



# Introduction to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland

Online Information Event

30 June 2023

# Housekeeping

- Recording
- Slides and recording will be sent out afterwards
- Q&A
- Polls
- Wide range of people attending





# Welcome and Introductions

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## **Speakers:**

### **James O'Brien**

Team Manager for Environment Policy & Strategy, Leicestershire County Council

Acting Chair of the LNRS Steering Group representing Leicestershire County Council as the 'responsible authority'

### **Owen Pugh**

Senior LNRS Advisor, Natural England

Natural England representative on LNRS Steering Group

### **Lucie Hoelmer**

Senior Environmental Partnership Officer, Leicestershire County Council

Leicestershire County Council representative on LNRS Steering Group



# What we intend to cover today

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- Why do we need to take action to recover nature? – James O’Brien
- What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy? – Owen Pugh
- What are the key points from the LNRS Regulations & Guidance? – James O’Brien
- What is happening locally on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy? – James O’Brien
- How can you get involved? – Lucie Hoelmer
- What do we need from you? – Lucie Hoelmer
- What is happening next? – James O’Brien

# How to contact us

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Email:

[llrlnrs@leics.gov.uk](mailto:llrlnrs@leics.gov.uk)

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Excuse me sir.....



Can we talk about biodiversity loss?

# Poll Time!

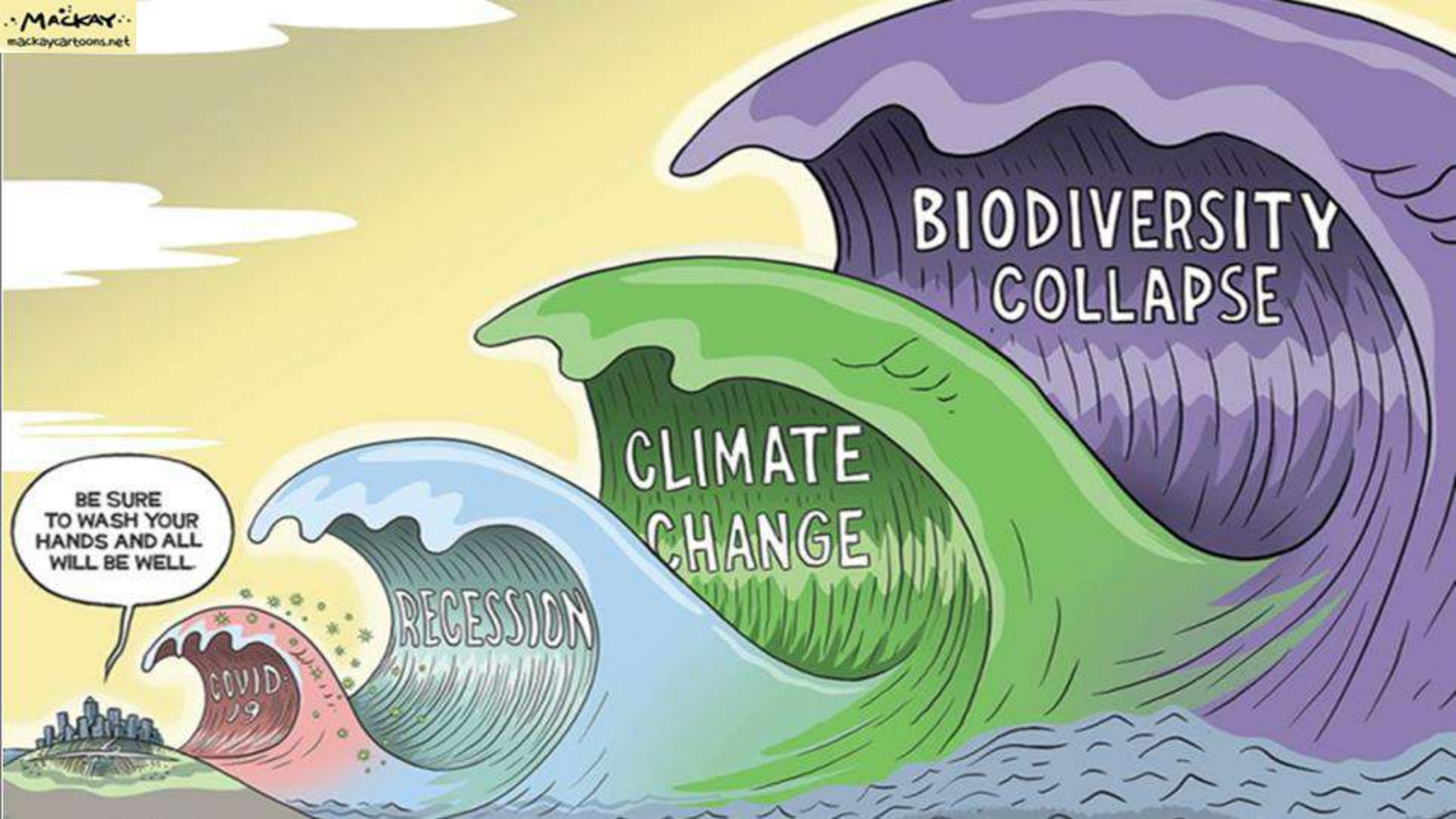
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James O'Brien

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# Why do we need to take action to recover nature?





BE SURE  
TO WASH YOUR  
HANDS AND ALL  
WILL BE WELL

COVID-  
19

RECESSION

CLIMATE  
CHANGE

BIODIVERSITY  
COLLAPSE



# **Why we need nature recovery?**

**Current life on Earth is the result of around four billion years of evolution. We live on the only planet known to have the perfect conditions for creating and sustaining life – not just human life, but that of all the diverse lifeforms making up the biosphere.**

**However, human caused biodiversity loss is causing devastating consequences for both non-human animals and humans.**

1 million species at risk of extinction



# We have halved the mass of the biosphere



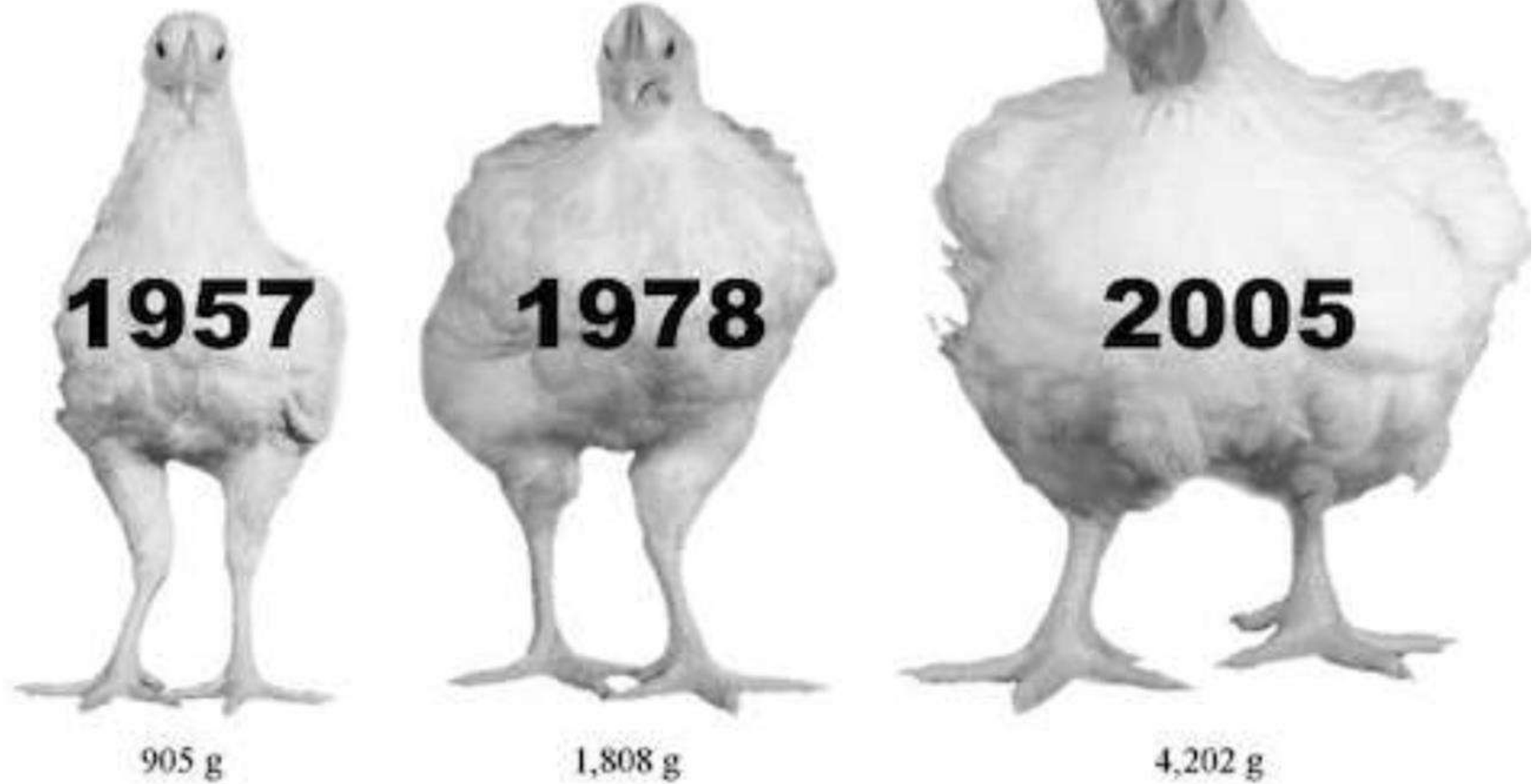
And concentrated mass in those things we like to eat

Humans and their  
domesticated animals  
are 96% of the  
terrestrial mammal  
biomass

(Smil 2002, 2011, Bar-On et al. 2018)

<https://www.britannica.com/animal/cow>

And we profoundly changed the organisms within ecosystems



## PRIMARY DRIVERS

### HABITAT LOSS

Thinning, fragmenting, or outright destruction of an ecosystem's plant, soil, hydrologic, and nutrient resources

### INVASIVE SPECIES

Any nonnative species that significantly modifies or disrupts the ecosystems it colonizes

### OVEREXPLOITATION

Process of harvesting too many aquatic or terrestrial animals, which depletes the stocks of some species while driving others to extinction

### POLLUTION

Addition of any substance or any form of energy to the environment at a rate faster than it can be rendered harmless

### CLIMATE CHANGE ASSOCIATED WITH GLOBAL WARMING

Modification of Earth's climate associated with rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the past one to two centuries

### INFLUENCERS

- Human population growth
- Increasing consumption
- Reduced resource efficiency

## BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Reduction in the number of genes, individual organisms, species, and ecosystems in a given area

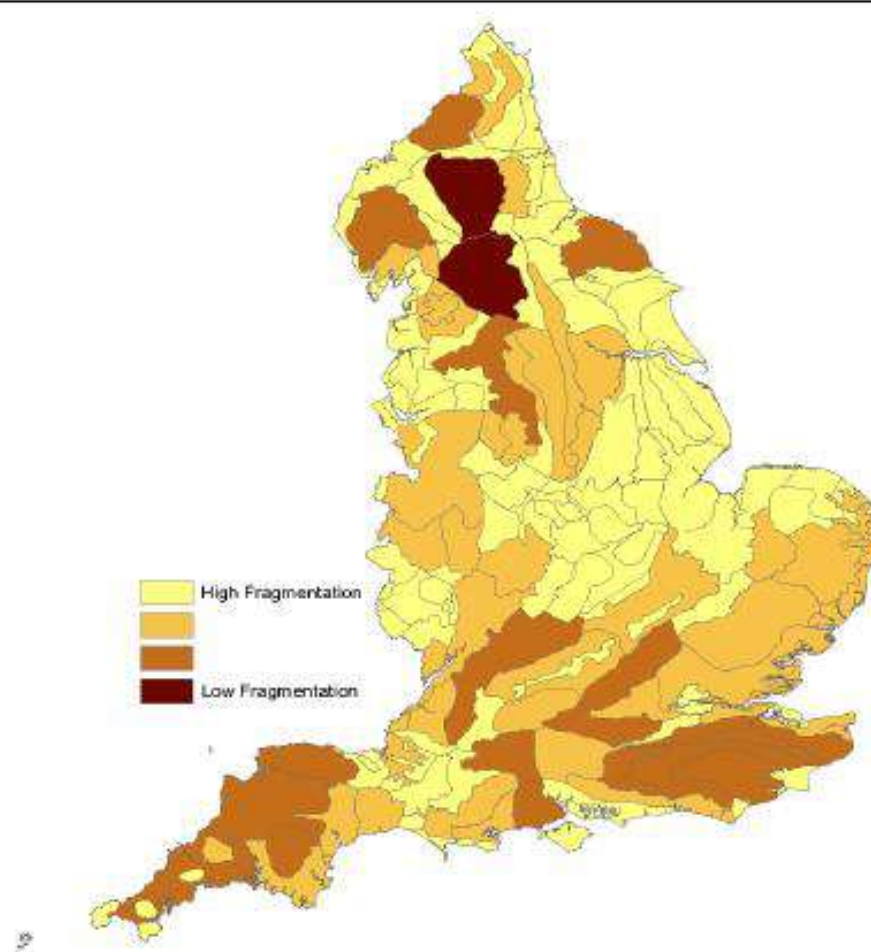
# Consequences of biodiversity Loss

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- **Accelerated extinction of species** – though some may increase
- **Increased disease transmission to humans** – Monkeypox, Ebola, Dengue fever, Covid-19
- **Decline in Ecosystem stability and services** – e.g. air quality, water purification, crop pollination, liveable habitats
- **Threat to food security and medicinal resources** e.g. – reduced food production, increased pests and diseases, increased food prices, loss of future medicines

