North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Local Habitat Map User Guide

February 2026

Contents

1. Introduction

The Local Habitat Map is one of the two statutory outputs of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for North Yorkshire and York. It is an interactive online web map, hosted by North Yorkshire Council through ArcGIS Online.

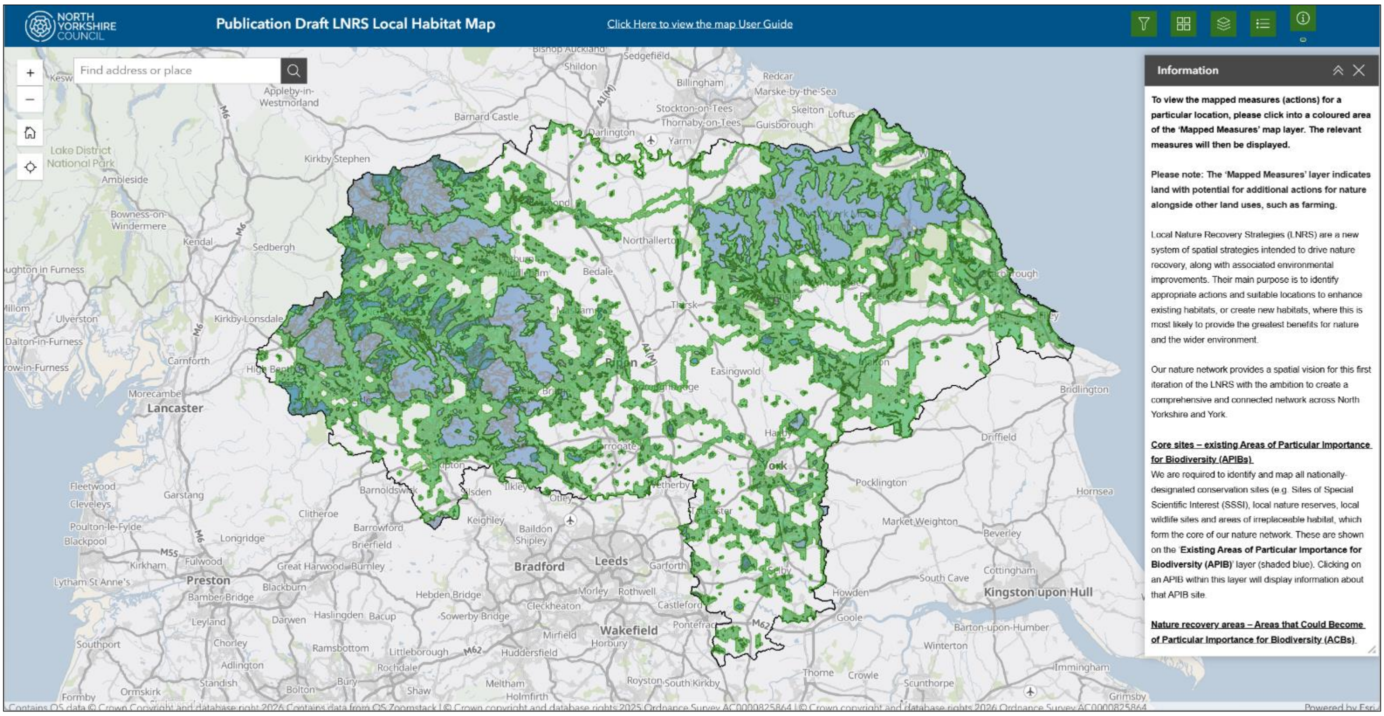
Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new system of spatial strategies intended to drive nature recovery, along with associated environmental improvements. Their main purpose is to identify appropriate actions and suitable locations to enhance existing habitats, or create new habitats, where this is most likely to provide the greatest benefits for nature and the wider environment.

Our nature network (the Local Habitat Map) provides a spatial vision for this first iteration of the LNRS with the ambition to create a comprehensive and connected network across North Yorkshire and York.

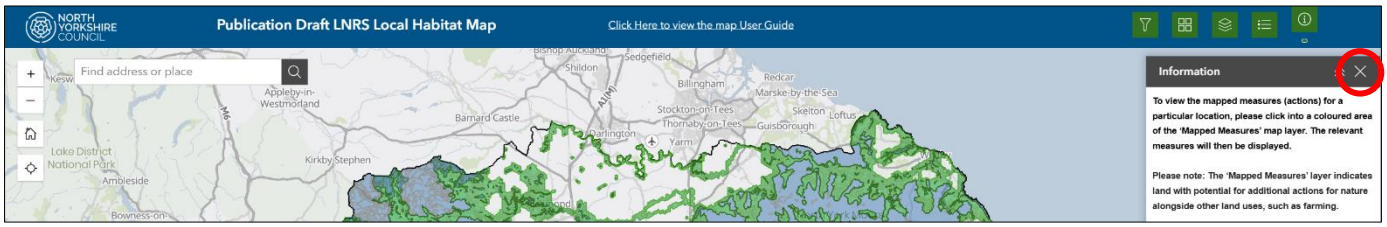
2. Accessing the Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map is an interactive online map. It can be viewed through any standard web browser (e.g. Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome). Due to the technical complexity of the map, it is best viewed on a laptop or desktop computer.

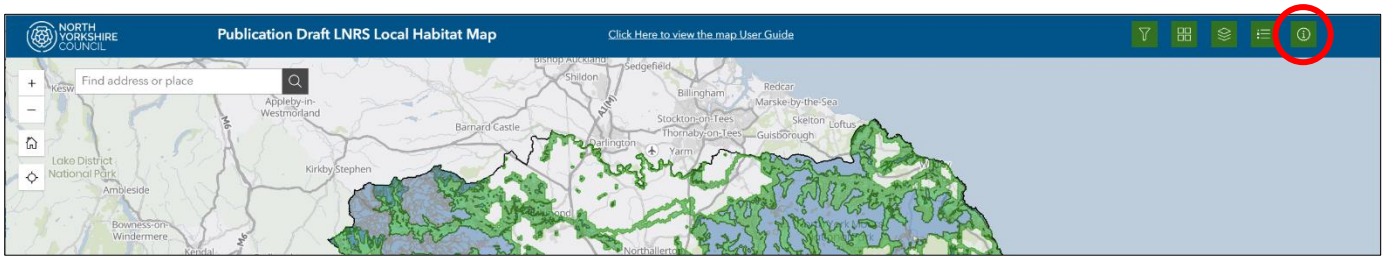
When you first access the map, it will open showing the default view shown in the screenshot below.



By default, the map opens with an ‘Information’ panel down the right-hand side of the window. This provides an overview of the different layers contained within the map, along with basic instructions (a more concise version of those in this guide). Please scroll down within the information panel to see all the information. The ‘Information’ panel can be closed using the ‘X’ button in the top-right corner, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



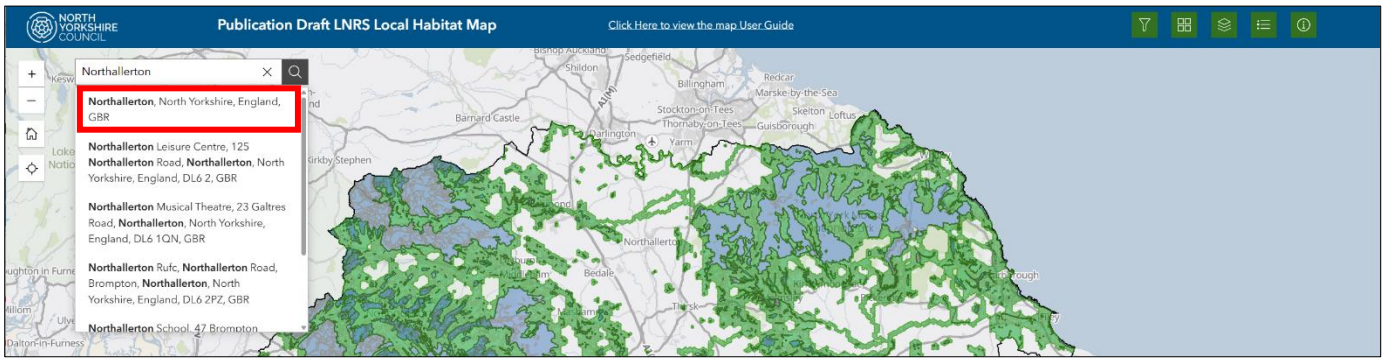
The ‘Information’ panel can be re-opened at any time by clicking the green ‘i’ button in the top-right corner of the map window, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



3. Navigating the Local Habitat Map

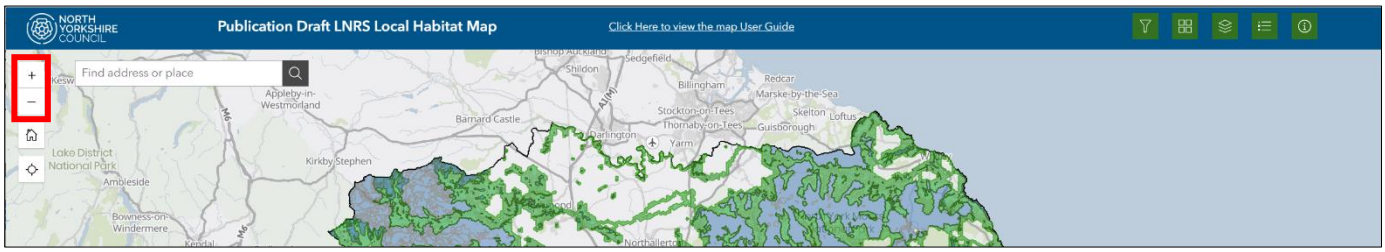
You can navigate around the map to see the mapped information for a particular location. You can search for a specific location using the 'Find address or place' search box in the top-left corner of the map window, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.

