contribute towards. For example ward specific guides, which helps identify invasive species, how to remove, how to spot wildlife or concerns about environmental issues, how to rewild gardens or create habitats

Community Health and Wellbeing Fund update

Partners in South Yorkshire are working to develop a new Community Health & Wellbeing Fund:

- To represent a significant shift in how local charities and community organisations are supported to play a central role in creating stronger, healthier and more resilient local communities.
- Strategic partners include South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and the four local authorities in South Yorkshire (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield)
- Partners working together to bring funds together into one joined-up, long-term fund that can provide steady, reliable, and sustainable funding to the VCSE sector.

The working group currently developing the fund are keen to hear from local VCSE leaders about how this fund could work in the best interests of the sector.

What level and time period of funding would be most helpful? What sort of costs might be needed for this to be most useful? How might impact be measured?

Opportunity to join focus group to be hosted by South Yorkshire Community Foundation/Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust; Monday 20th July 10.30am - 12.00pm - please email Cathy Slater on c.slater@wildsheffield.com if you would like to attend (hybrid - online option as well as in-person)

Topics for future meetings:

The next meeting is Thursday 17th September 2026 2-3.30pm and will be focussing on young people's connection to nature, suggestions of contributors welcome. The following have been suggested:

Grow Sheffield

Discovery Outdoors

The Allotments Partnership of North East Sheffield (Saskia Peet)

Please email greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com with any ideas or if you would like to talk about your work with young people.