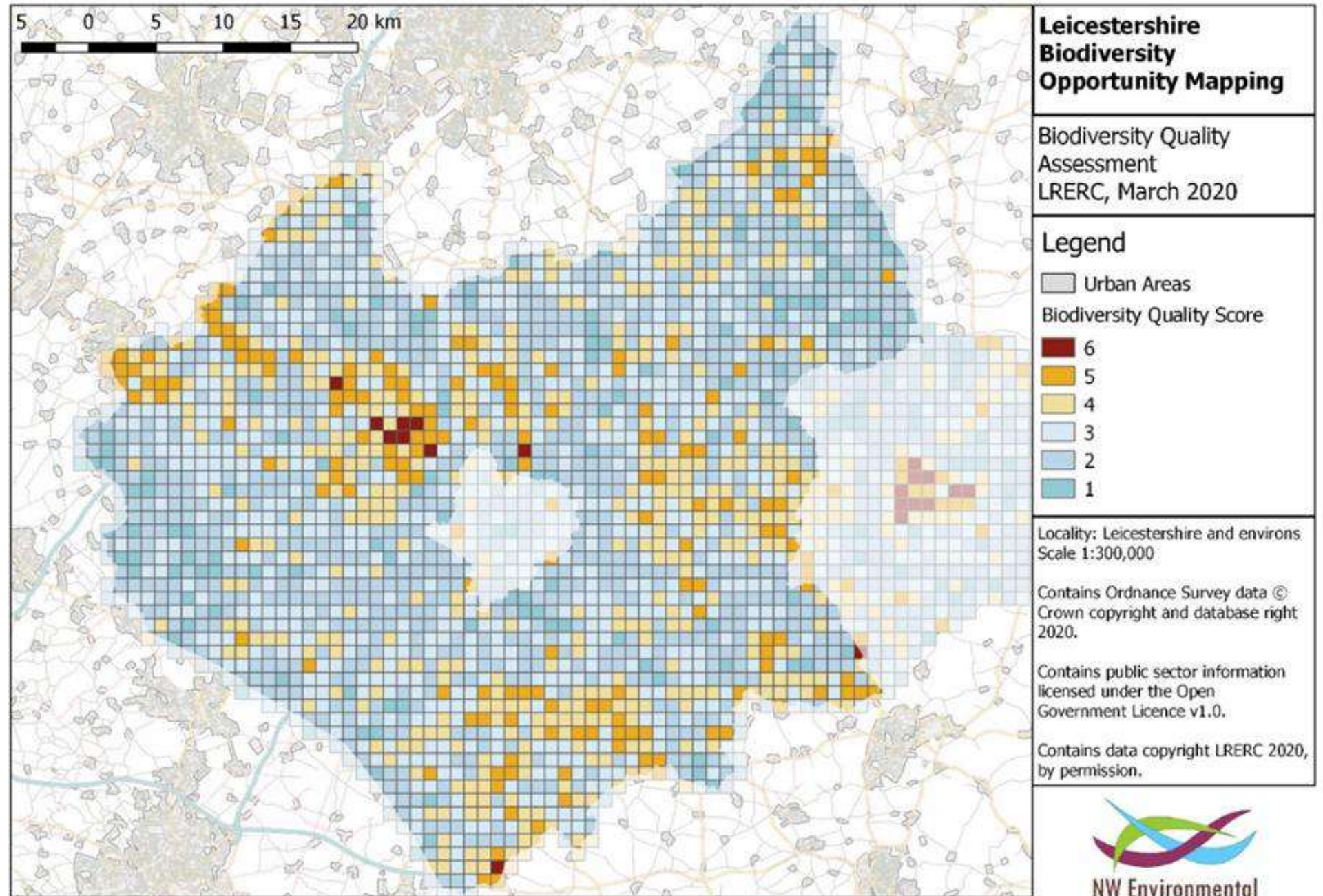
# Levels of habitat fragmentation

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**Figure 4. Levels of habitat fragmentation across National Character Areas.** This analysis takes account of habitat extent and permeability land between habitat patches to produce a ranking from areas where habitats are most fragmented (lighter) to less fragmented and more connected (darker). From a new analysis carried out by Dr. R. Catchpole, Natural England (see text for further details).

# LRERC Biodiversity Quality Score for Leicestershire



# **Biodiversity Decline in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland**

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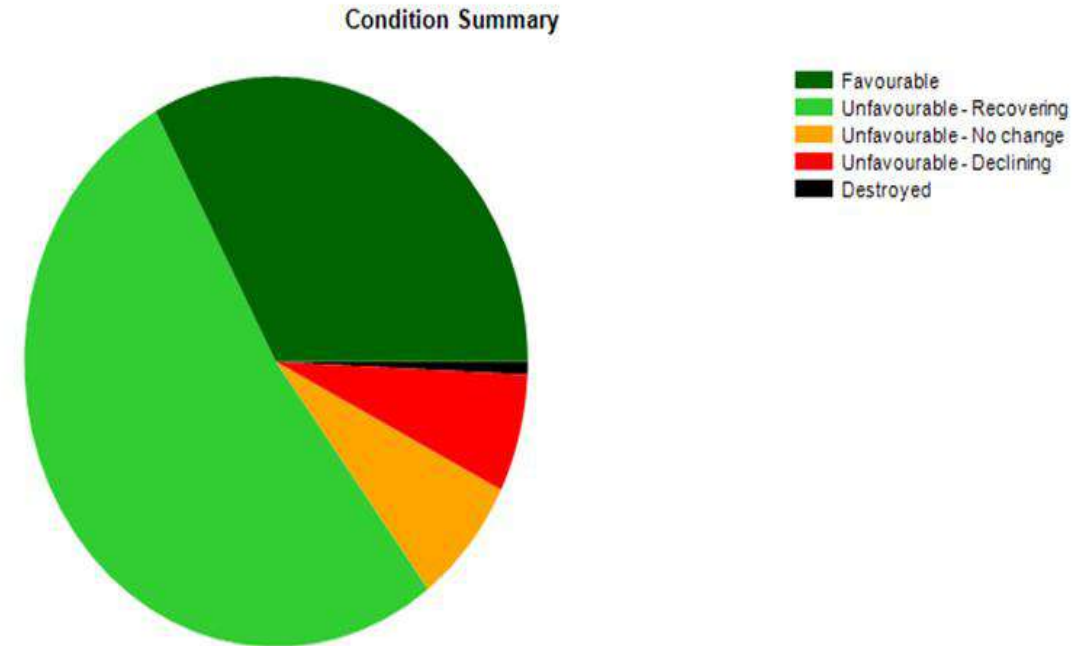
## **UK State of Nature Report 2019**

- 13% decline in average species' abundance
  - 5% decline in average species' distribution
  - 41% of species have decreased in abundance
  - 53% of species show strong changes
  - 15% of species are threatened
- 
- 16% decline in butterflies (1976-2016)
  - 25% decline in moths (1970-2016)
  - 26% decline in average mammal distribution (1970-2015)
  - 43% of birds threatened (at risk of extinction)

# Biodiversity Decline in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland

Natural England's 2019 assessment of 76 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) in Leicestershire showed that:

- 52.38% were in Unfavourable recovering condition
- 7.27% were in Unfavourable condition - no change
- 6.69% were in Unfavourable condition - declining



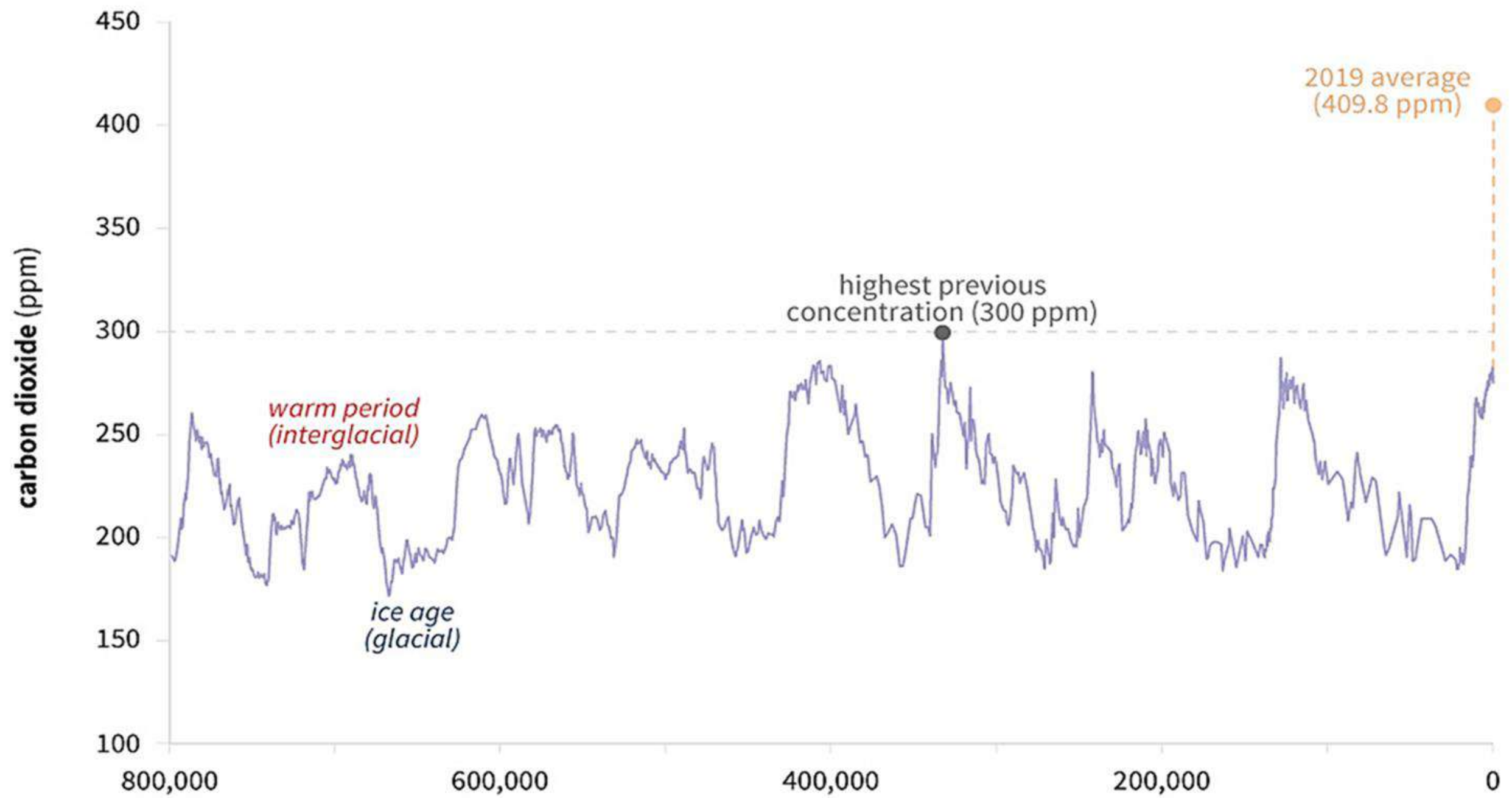
Source: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk> June 2019

# Biodiversity Decline in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland

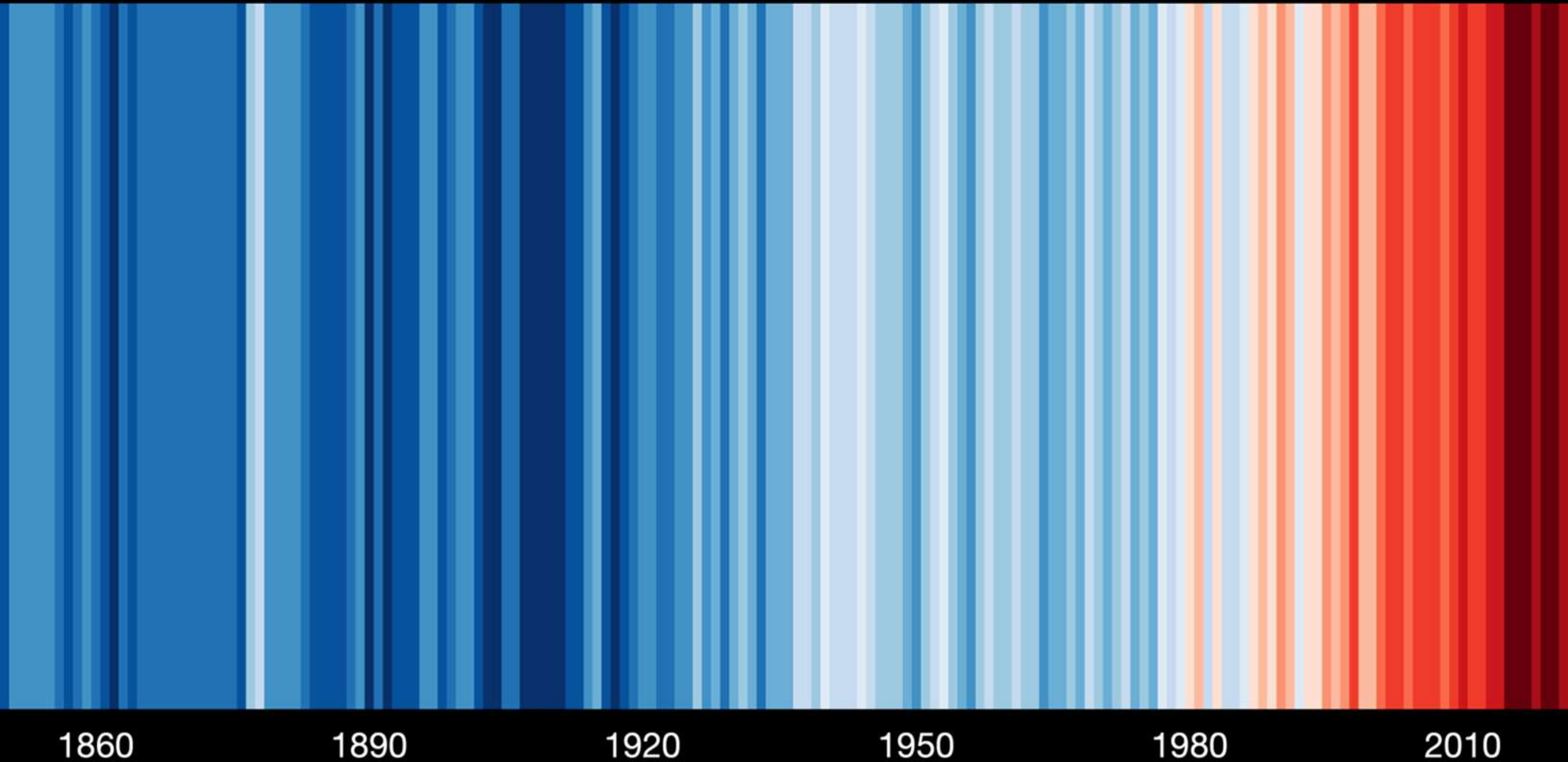
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- less than 200ha of calcareous grassland, of which 28ha is on SSSI and much of which is in decline and of poor quality
- less than 500ha of acid grassland, heath grassland or heath, of which 34ha is on SSSI
- 0.3 ha of wet heath
- c.500ha of species-rich neutral grassland of national UKBAP priority habitat quality (407ha on SSSI)
- Tree cover in Leicestershire is less than 6% compared with 13% in UK overall (Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026)
- ~82% of land across the area is managed for agriculture