Once you have entered an address or place name and clicked the search button (magnifying glass button), you will need to click the place name in the list of results that appears:



The map will then zoom in to the location that you have selected from the list.

You can zoom in and out of the map using your mouse scroll wheel, or by using the '+' and '-' icons in the top-left of the window, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



You can reset the map zoom to the default starting view (showing the whole strategy area) at any time by clicking the 'home' button, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.

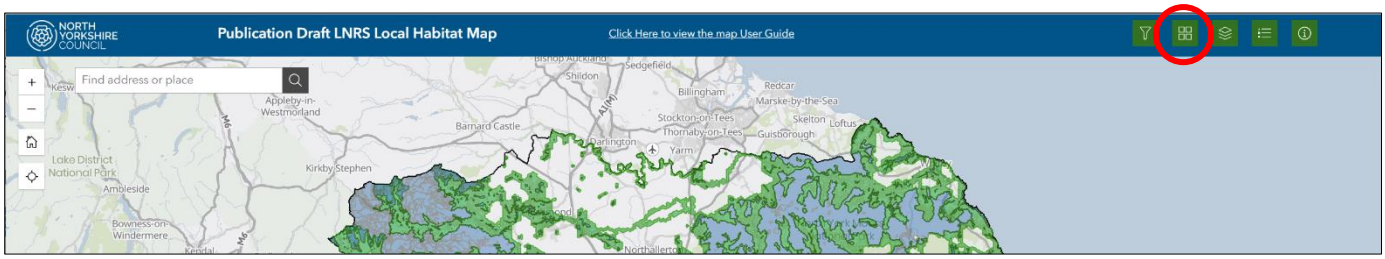
You can move around the map by clicking and dragging anywhere on the map.

Please note: The map contains a lot of data, so please be patient whilst the data loads. It may take several seconds for the data to load whilst navigating the map or turning layers on or off.

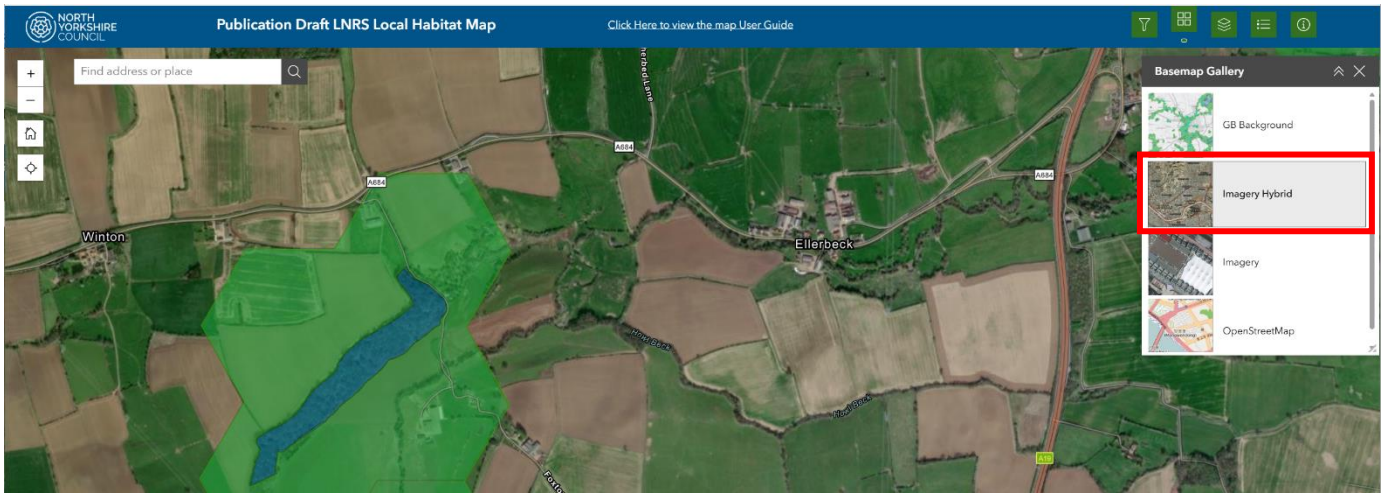
A flashing blue dot next to one of the layer names in the layer list indicates that the data for that map layer is still loading.

Changing the background map:

The data layers in the Local Habitat Map are shown over the top of a background map, or basemap. By default, the map loads with the 'GB Background' map as the basemap. You can change the background map by clicking the 'Basemap Gallery' button, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



This will show the other basemap options. Simply click on the basemap option that you would like to use, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.

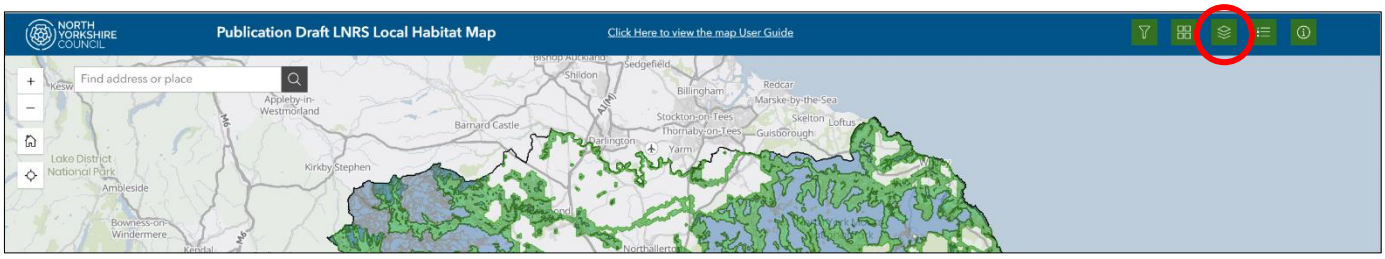


The 'Imagery' and 'Imagery Hybrid' options allow you to view aerial imagery beneath the LNRS data layers, which can be particularly useful for seeing how the LNRS data relates to real 'on-the-ground' features or specific areas of land.

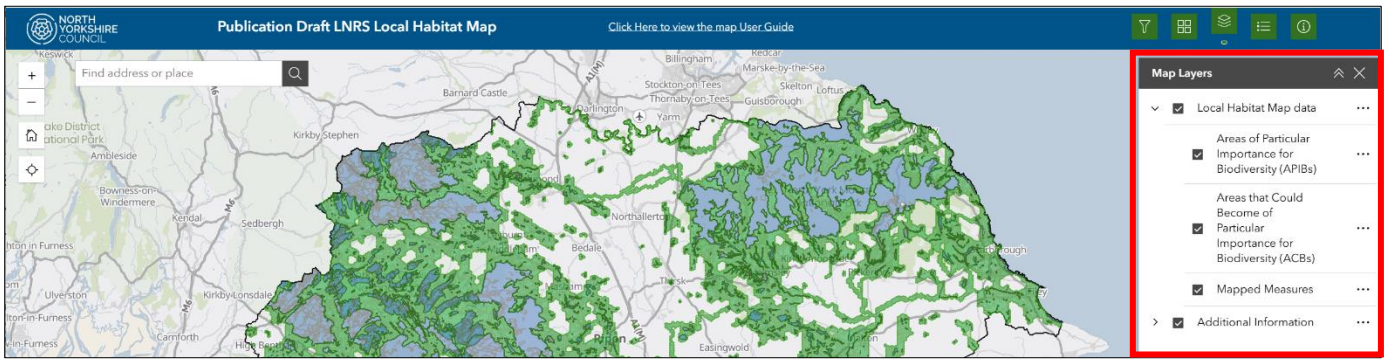
Please note: The 'Imagery' and 'Imagery Hybrid' basemap options are slower to load than the simpler basemaps. It is best to navigate to your area of interest first, before changing the basemap to one of these options in order to avoid unnecessary additional loading time.

4. Using the map layers

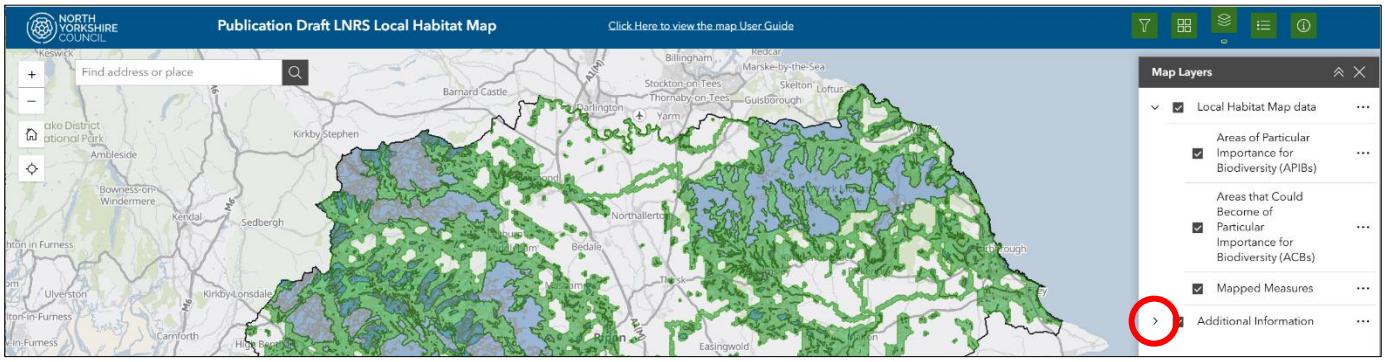
The Local Habitat Map contains a number of different data layers. The different data layers within the map can be accessed by clicking the green ‘map layers’ button in the top-right corner of the map window, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



This will display a list of all the data layers contained within the map. Layers can be turned on and off by clicking the check box next to the layer name, shown outlined red in the screenshot below. Layers currently turned on are shown with a grey tick mark. Layers currently turned off are shown with an empty check box.

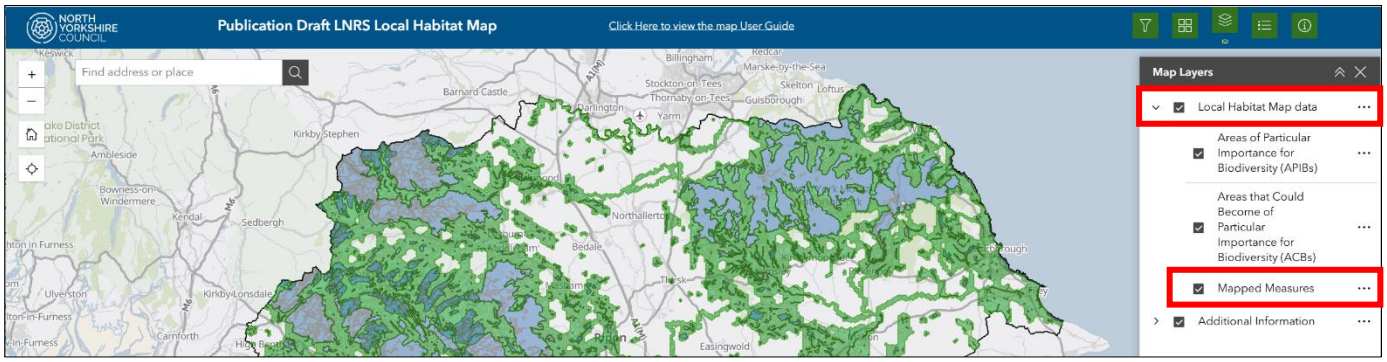


Some of the data layers are contained within ‘folders’ in the Map Layers list. Where this is the case a drop-down arrow icon is displayed next to the layer name, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



To open the layer folder, click the drop-down arrow icon. This will display the layers contained within that layer folder. The layer folder is known as the ‘parent’ layer, and the layers within the folder are known as the ‘child’ layers.

In order to display these layers on the map, both the 'parent' and 'child' layers need to be turned on. An example of a 'parent' and 'child' layer is outlined red in the screenshot below.



In the example above, in order to view the 'Mapped Measures' layer, the 'Local Habitat Map data' layer must also be turned on. This is because the 'Mapped Measures' layer is a 'child' layer contained within the 'Local Habitat Map data' 'parent' layer. If the parent layer is turned off, any child layers contained within that parent layer will not be visible, regardless of whether the individual child layers are turned on or off.

Statutory LNRS layers:

The statutory LNRS data layers are contained within the parent layer 'Local Habitat Map data'. These are:

- Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs)
- Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACBs)
- Mapped Measures

An overview of how to navigate and use the data within these layers is provided in the sections below.

Non-statutory layers:

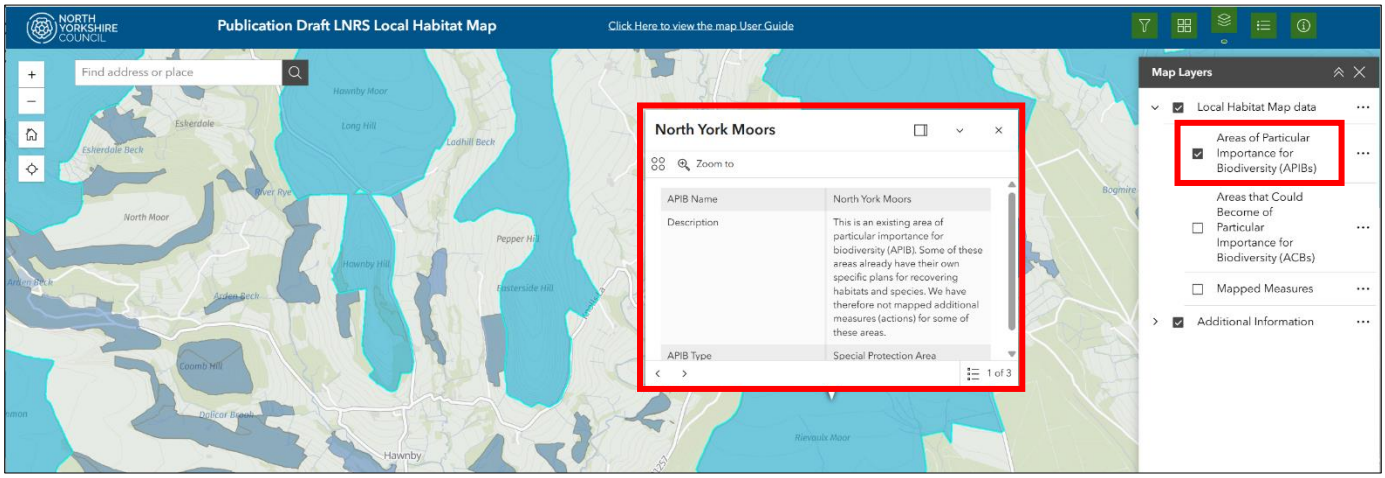
We have also included several non-statutory data layers within the Local Habitat Map, which provide useful additional information and wider context to the statutory layers listed above. These data layers are contained within the parent layer 'Additional Information'.

The section of this document titled 'Additional Information Layers' below gives an overview of the information contained within these layers.

5. Using the Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs) layer

The Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs) layer shows the existing sites across our geography that have been identified as being of particular importance for nature. These are sites with an existing local or national designation, or areas of irreplaceable habitat. This layer is turned on by default when you access the Local Habitat Map.

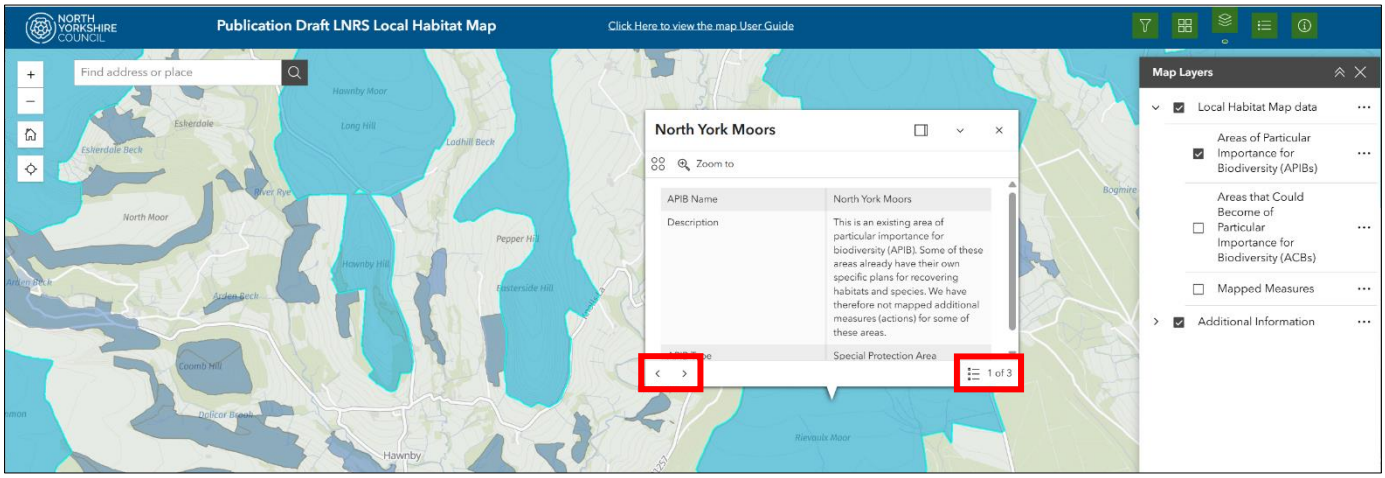
Existing APIB sites are shown in blue shading on the map. Clicking on one of the APIB sites will generate a pop-up window showing information about the APIB site (it may take a few moments for the pop-up to appear, depending on the speed of your internet connection). The pop-up window is shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



The full extent of the APIB that you have clicked on will be highlighted in bright blue on the map.