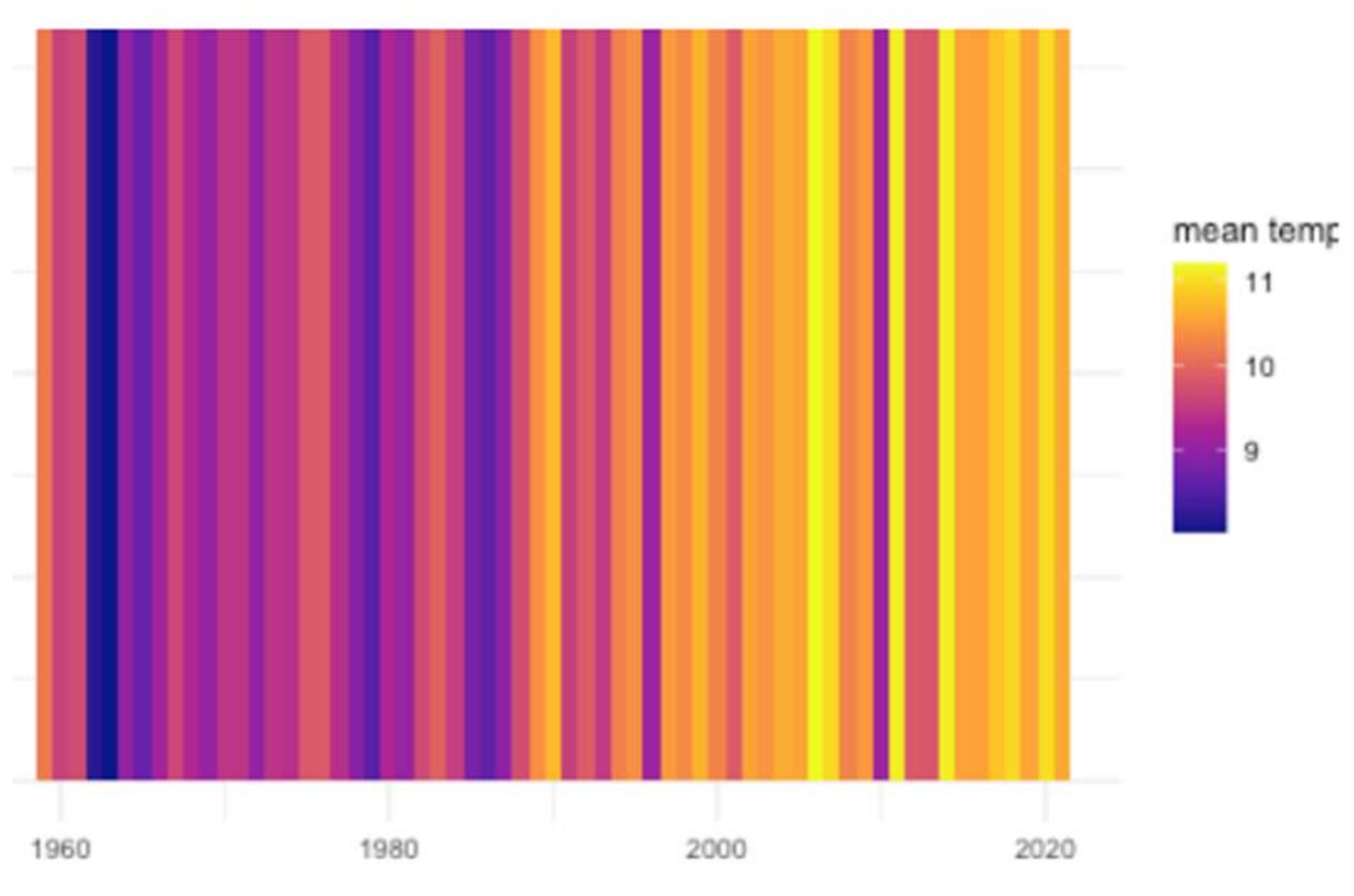
# CARBON DIOXIDE OVER 800,000 YEARS



# Global temperature change (1850-2021)



# Average annual temperature trend for Leicestershire



**Increase of +1.8°C in average annual temperature in Leicestershire since 1960**

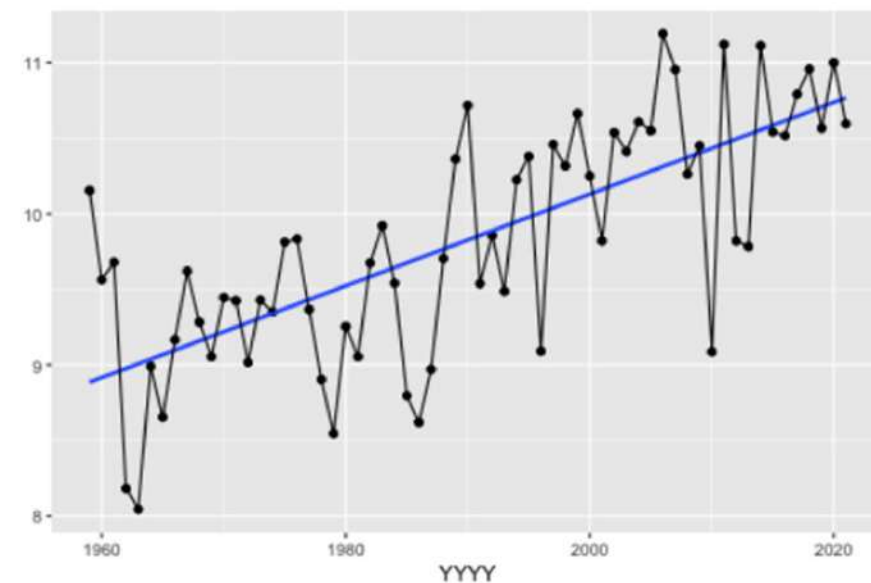


Figure 8: Average annual temperature trend °C







Leicestershire Oct 2019

PA MEDIA

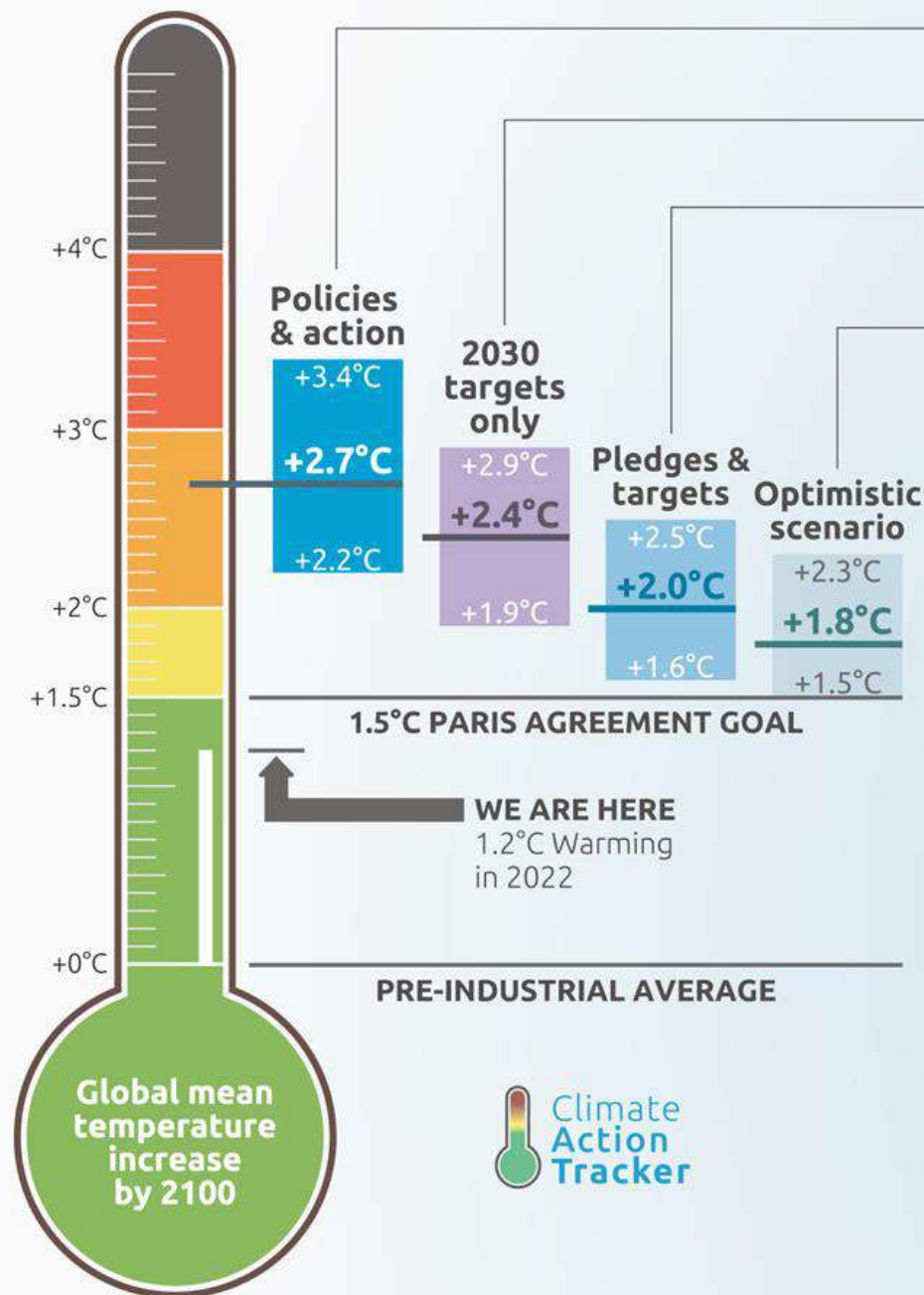


Tinsel Lane, Sheepy, was one of a number of roads affected by the heatwave during the summer



Bradgate Park, April 2017

MARC ROSE



## Policies & action

Real world action based on current policies †

## 2030 targets only

Based on 2030 NDC targets\* †

## Pledges & targets

Based on 2030 NDC targets\* and submitted and binding long-term targets

## Optimistic scenario

Best case scenario and assumes full implementation of all **announced** targets including net zero targets, LTSs and NDCs\*

† Temperatures continue to rise after 2100

\* If 2030 NDC targets are weaker than projected emissions levels under policies & action, we use levels from policy & action