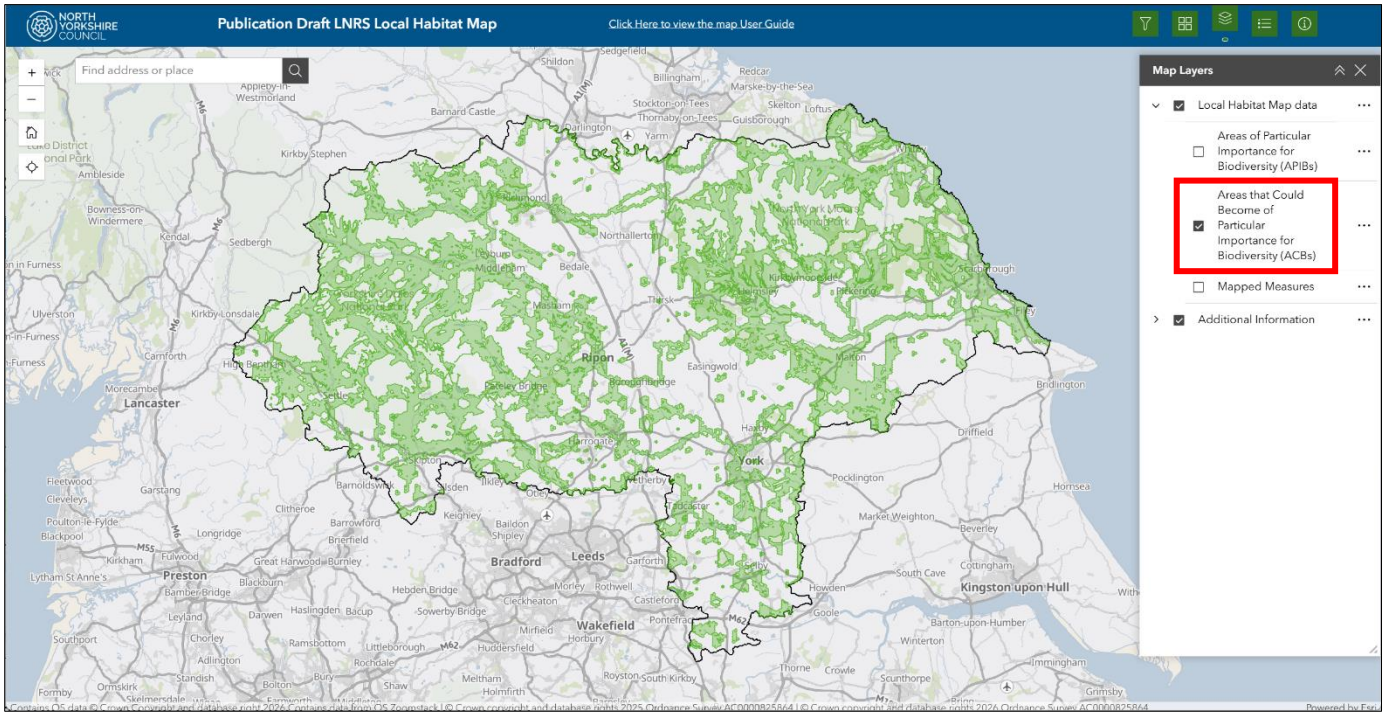
The pop-up window will show the APIB name, some description text, and the APIB type (e.g. SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, Irreplaceable Habitat etc.).

Please note that there may be multiple overlapping APIB types at the same location. This will be indicated by a '1 of 2' or '1 of 3' note in the corner of the pop-up window. You can use the 'back' and 'forward' arrows in the opposite corner of the pop-up window to scroll between the different APIBs. Both are shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



6. Using the Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACBs) layer

The Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACBs) layer shows the locations across our geography that have been identified as places where efforts to enhance nature and biodiversity should be focused, outside the existing APIB sites. This layer is turned on by default when you access the Local Habitat Map and is shown in bright green shading on the map, as shown in the screenshot below.

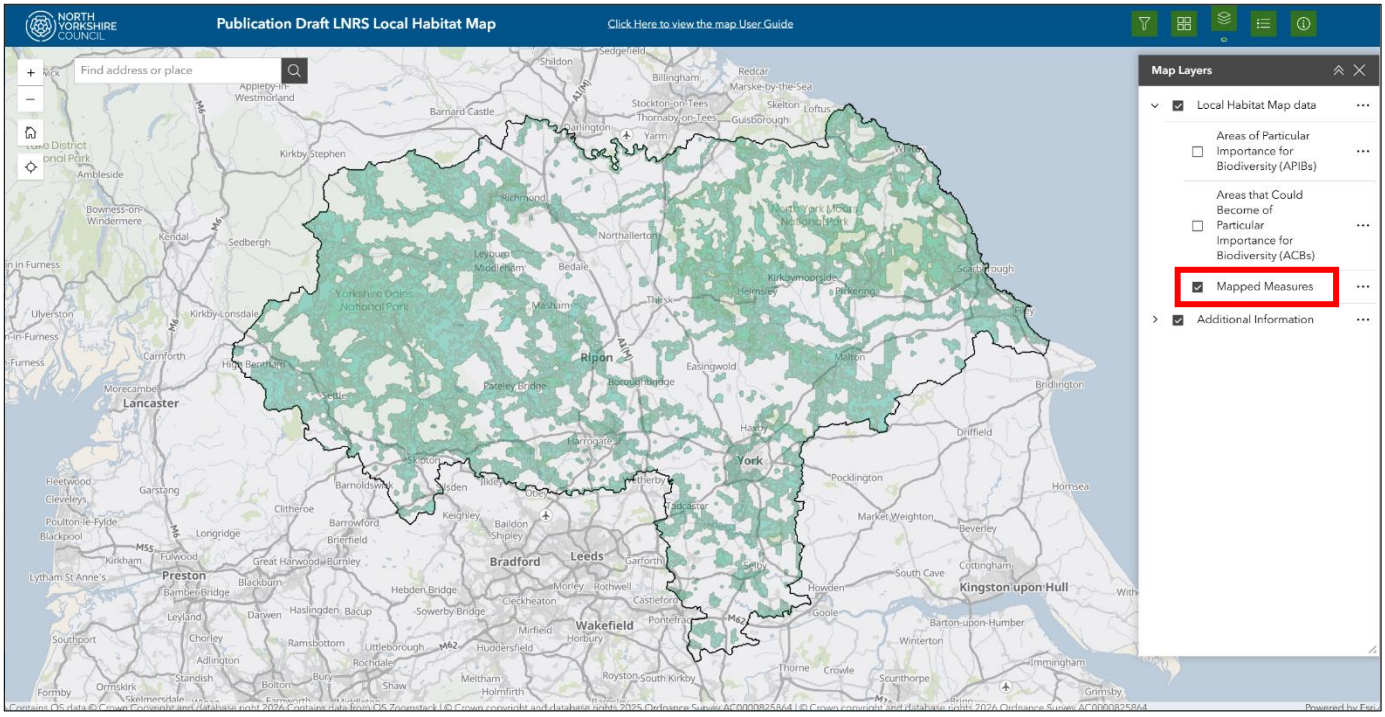


Please note that this is a ‘display only’ layer and is not interactive.

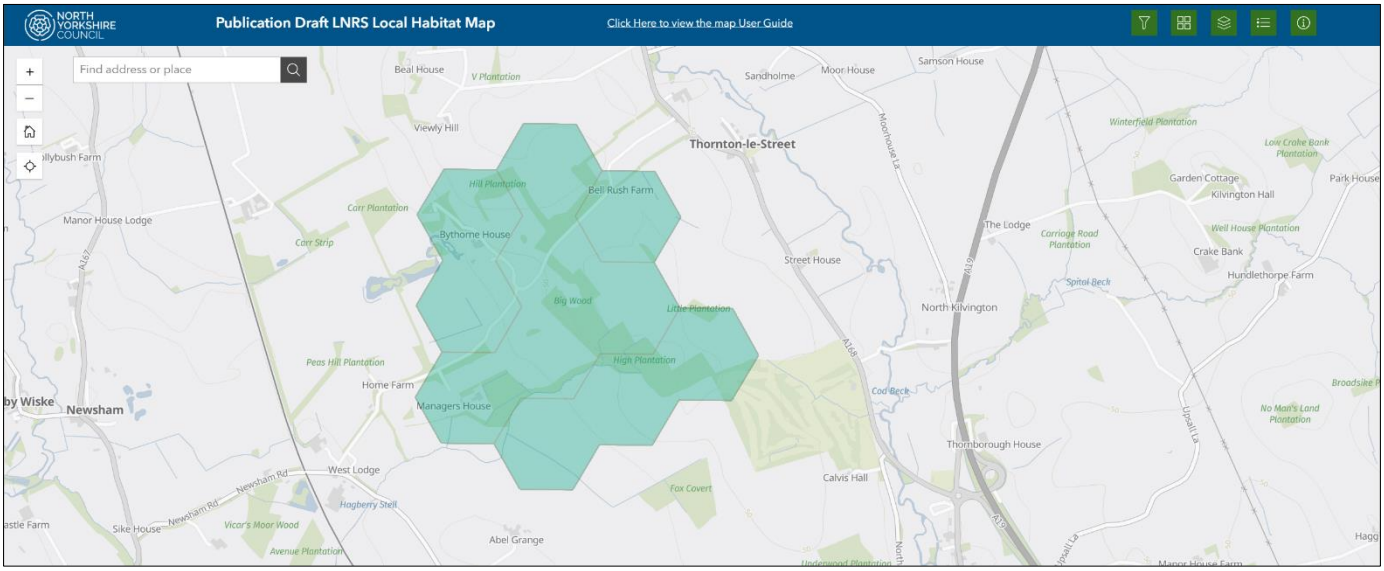
The APIB and ACB layers together form our LNRS strategic network.

7. Using the Mapped Measures layer

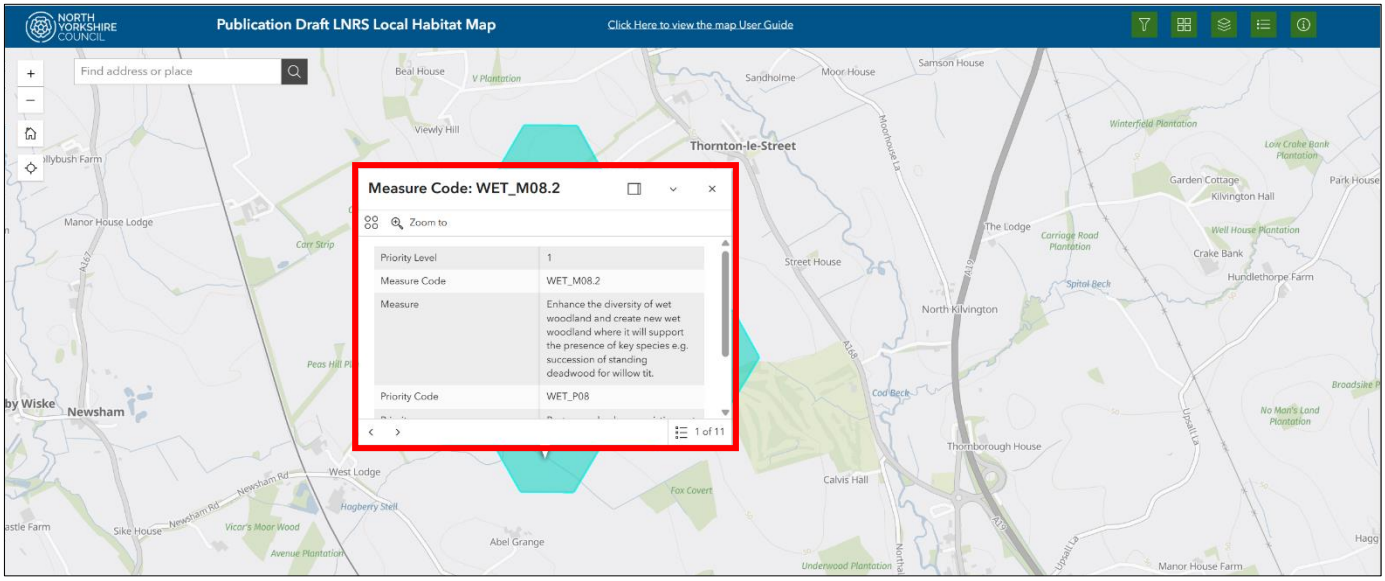
The Mapped Measures layer shows the locations across our geography that have been identified as places where efforts to enhance nature and biodiversity should be focused. This layer is turned on by default when you access the Local Habitat Map and is shown in turquoise shading on the map, as shown in the screenshot below.



This layer overlaps with both the APIB and ACB layers above and shows the specific mapped measures from the LNRS that have been identified as being most appropriate for each location within the strategic network. The Mapped Measures layer is based on 20ha regular hexagons and the outline of each hexagon can be seen by the light grey outline when you zoom into the map, as shown in the screenshot below.

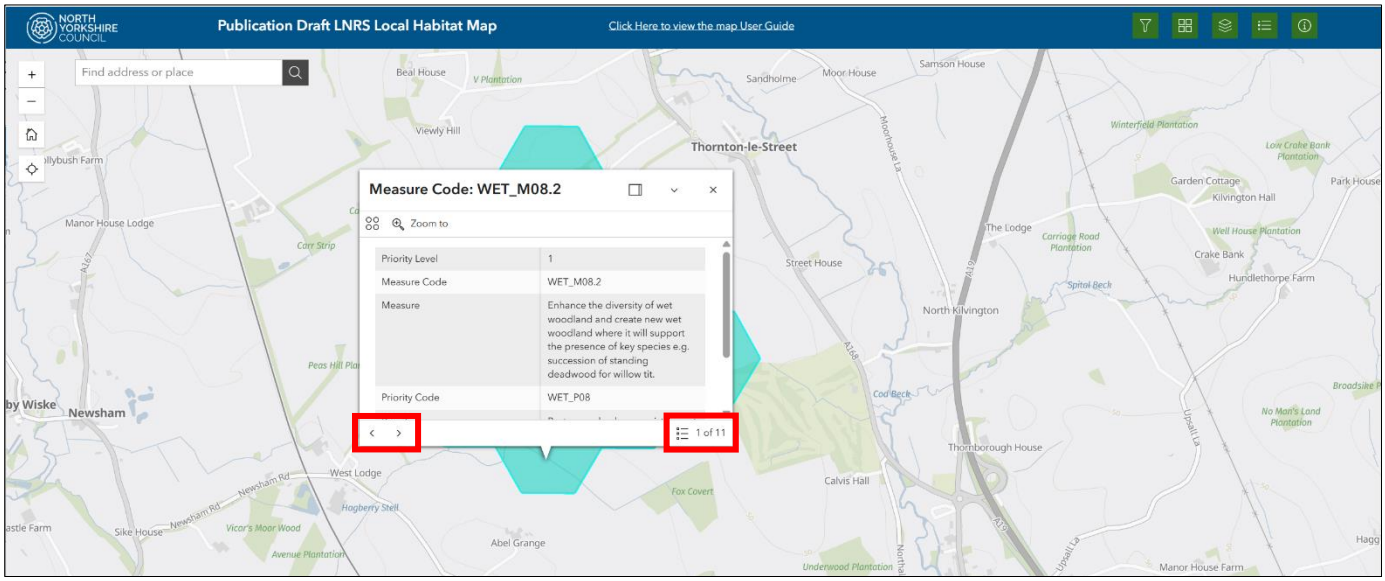


Clicking on one of the hexagons will generate a pop-up window showing information about the mapped measures for that hexagon (it may take a few moments for the pop-up to appear, depending on the speed of your internet connection). The pop-up window is shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



The pop-up window will show the priority level of the measure, the unique measure code, and the measure description. Scrolling down in the pop-up window will also show the unique priority code and priority description of the priority that the measure relates to (to provide wider context of the priority the measure is intended to contribute towards).

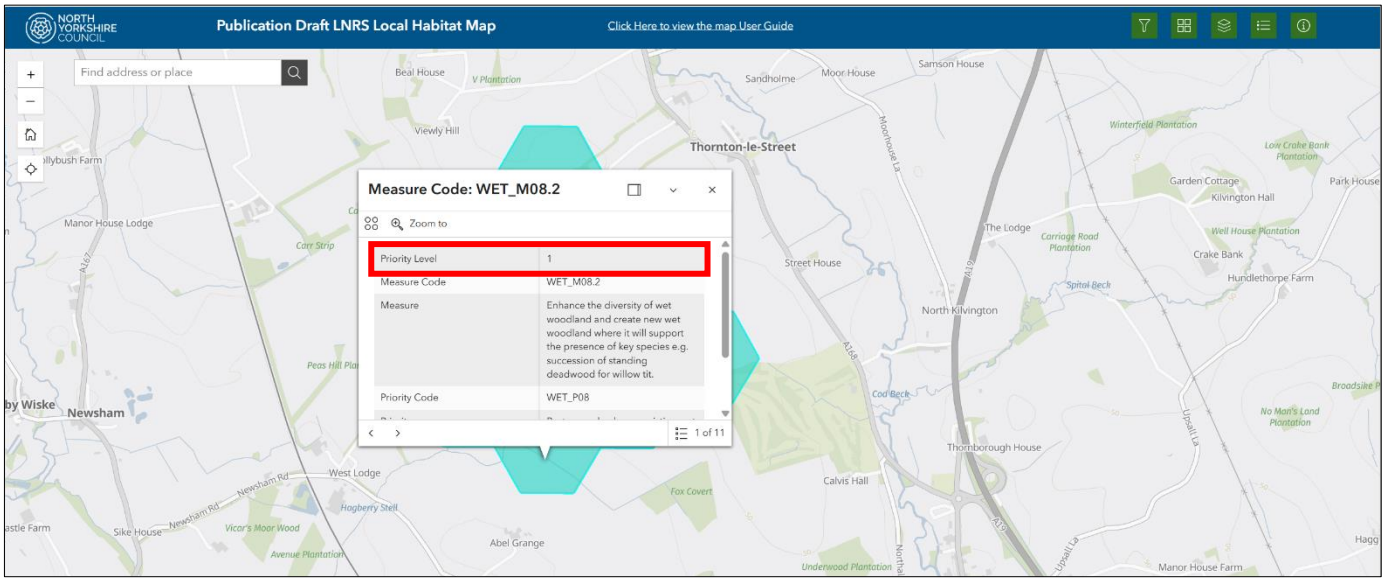
Please note for most hexagons there will be multiple mapped measures at the same location. This will be indicated by a '1 of 2' or '1 of 3' note in the corner of the pop-up window. You can use the 'back' and 'forward' arrows in the opposite corner of the pop-up window to scroll between the different mapped measures. Both are shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



Other nearby hexagons that have the same mapped measure allocated to them will be highlighted in bright blue on the map. This will change as you scroll through the different measures. This gives a useful indication of other nearby hexagons where the same mapped measure is also considered to be appropriate.

Priority Level

Each mapped measure has been assigned a priority level, with level 1 having the highest priority, level 2 having a moderate priority, and level 3 having a lower priority. The priority level is outlined red in the screenshot below.



It is not the intention to say that some measures are ‘low priority’, but to provide a relative level of priority across the mapped measures. The general principle is that where a measure has more ‘niche’ requirements (and therefore can only be done in a small number of places) it has been assigned a higher priority level (e.g. Level 1). For measures that have fewer constraints (and therefore can be done in a much wider number of places), these have been assigned a lower priority level (e.g. Level 3).

The priority levels should be used as a guide as to which measures should be prioritised in a particular location. Generally, a Level 1 measure should be prioritised over a Level 2 or Level 3 measure, and a Level 2 measure should be prioritised over a Level 3 measure, subject to the site conditions being suitable to deliver the higher priority measure.

The mapped measures are presented in priority order in the pop-up window, with Priority Level 1 measures appearing first, followed by Level 2 and then Level 3 measures.