# CAT warming projections Global temperature increase by 2100

November 2022 Update





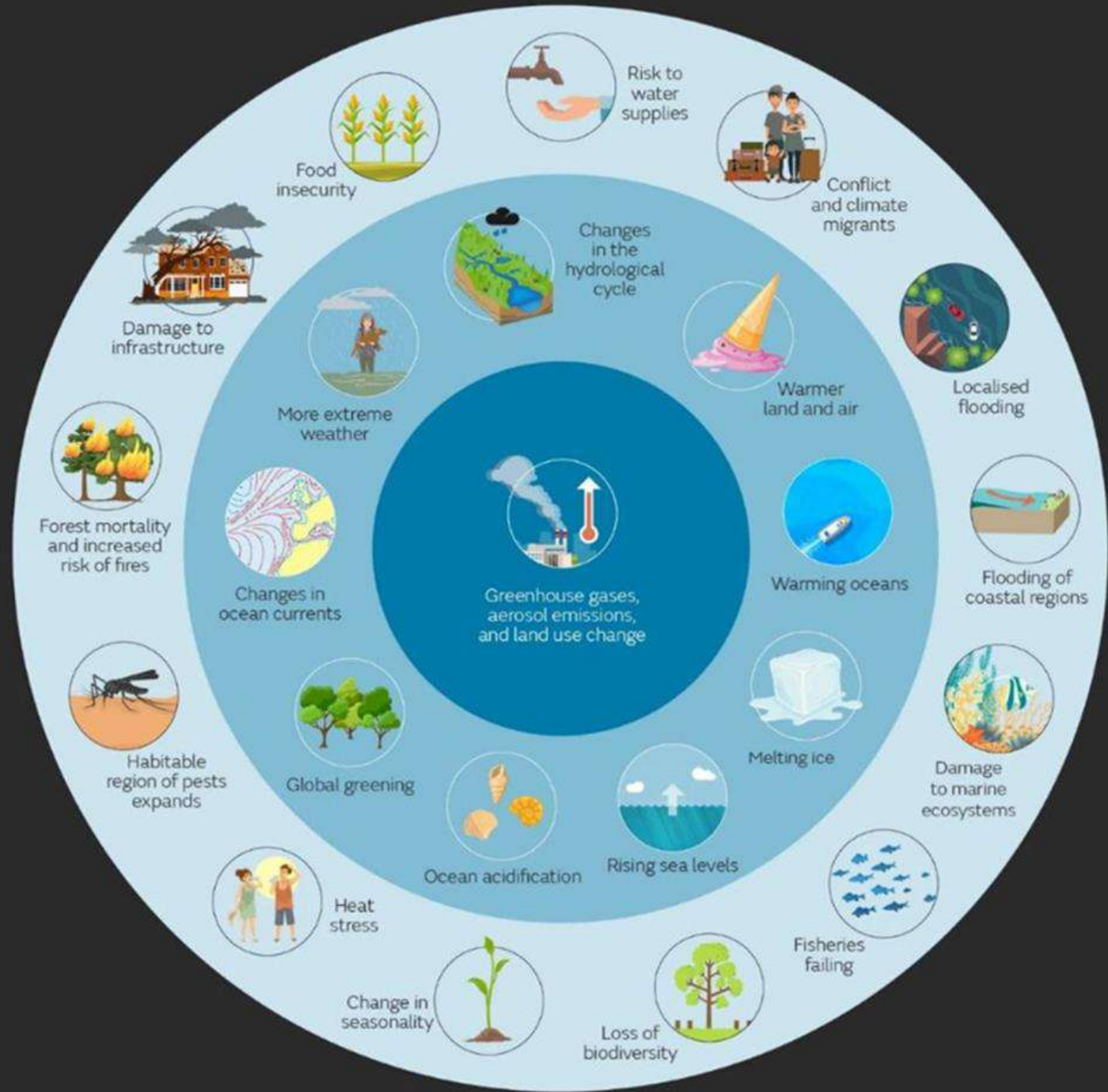
Drivers of  
climate change



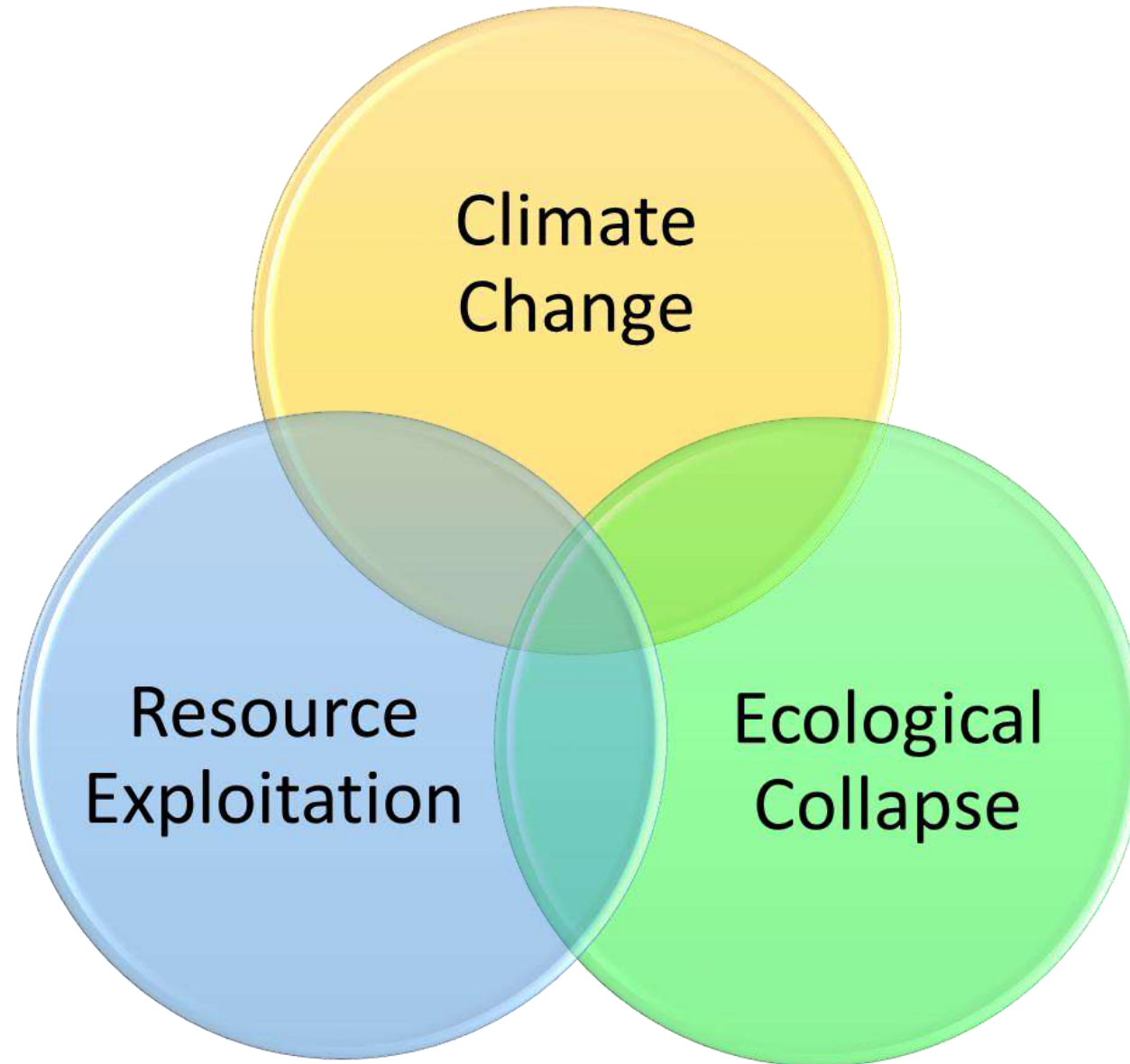
Changes to the  
climate system



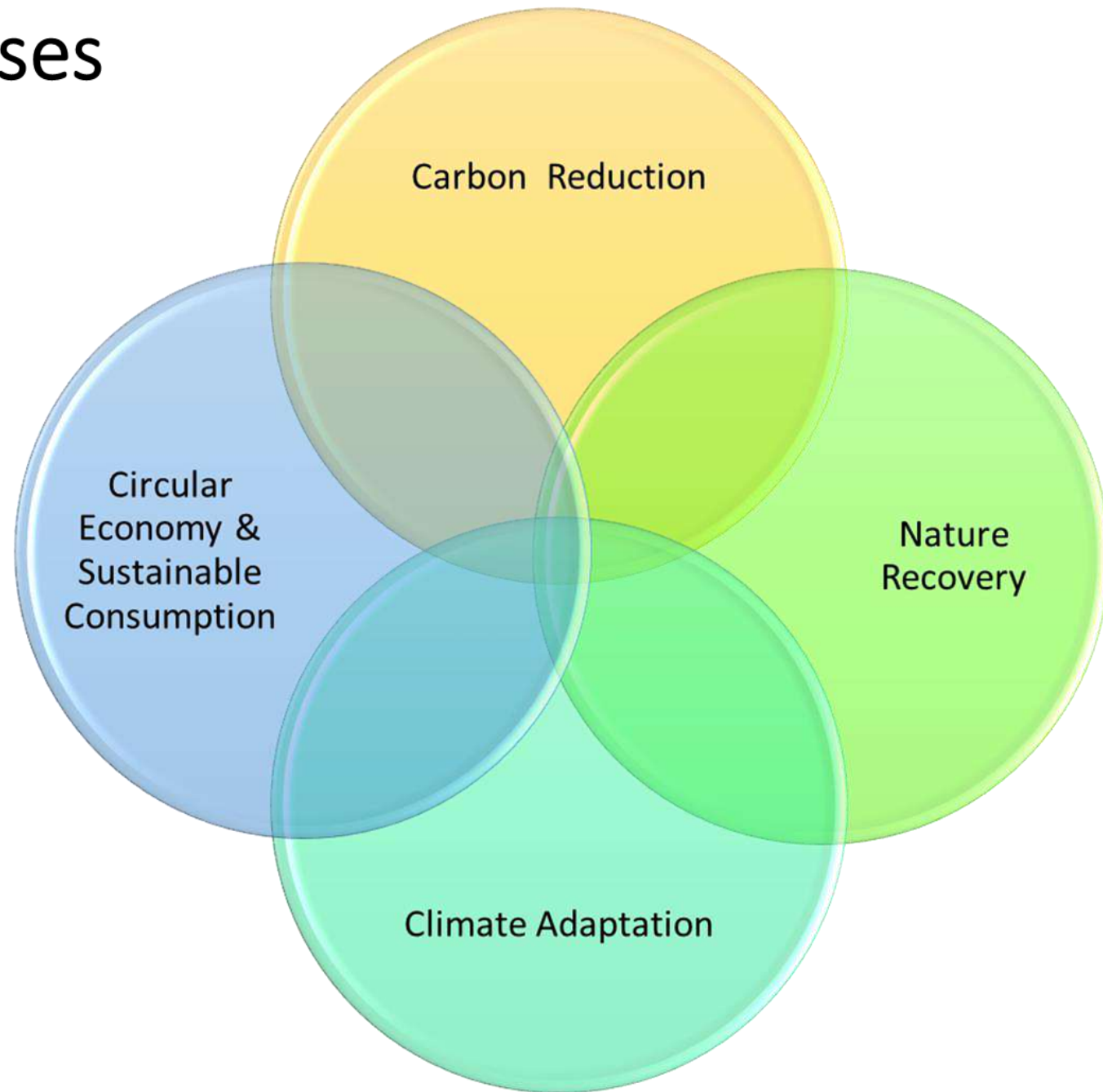
Impacts



# Interconnected Crises Model



# Interconnected Crises Solutions Model

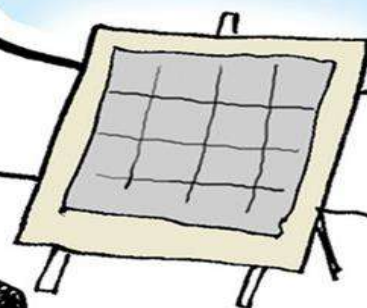




# CLIMATE SUMMIT

WHAT IF IT'S  
A BIG HOAX AND  
WE CREATE A BETTER  
WORLD FOR NOTHING?

- ENERGY INDEPENDENCE
- PRESERVE RAINFORESTS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- GREEN JOBS
- LIVABLE CITIES
- RENEWABLES
- CLEAN WATER, AIR
- HEALTHY CHILDREN
- ETC. ETC.



YEL  
Pitt

## The Earth as a Cosmic Oasis

**There is  
no  
Planet B!**



That's us....

Excuse me sir.....



Can we talk about making space for nature?

# Poll Time!

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Owen Pugh

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# What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?



# Local Nature Recovery Strategies



Locally-led, transparent and collaborative  
planning and decision-making tools for  
nature's recovery



# Environment Act 2021



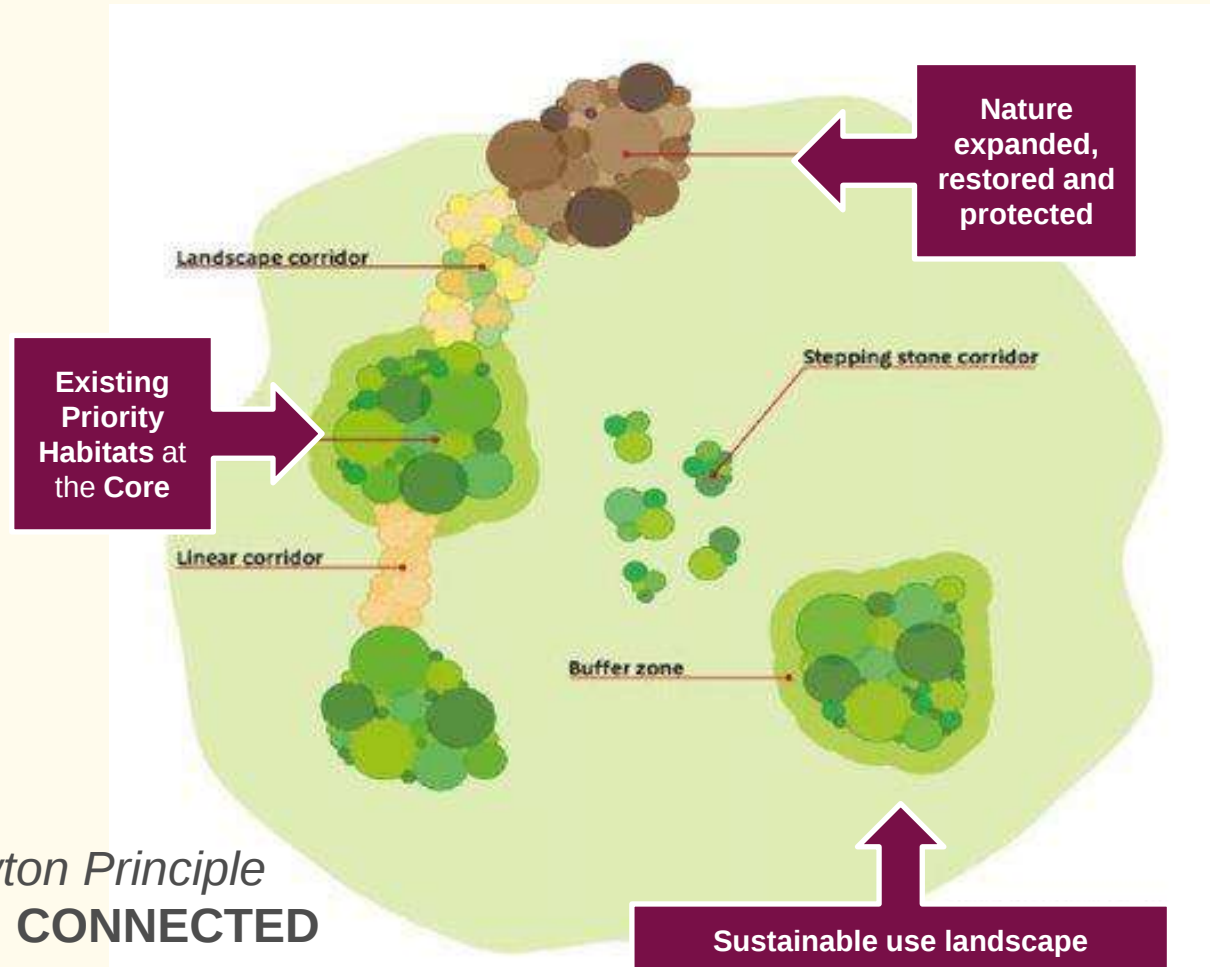
Sets clear statutory targets for recovery of the natural world in priority areas: air, biodiversity, water and waste, and puts forward tools to achieve these targets