Unmapped Measures

The Local Habitat Map is just one part of the LNRS. If your location of interest is outside the strategic network, with no mapped measures shown on the map, there are still many other measures within the strategy that could be undertaken that would provide benefits for nature and the wider environment. These are referred to as ‘unmapped measures’. Please refer to Document 4 ‘Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, Part II – Priorities and Measures’ of the written strategy documents to see the full list of priorities and measures (including the unmapped measures).

Clicking on an area outside of the strategic network in the Local Habitat Map will generate the ‘Outside Network’ pop-up message below, which includes a link to Document 4 of the strategy:

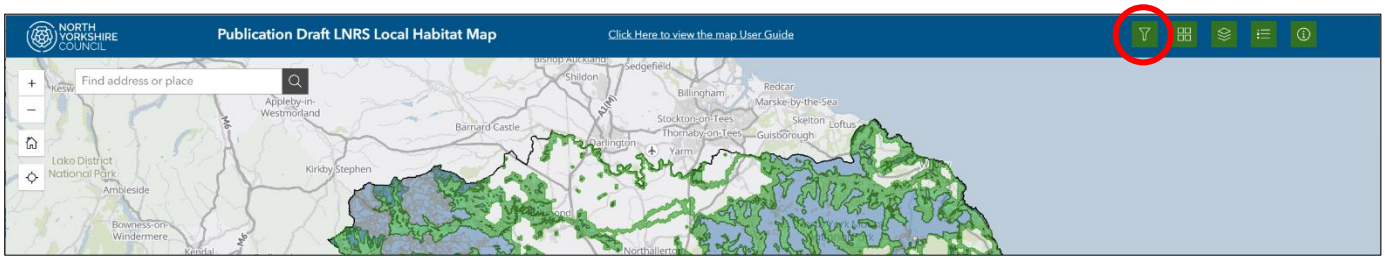
> “There are no proposed mapped measures (actions) for this location, which is outside the strategic nature recovery network. Appropriate measures can still be undertaken to benefit nature in this location. Please see Document 4 of the LNRS documents for the full list of nature recovery priorities and associated measures (actions) that could be considered”

8. Using the habitat filters for the Mapped Measures layer

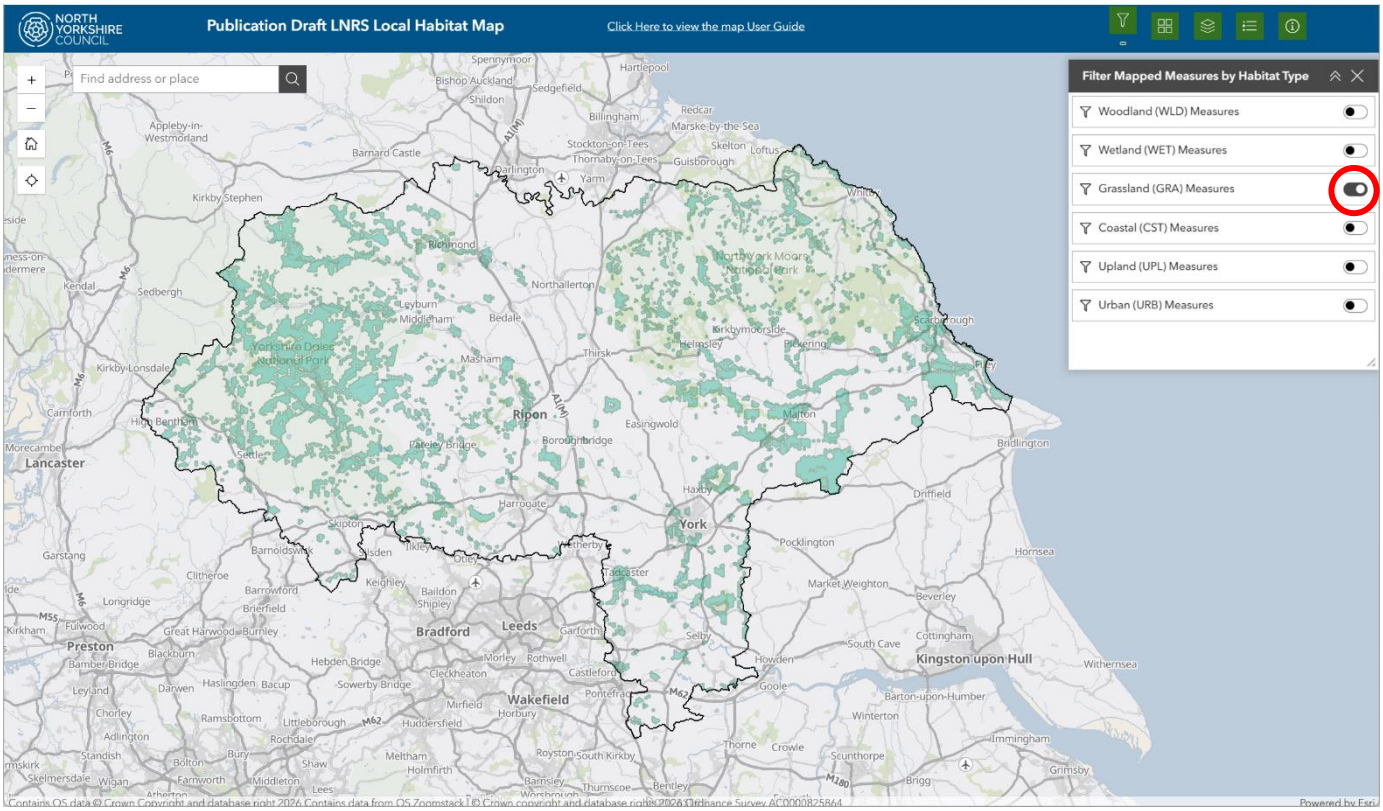
The Mapped Measures layer can be filtered by habitat type. This allows you to see only the mapped measures for a particular habitat type, for example only the mapped measures relating to ‘Woodland’ habitats or only those relating to ‘Grassland’ habitats.

Please note: The habitat filters **only** affect the Mapped Measures layer. They do not have any effect on any of the other layers within the Local Habitat Map. The Mapped Measures layer must be turned on to see the effect of the habitat filters.

The habitat filters can be accessed by clicking the green ‘Filter Mapped Measures by Habitat Type’ button in the top-right corner of the map window, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



This will open the ‘Filter Mapped Measures by Habitat Type’ window. Clicking on the toggle button next to a habitat type, shown circled red in the screenshot below, will apply the relevant filter to the Mapped Measures layer.



In the example shown above, the ‘Grassland’ habitat filter has been turned on, which will filter the Mapped Measures layer to only show hexagons containing mapped measures for Grassland habitats. Mapped measures for the other habitat types will not be shown, as all other habitat type filters are turned off.

To go back to seeing the full Mapped Measures layer, showing the mapped measures for all habitat types, you must then turn any filter toggles back off again.

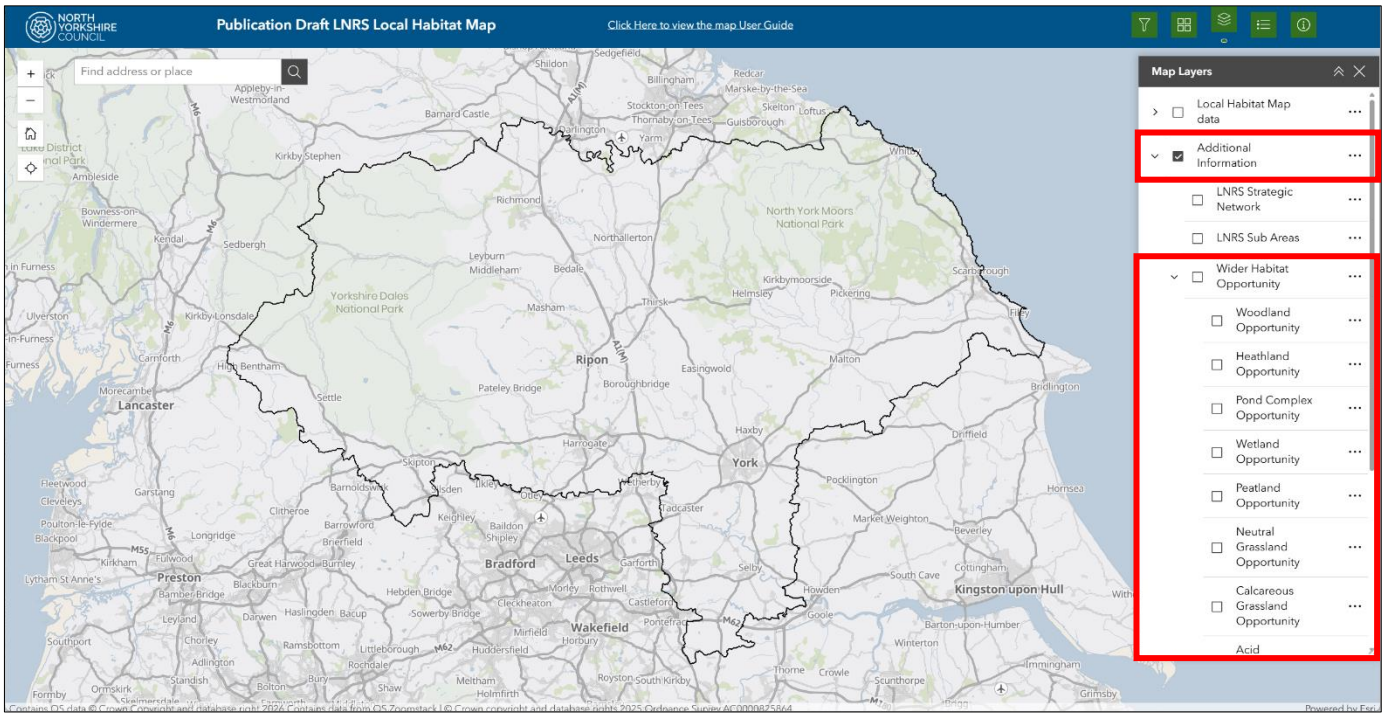
Please note: It can take some time for the habitat filters to take effect. This is due to the large amount of data contained within the Mapped Measures layer. This is particularly the case when habitat filters are turned ‘off’ and the Mapped Measures layer needs to go back to showing the mapped measures for all habitat types. Please be patient whilst the data loads.

You can turn on multiple habitat filters at a time, if desired. For example, you could turn on the ‘Woodland’ and ‘Grassland’ habitat filters at the same time to see hexagons that contain mapped measures for both woodland and grassland together.

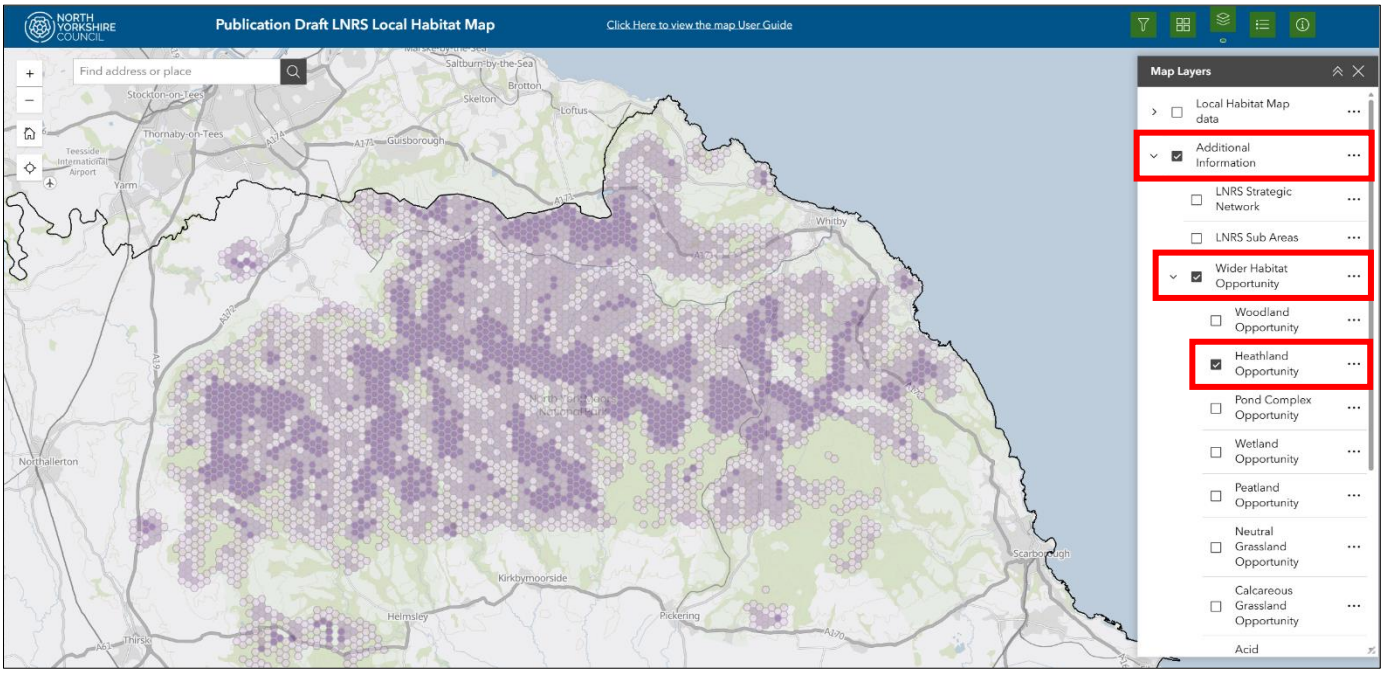
9. Using the Wider Habitat Opportunity layers

The wider habitat opportunity layers are non-statutory layers, intended to provide additional information about which areas of North Yorkshire and York have the greatest general longer-term potential for particular habitat types. The wider habitat opportunity layers should not be directly compared with the statutory LNRS layers, in particular the Mapped Measures layer, as the mapped measures are based on a much wider range of considerations and additional datasets.

The wider habitat opportunity layers give a general indication of the locations where opportunity exists for a particular habitat type across the strategy area (both inside and outside the strategic network). These layers also demonstrate the potential to develop the strategic network in future iterations of the LNRS. The wider habitat opportunity layers are based on 20ha regular hexagons. The wider habitat opportunity layers are turned off by default and are contained under the 'Additional Information' layer folder, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



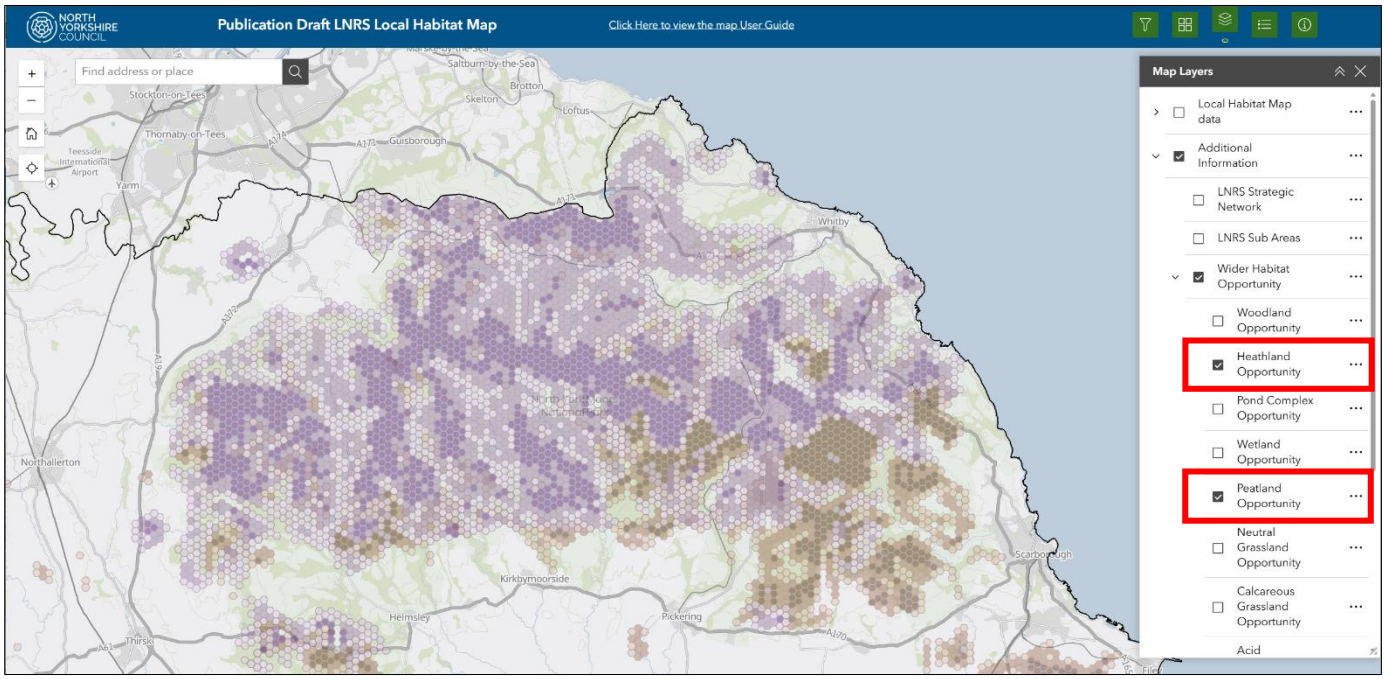
Please note: In order to view the wider habitat opportunity layers, you need to have both of the 'parent' layers 'Additional Information' and 'Wider Habitat Opportunity' turned on, as well as the 'child' habitat opportunity layer you wish to view, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



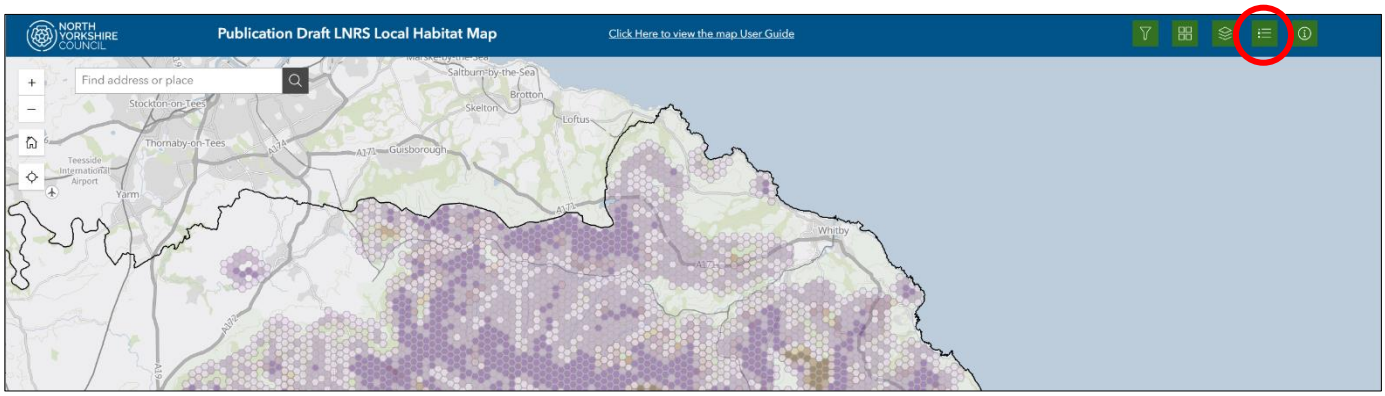
The habitat opportunity layers display as a 'heat map' with three different levels of shading. Hexagons shown with the darkest shading contain the highest opportunity for the habitat type selected. Hexagons in the mid-level shading contain medium opportunity, and hexagons in the lightest shading contain lower opportunity. Areas of the map that are not shaded do not have any notable opportunity for the selected habitat type.