# Nature Recovery Network

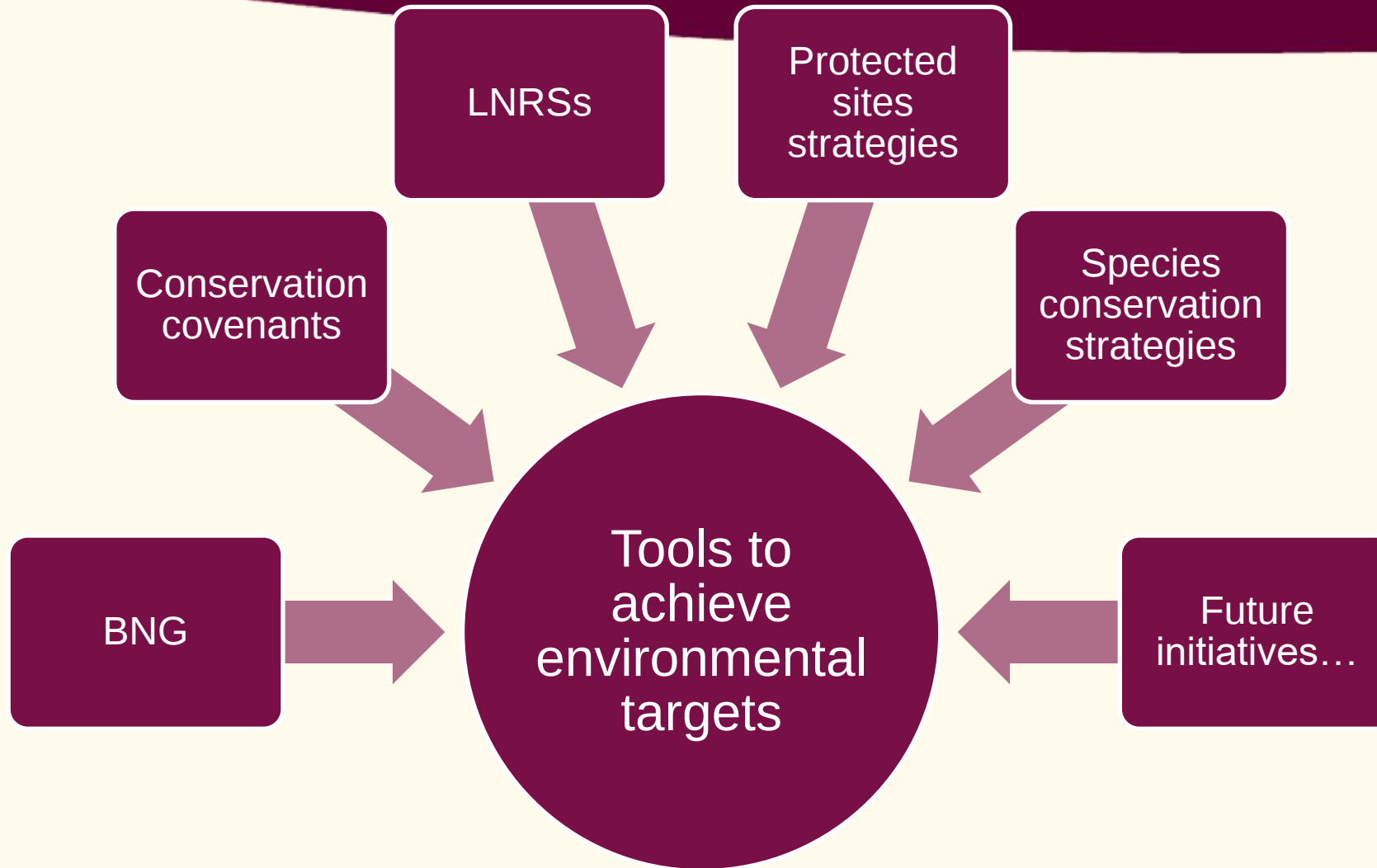


A major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and enacted by the Environment Act 2021, to create a single, national network of wildlife rich places across England

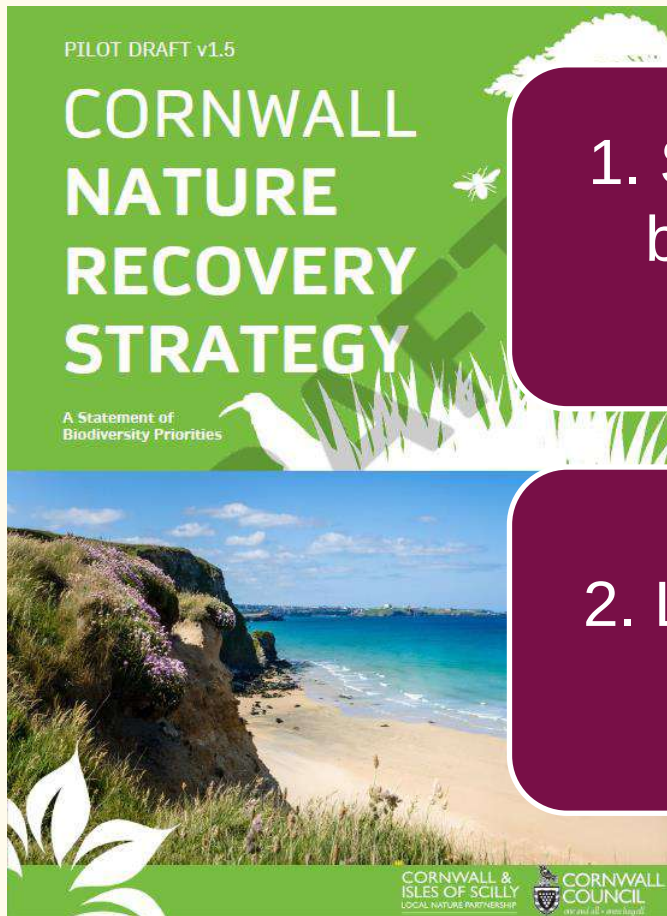


*Diagram illustrating the Lawton Principle*  
**BIGGER, BETTER, MORE, CONNECTED**

# Environment Act 2021

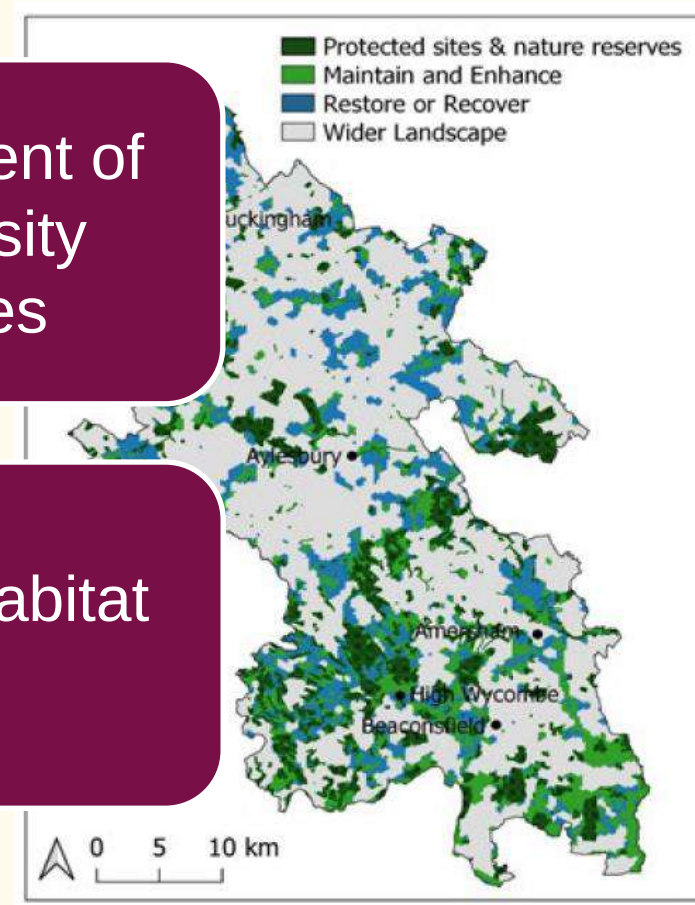


# Local Nature Recovery Strategies



1. Statement of biodiversity priorities

2. Local Habitat Map



PILOT DRAFT v1.5

# CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY NATURAL RECOVERY STRATEGY

A Statement of  
Biodiversity Priorities

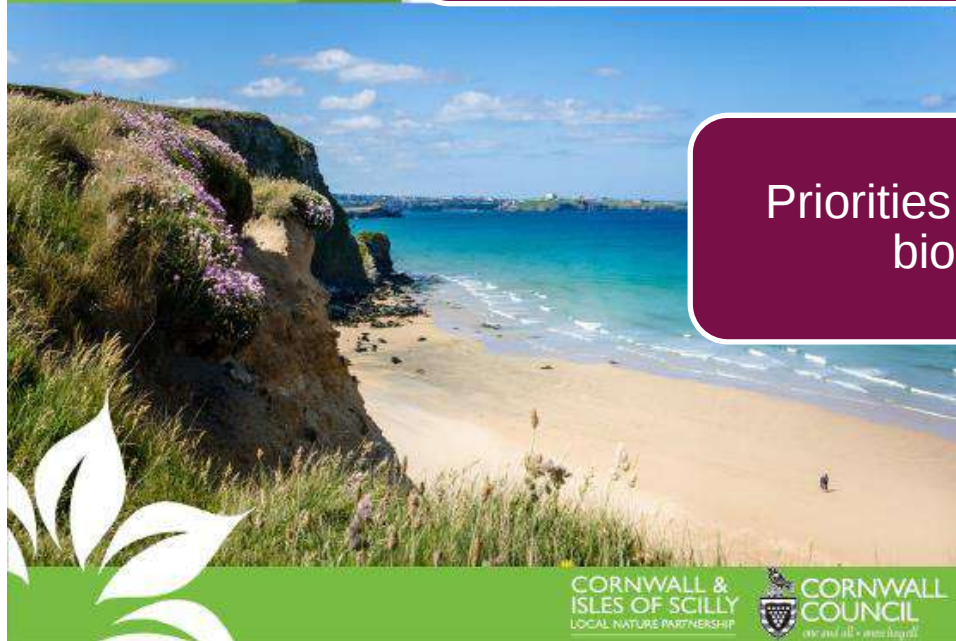
Description of the strategy  
area and its biodiversity

Description of opportunities  
for recovering biodiversity

Priorities for recovering  
biodiversity

1. Statement of  
biodiversity  
priorities

Measures relating to those  
priorities



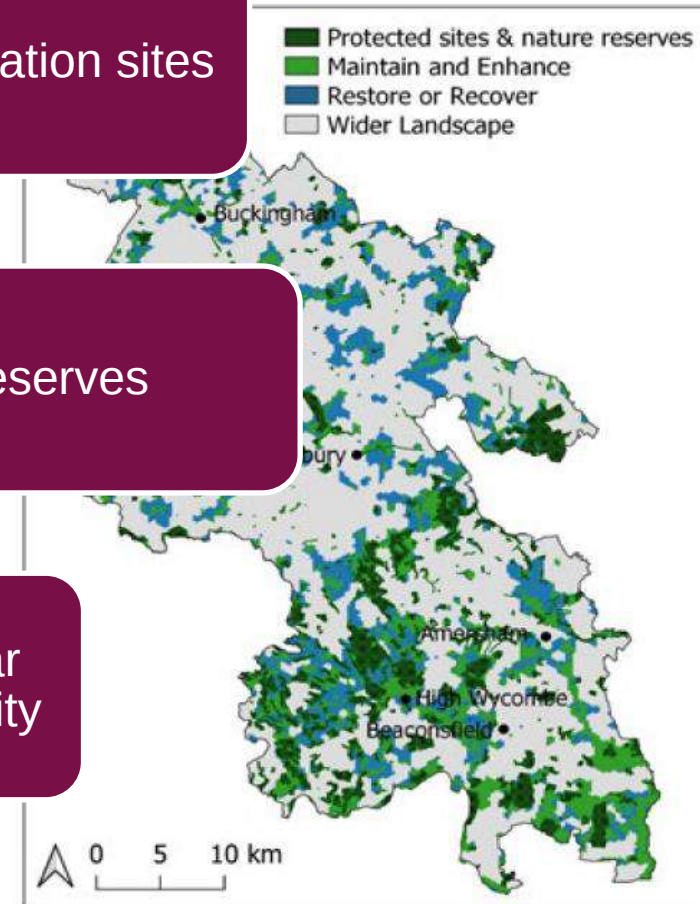
## 2. Local Habitat Map

National conservation sites

Nature reserves

Other areas of particular importance for biodiversity

Areas where action could bring about nature recovery and other environmental benefits

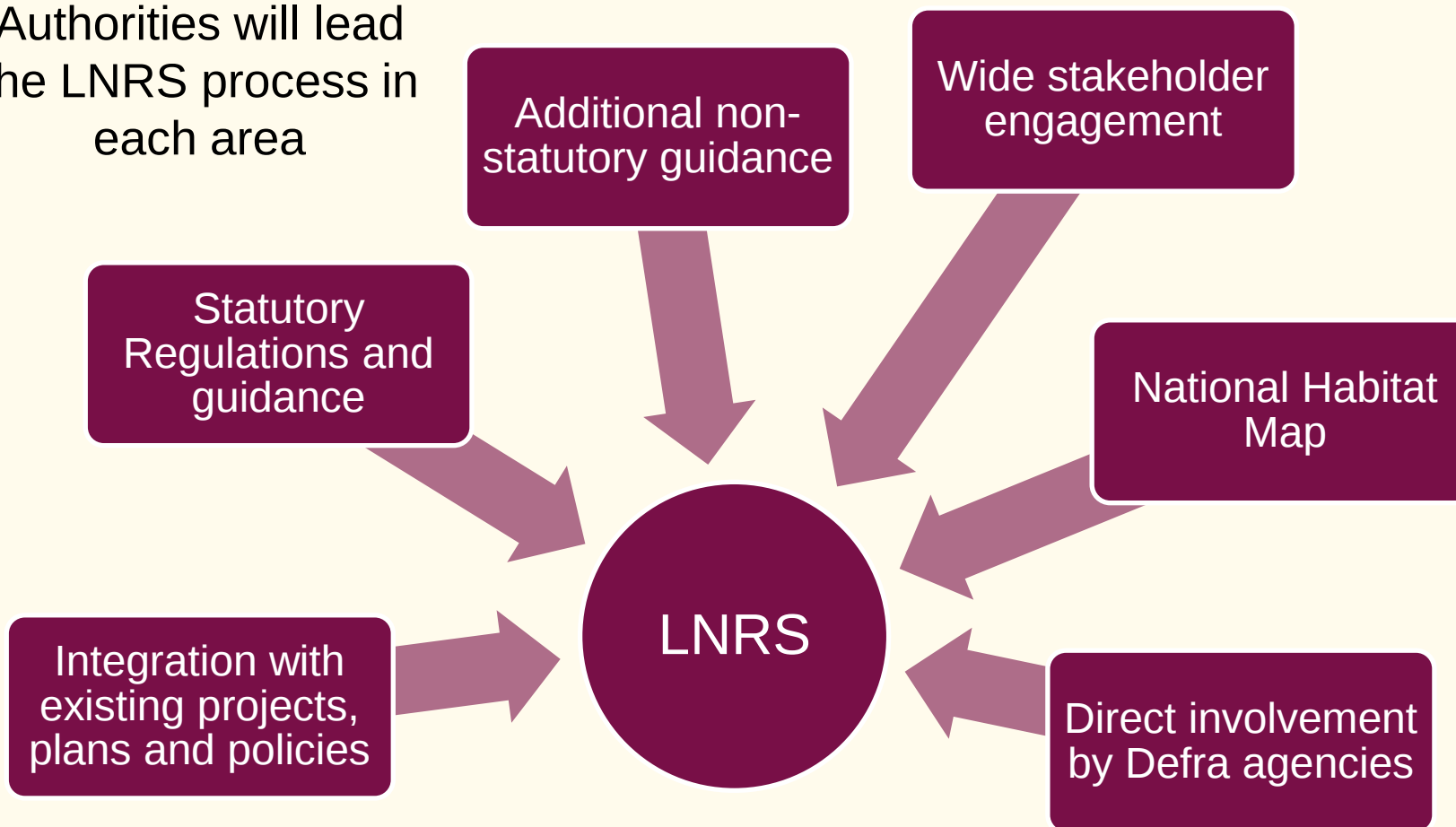


*Local Habitat Map produced by Biodiversify for Buckinghamshire Council (2021) for the LNRS pilot*

# How will they be produced?



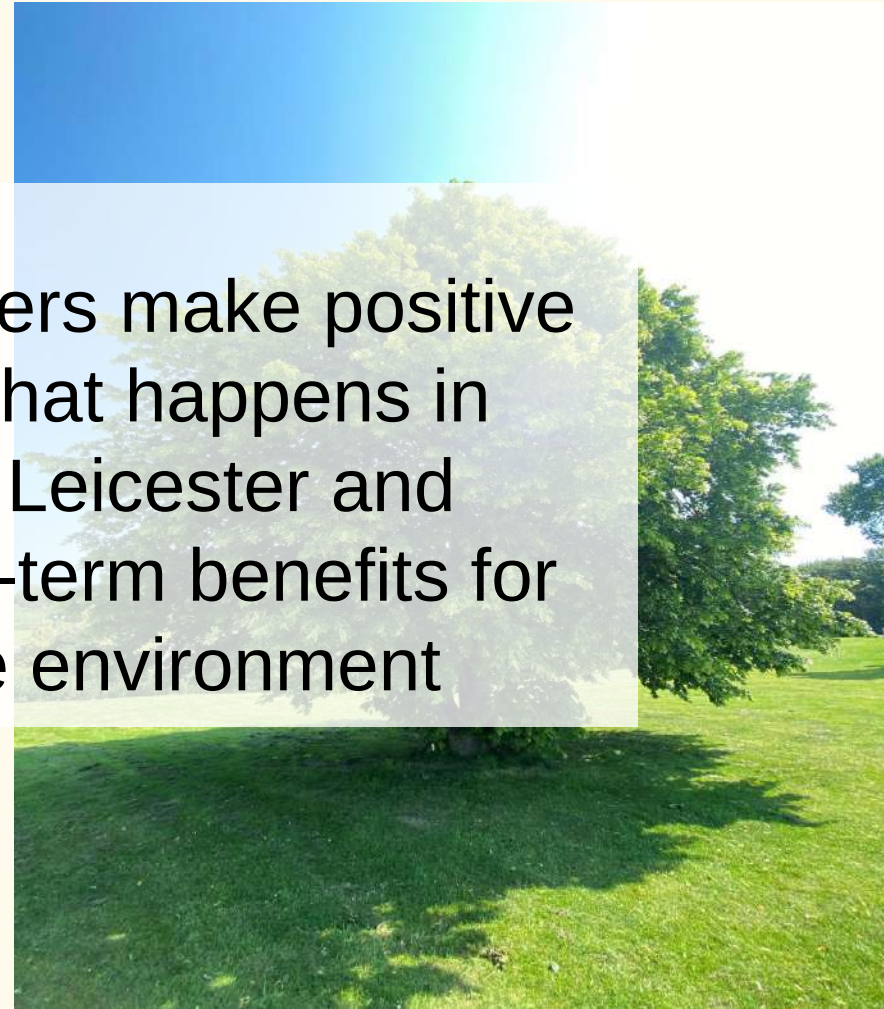
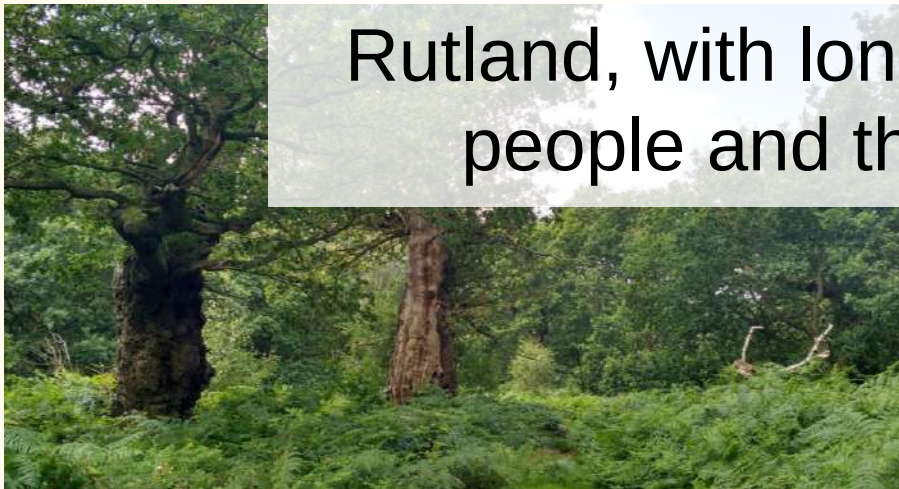
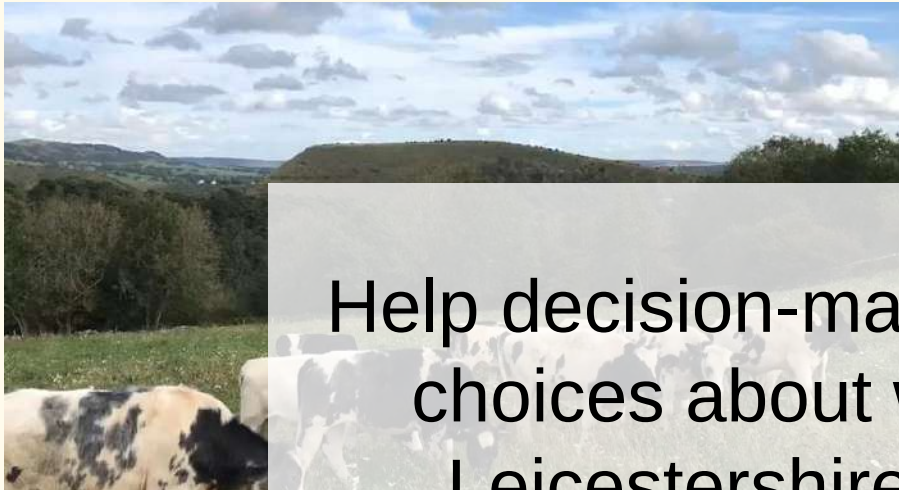
Responsible  
Authorities will lead  
the LNRS process in  
each area



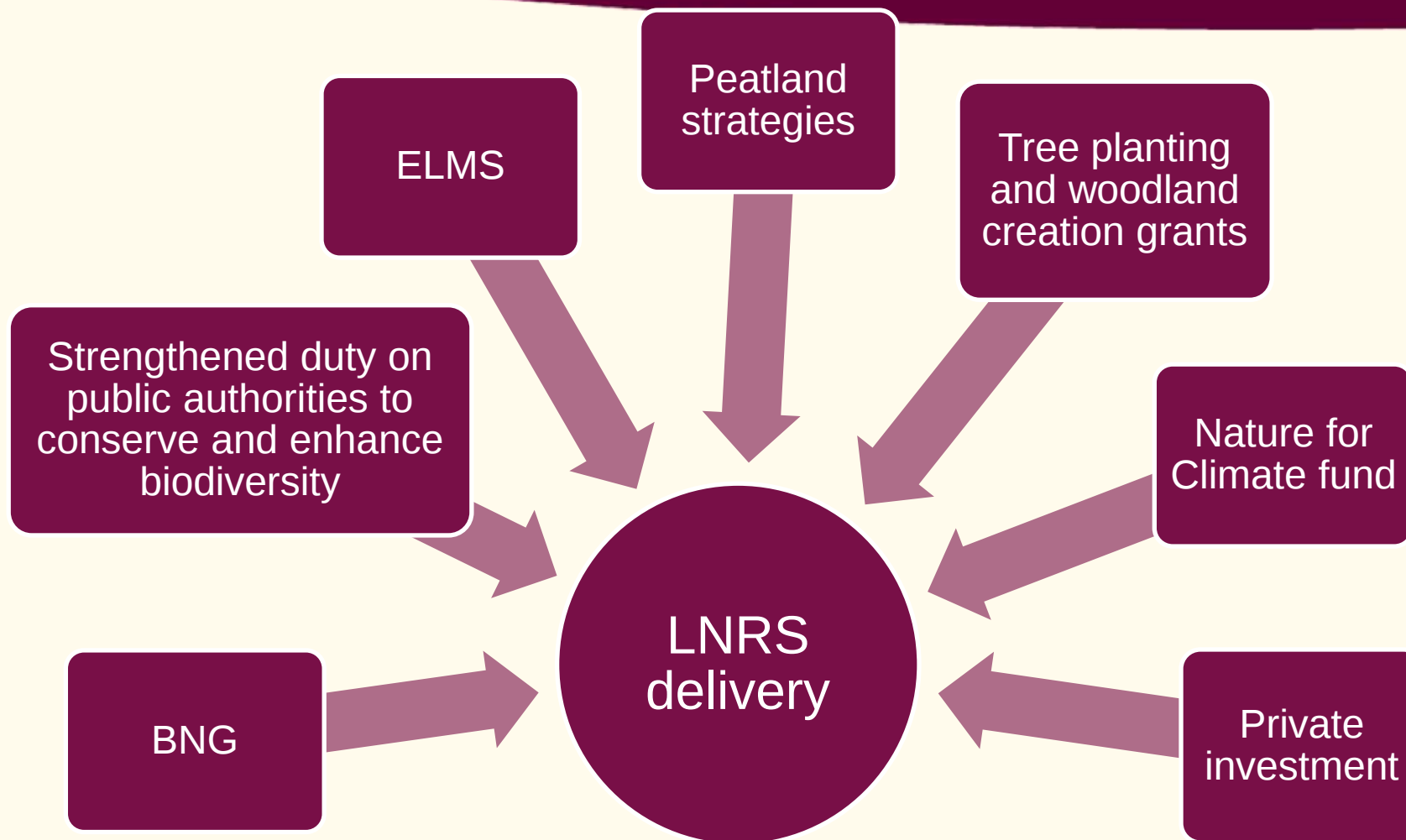
# What will LNRs do?



Help decision-makers make positive choices about what happens in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, with long-term benefits for people and the environment



# How will they be delivered?



# How are LNRs different?



- Links to funding initiatives
- Statutory underpinning

*Clauses 97 – 101 of the Environment Act / Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006*

- Country-wide
- Democratic mandate
- Local ownership
- Non-environmental hooks

# What LNRs are not / do not



- Delivery plans
- Red lines on a map
- Prevent land uses
- Grant permissions
- Non-binding



# Natural England's role



Includes supporting RAs by:

- Providing advice from Defra group
- Advising on the implementation of Regulations and Guidance
- Supporting the establishment of LNRS partnerships
- Encouraging join-up with other LNRSs and promoting a nationally consistent approach to LNRS production
- Ensuring engagement with farmers and landowners



NATURAL  
ENGLAND

# “That’s all folks!”



Owen Pugh – LNRS senior advisor

Happy to hear from you – contact me at:

[owen.pugh@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:owen.pugh@naturalengland.org.uk)



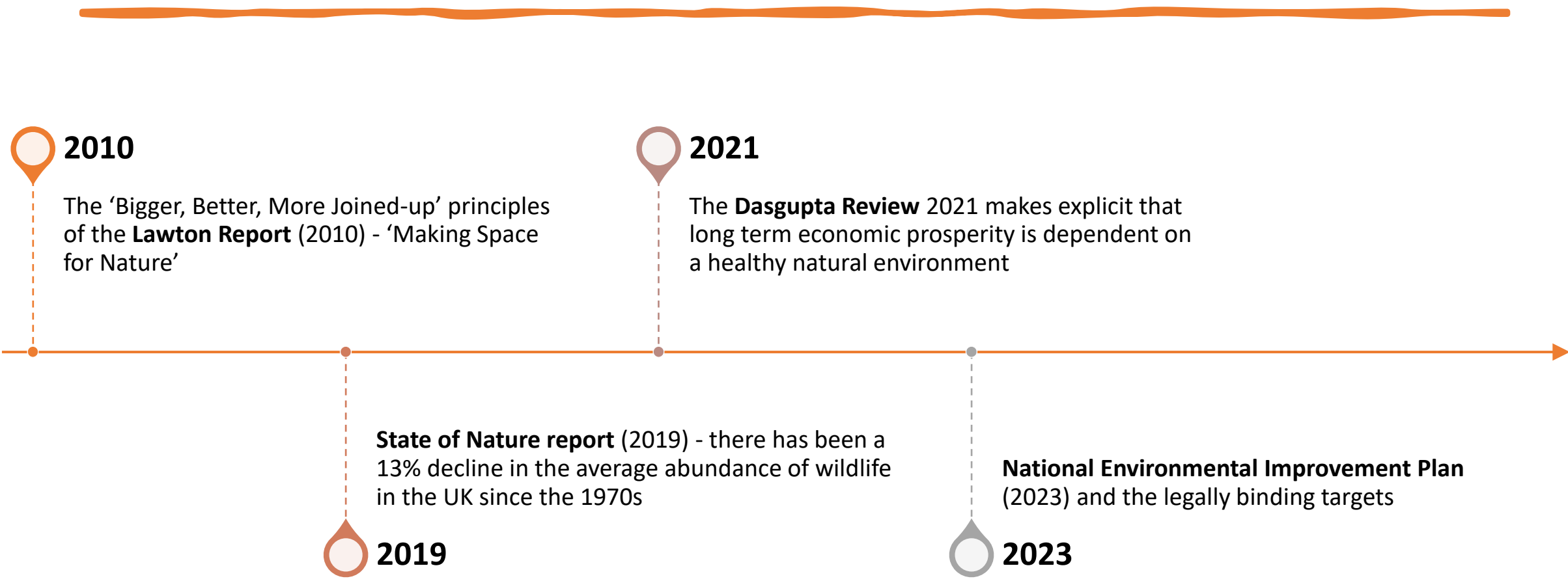
James O'Brien

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# What are the key points from LNRS Regulations & Guidance?



# LNRS Informed by



**2010**

The 'Bigger, Better, More Joined-up' principles of the **Lawton Report** (2010) - 'Making Space for Nature'

**2021**

The **Dasgupta Review** 2021 makes explicit that long term economic prosperity is dependent on a healthy natural environment

**State of Nature report** (2019) - there has been a 13% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK since the 1970s

**2019**

**National Environmental Improvement Plan** (2023) and the legally binding targets

**2023**

# Local Nature Recovery Strategy

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A new mandatory system of **spatial strategies** that will **map the most valuable existing areas for nature, establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and wider environmental benefits.**

Introduced as part of the **Environment Act 2021.**

# Developing the LNRS (1)

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- **Overall purpose**

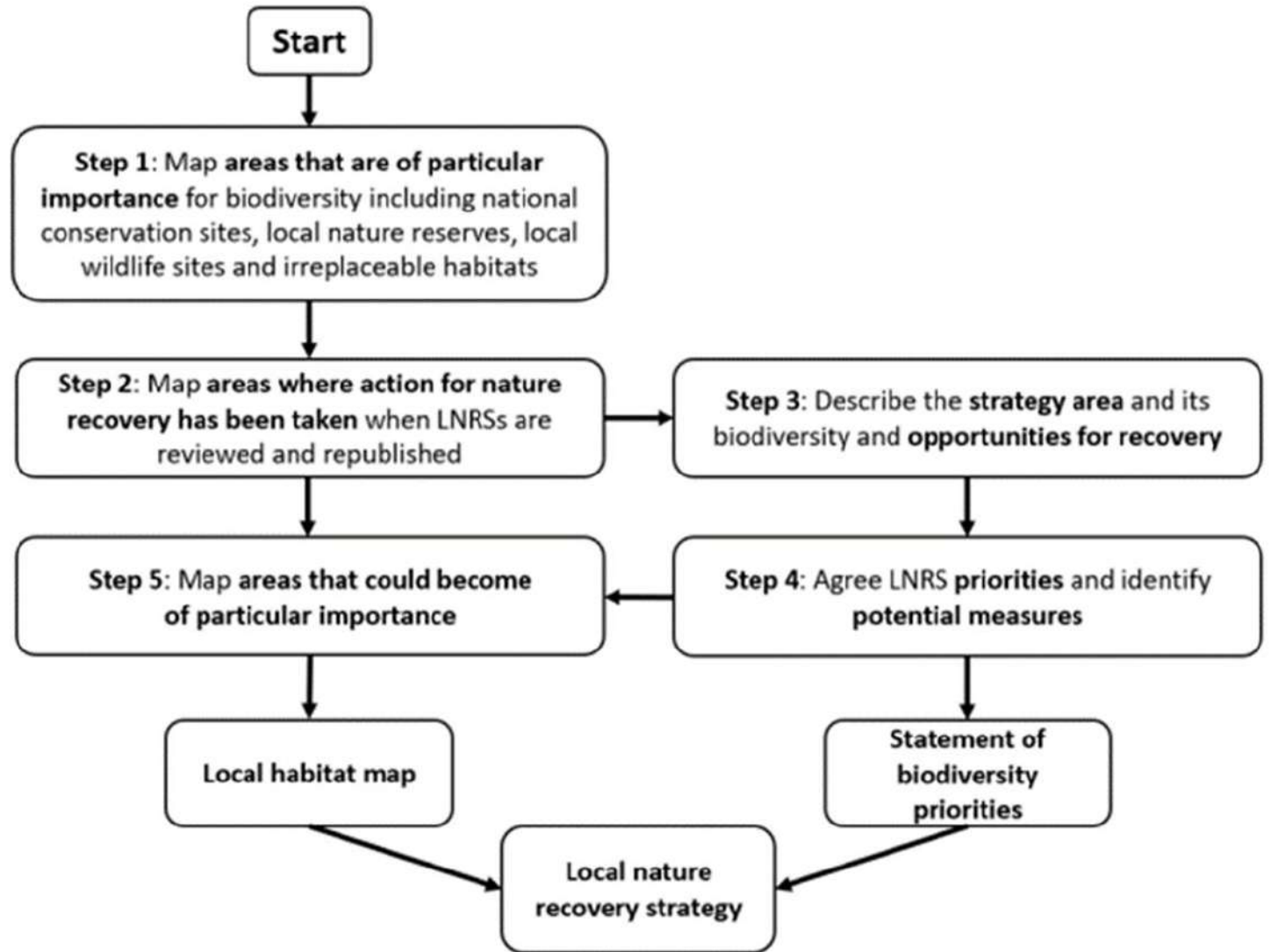
- agree priorities for nature's recovery
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals

- **What it needs to contain**

- a statement of biodiversity priorities
- a local habitat map
- a description of the strategy area and its biodiversity
- a description of the opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity in the strategy area
- the priorities for recovering enhancing biodiversity (taking into account the contribution that this can also make to other environmental benefits)
- proposals as to potential measures relating to those priorities

# Developing the LNRS (2)

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# Regulations and Guidance Key Points (1)

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- The Regulations and Guidance were issued in **March 2023**

## General Points

- Defra Secretary of State decides the area that each strategy covers and **appoints a 'responsible authority'** to lead its preparation, publication, review and republication
- **48** LNRS areas across England
- The **creation of the role of 'supporting authority'** and how they should work with responsible authorities
- A **process for dispute resolution** should responsible authorities and supporting authorities develop different opinions on what should be included in the LNRS
- **Requirements for wider engagement**, including how to bring a wide range of organisations and viewpoints into LNRS preparation and the need for public consultation
- **A step-by-step process** for responsible authorities to take when preparing the LNRS
- LNRSs should identify local opportunities to **contribute to national environmental objectives**
- **Rules for review and publication**, all LNRSs will be received at the same time and renewed by the Secretary of State and expected every 3-10 years

# Regulations and Guidance Key Points (2)

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- The need to **consider other plans and strategies** in the area so that the LNRS does not “reinvent the wheel”
- LNRSs should be **deliverable on the ground** and not a “wish list” of things we’d like to see happen
- There is **no fixed deadline** for when LNRS need to be produced by, though it is expected that it will take **12-18 months**
- The main purpose of the strategies is to **identify locations to create or improve habitat** most likely to provide the **greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment**. The strategies **do not force the owners and managers of the land identified to make any changes**. Instead, the Government is encouraging action through, for example, opportunities for funding and investment

# Regulations and Guidance Key Points (3)

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## Planning & Local Authority points

- The Government intends for LNRs to **inform the local planning process. Local planning authorities must have regard to them** in complying with the strengthened biodiversity duty. The Government will provide separate guidance to explain what this means in practice.
- The Act establishes two mechanisms to support the delivery of LNRs namely, mandatory **biodiversity net gain** and a **strengthened biodiversity duty** on public authorities.
- The strategies will **identify where action to achieve biodiversity net gain will have the most impact** and encourage action in these locations through the way net gain is calculated.
- All public authorities will also have to **have regard to relevant LNRs** under the strengthened biodiversity duty

# Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)...a mechanism to deliver LNRS (1)

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- Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021-Biodiversity Net gain is a condition of planning no longer voluntary but mandatory
- Secondary legislation coming in November 2023 to support the schedule
- Requires minimum of 10% net gain - some areas are pushing for 20% Net Gain through their Local Plans
- A Biodiversity Metric is to be used in working out the gains onsite and offsite - offsite seen as a last resort

FAQs: <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities/biodiversity-net-gain-faqs>

# Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)...a mechanism to deliver LNRS (2)

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- Spatial areas identified within the LNRS to be of importance for nature recovery will be considered of strategic significance and if a developer plans to invest in these areas they will score more highly in the Biodiversity Metric
- Until LNRS is in place other strategies apply such as Green Infrastructure strategies - identified corridors etc, Biodiversity policies - anything that supports the Local Plan.
- These existing strategies will be taken into account when LNRS is being developed
- BNG and LNRS does not replace existing protections on species such as bats etc

# Principles

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- **Transparency** - be able to show how partner contributions have been considered, how decisions have been made, and what the basis for them is
- **Inclusivity** - enable everyone with an interest to be involved where possible
- **Clear Communication** - avoid using technical terms that may not be understood by partners and end users

# Funding

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- 2 year funding award – Section 31 grant (2023/24 – 2024/25)
- Amount based on a national formula consisting of a base budget, plus additional amounts depending on a) no. of authorities and b) no. of farmers
- Should be sufficient to undertake the preparation of the LNRS
- Waiting for details on funding for operational and management costs linked to implementation of LNRS
- Expected that projects will be funded through BNG and ELMS etc

# Additional Information

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- Link to the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/made>
- Link to the LNRS Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategy-what-to-include>

James O'Brien

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# What is happening locally on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?



# LNRS Locally

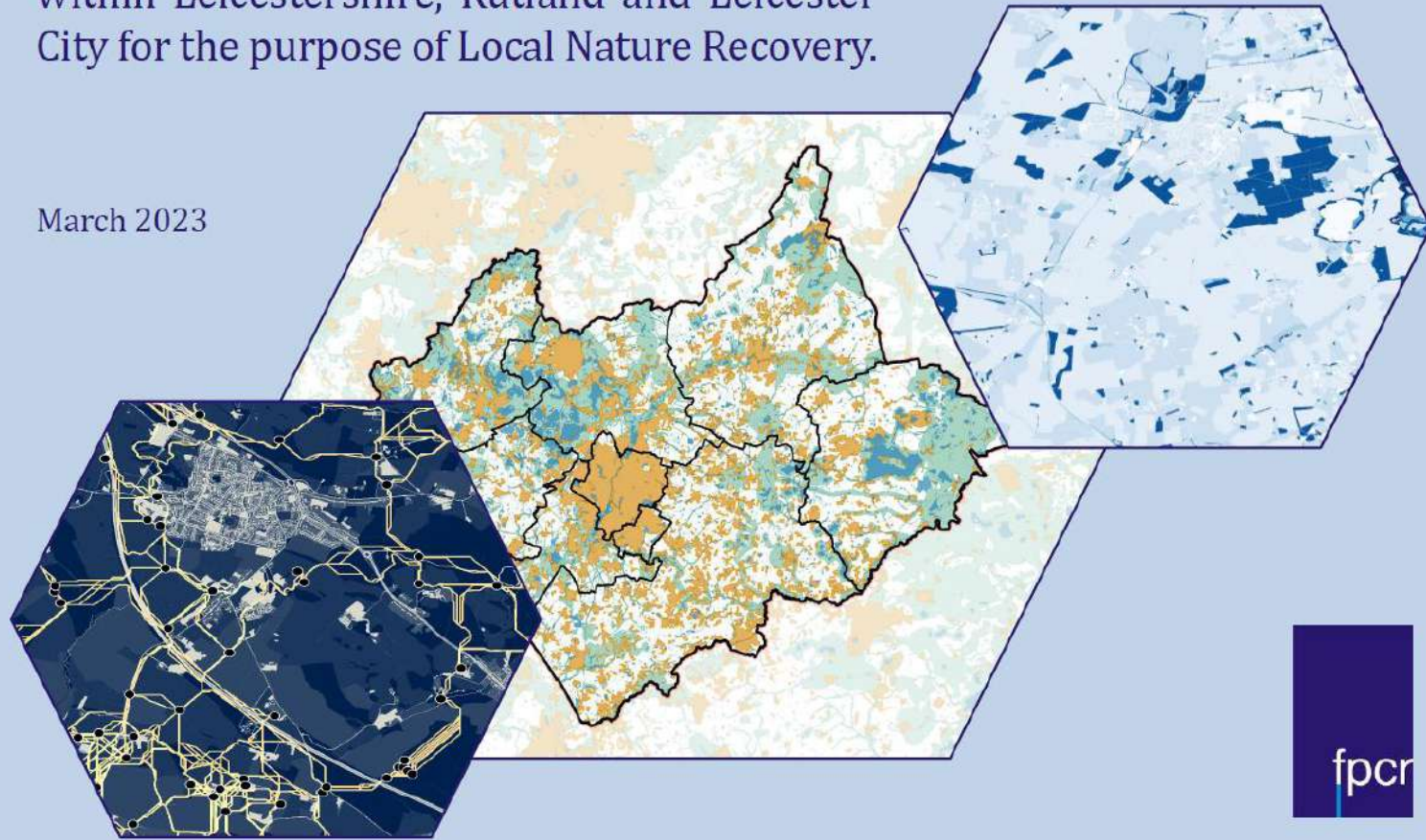
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- Leicestershire County Council has been appointed as the '**responsible authority**' for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy that will cover Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
- Interim **LNRS Steering Group** was established, initially with representation from Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council
- More recently the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, National Forest Company and district representatives have joined
- Work has focused on **data** gathering, analysis and mapping & **stakeholder** mapping and analysis

# LNRS Locally

Mapping strategic biodiversity locations within Leicestershire, Rutland and Leicester City for the purpose of Local Nature Recovery.

March 2023



## Modelling of Woodland constraints and opportunities

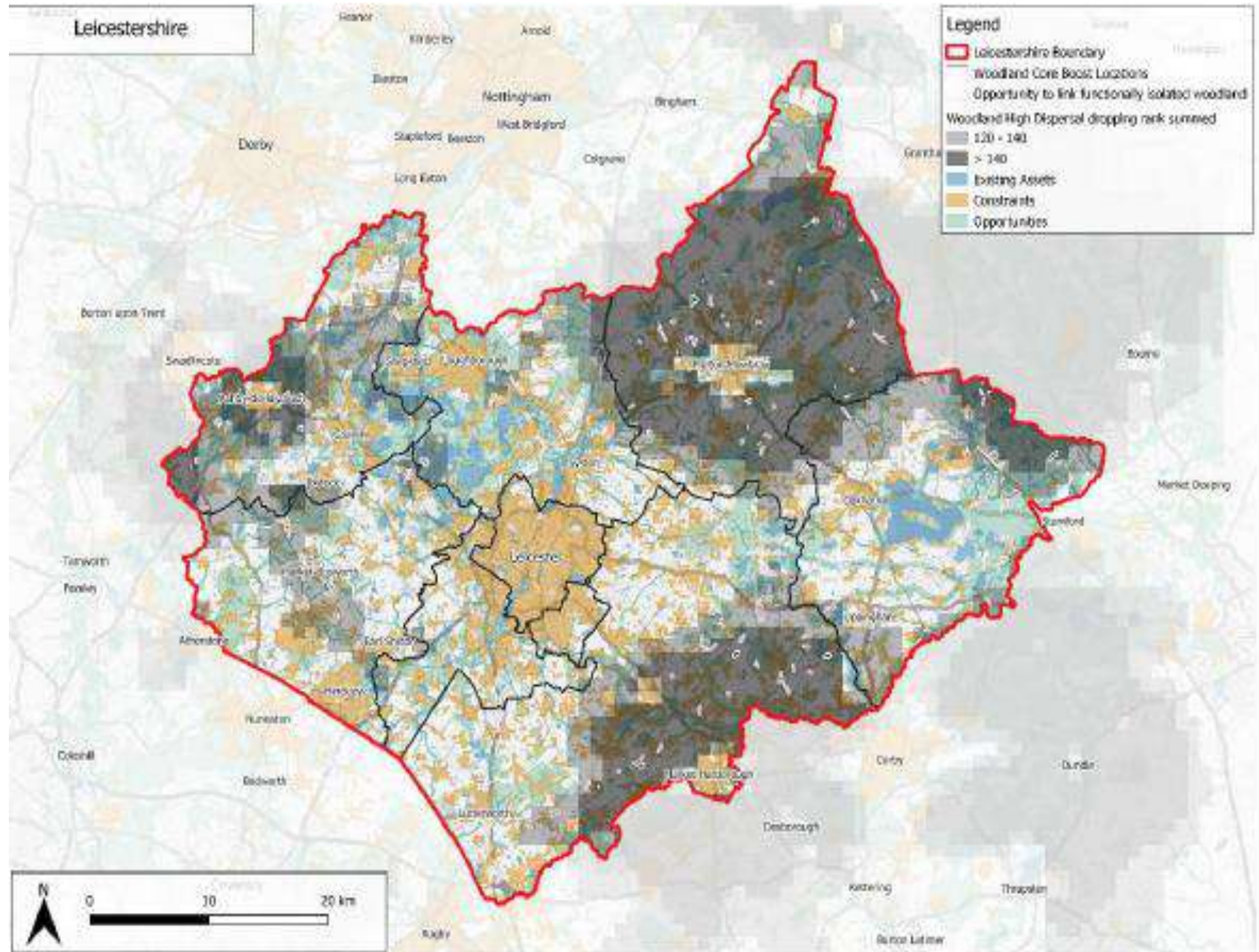


Figure 29: Opportunities and constraints map overlaid with woodland connectivity mapping

# Prioritising Action

(not one size fits all)

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➡ (a) Increase habitat diversity and quality



➡ (b) Increase habitat diversity and / or connectivity



➡ (c) Increase area of habitat and / or connectivity



➡ (d) Create new habitat / increase size of sites

**Figure 6. Prioritising action**

Four very different areas of England suggest different priorities for enhancing ecological networks, ranging from a landscape with large areas of semi-natural habitat (a) to one with very little (d). In all cases, the first priority is, however, to ensure existing wildlife sites are of good quality (see text).

# National Campaigns

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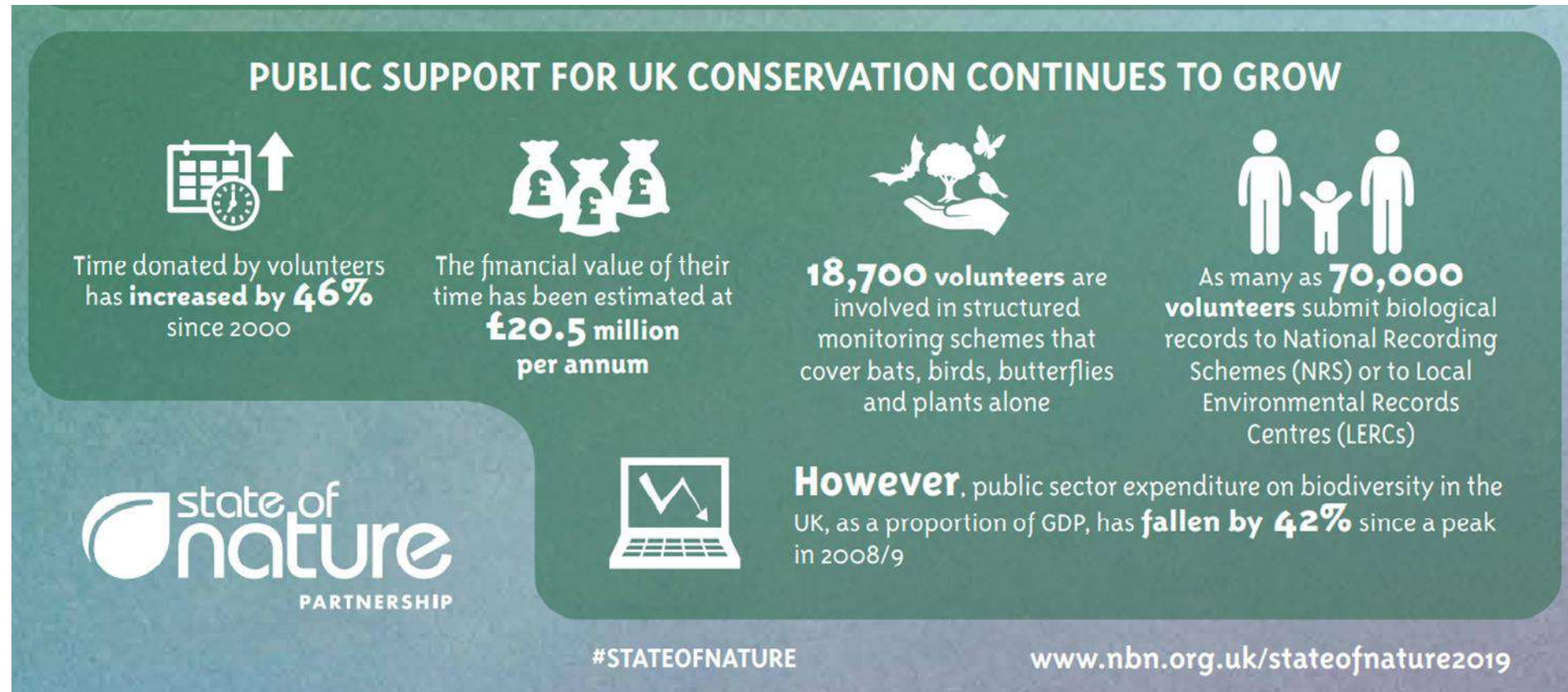


# National Campaigns

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# Increased public support for nature



Lucie Hoelmer

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# How can you get involved?



# How can you get involved?

## Engagement

- Technical Officers Group, Biodiversity Officers Group, Working Groups
- Workshops
- Surveys
- One to one meetings
- Submit ideas on recovering nature
- Contact us if you have land where you would like to make space for nature
- Submit copies of any strategies or plans to inform the nature and wider environmental priorities

## Consultation

- Public Consultation

Lucie Hoelmer

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# What do we need from you?



# What do we need from you?

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- Knowledge about: species, habitats, historic environment, practical techniques to improve nature, other environmental issues etc
- Evidence - records about nature that have been verified
- Expertise - data, GIS, agricultural practices, ecology, planning etc
- Involvement in workshops etc
- Details of existing nature recovery activities
- Details of planned nature recovery activities
- Details of plans, strategies and priorities
- Thoughts, suggestions & innovative ideas
- Time

James O'Brien

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# What is happening next?



# Next steps

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- Recruitment - underway
- Project Plan - started
- Project Budget & Spend Profile - started
- Formalise governance structures and membership – Steering Group, Technical Officers Group, Biodiversity Officers Group, Working Groups - started
- Identify specific activities that can be undertaken by specialist support – to start
- Identification and sourcing of other plans and strategies - started
- Identification and sourcing of datasets – underway
- Meetings and workshops with partners and stakeholders - started
- Engagement and Communications Plan – to start

Excuse me sir.....



Can we talk about climate change?

# Poll Time!

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**Answer  
some  
questions**



# How to contact us

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Email:

[llrlnrs@leics.gov.uk](mailto:llrlnrs@leics.gov.uk)

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# Thank you

## Be in touch again soon

## Looking forward to working with you all in taking action for the recovery of nature across the area