Please note: These layers are based on underlying habitat data and are intended to provide a general guide as to which locations within the strategy area may have the greatest longer-term opportunity for particular habitat types. They are not intended to give a definitive view of where particular habitat types should be created.

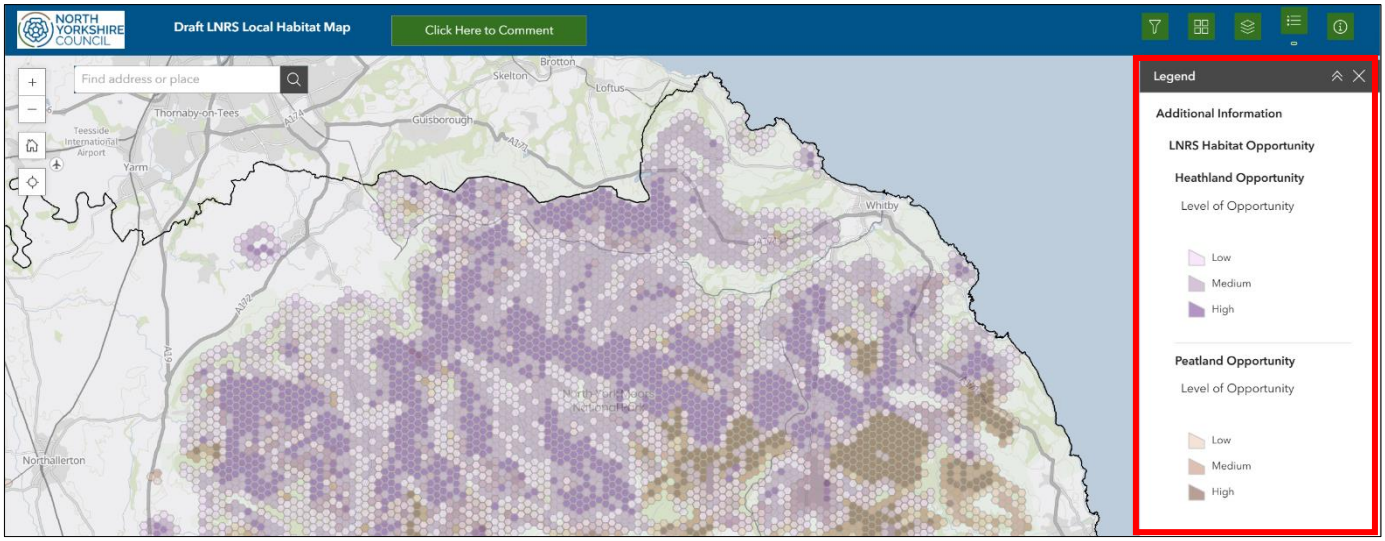
You can turn on multiple habitat opportunity layers at the same time. The layers are semi-transparent, so you should be able to see where two layers overlap with each other. For example, if you wanted to see general heathland and peatland opportunity together, you could turn on both the ‘Heathland’ and ‘Peatland’ opportunity layers together, as shown in the screenshot below (heathland opportunity shaded purple, peatland opportunity shaded brown).



The legend for these layers (and other layers within the Local Habitat Map) can be accessed by clicking the green ‘Legend’ button in the top-right corner of the map window, shown circled red in the screenshot below.



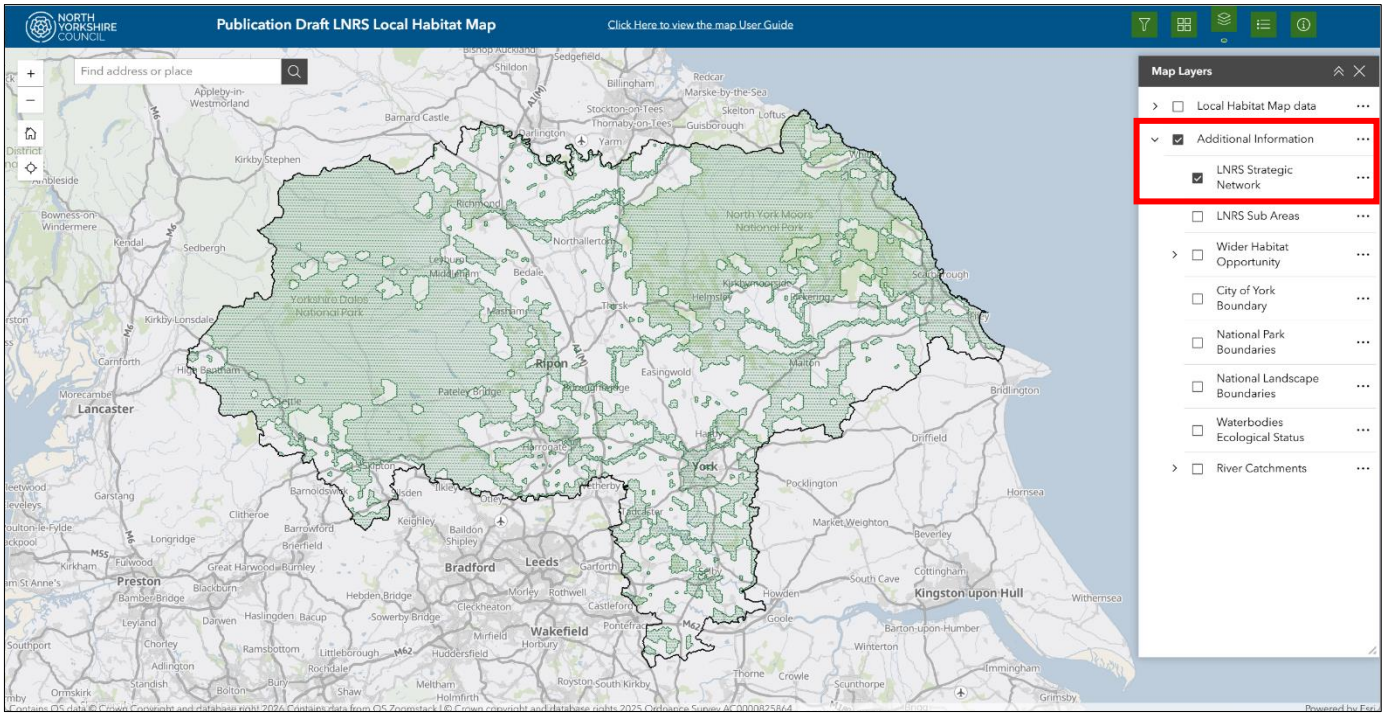
This will open the legend window, which will include all legend information for the layers that are currently turned on within the map. The legend for the habitat opportunities layers is shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



10. Additional Information Layers

There are several other data layers within the Local Habitat Map that provide useful wider context information. These are also contained under the ‘Additional Information’ layer folder. These layers are turned off by default.

Please note: In order to view these layers, you need to have the ‘parent’ layer ‘Additional Information’ turned on, as well as the ‘child’ layer that you wish to view, shown outlined red in the screenshot below.



A brief overview of each of the additional information layers is provided below:

- **LNRS Strategic Network** – This layer provides a visual overview of the LNRS strategic network for North Yorkshire and York. The shaded area is the area covered by both the APIB and ACB layers combined. This layer is useful when used in conjunction with some of the other additional information layers, particularly the ‘Wider Habitat Opportunity’ layers to understand how they relate to the LNRS strategic network.
- **LNRS Sub Areas** – This layer shows the LNRS sub-areas, as referred to in Document 3 ‘Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, Part I – Description of our Strategy Area’. Clicking into one of the sub areas will generate a pop-up providing its name.
- **Wider Habitat Opportunity** – See section 9 for a detailed overview of these layers.
- **City of York Boundary** – This layer provides the administrative boundary of City of York Council.
- **National Park Boundaries** – This layer shows the boundaries of the two National Parks (North York Moors National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park) that overlap the strategy area.
- **National Landscape Boundaries** – This layer shows the boundaries of the three National Landscape areas that are either within or overlap the strategy area.

- **Waterbodies Ecological Status** – This layer shows the location and Water Framework Directive ecological status of river, canal and surface water transfer waterbodies. Clicking onto a waterbody within this layer will generate a pop-up window providing information about the selected waterbody. Under the 'Waterbody Additional Information' category in the pop-up, clicking on the 'View' link will open the Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer[1] for the selected waterbody. This layer is particularly useful when considering LNRS measures in the 'Water and Wetlands' habitat category.
- **River Catchments** – These layers show the River Management Catchments and River Operational Catchments across North Yorkshire and York. These layers are particularly useful when considering LNRS measures in the 'Water and Wetlands' habitat category, as well as when considering the implementation of measures in relation to river catchments.

[1] Catchment Data Explorer – Environment Agency https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning