

North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Document 1: Thriving Nature in North Yorkshire
and York

Short Summary (Non-technical)

February 2026

LNRS Document Navigation

The North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is split into 5 separate parts to help users of the strategy easily find the information that is most relevant to them. The 5 parts are set out in the table below, with a brief description of each one. To access other parts of the LNRS, please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/lnrs-documents

This is: **Document 1: Thriving Nature in North Yorkshire and York – Short Summary (Non-technical)**

1	Thriving Nature in North Yorkshire and York – Short Summary (Non-technical) Provides a short summary (non-technical) of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy intended for residents and readers from a non-technical background
2	Thriving Nature in North Yorkshire and York – Our Local Nature Recovery Strategy Provides a detailed overview of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy intended for politicians, land managers, town planners and wider stakeholders
3	Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part I – Description of Our Strategy Area Provides a detailed description of the strategy area of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy
4	Statement of Biodiversity Priorities Part II – Priorities and Measures Sets out the priorities and measures for the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy
5	The Local Habitat Map Online mapping platform providing the Local Habitat Map for the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including existing Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs) and Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACBs)
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What is a LNRS?

A Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a new type of plan to reverse the decline in nature, while bringing many other benefits to people.

We are required by law to prepare an LNRS for North Yorkshire and York and its main purpose is to restore existing natural areas and propose new ones to help our wildlife flourish.

Our LNRS must:

- Agree what is most important for nature's recovery
- Map the most valuable existing natural areas
- Map proposals for improving or creating natural areas along with other benefits

The strategy does not oblige landowners or land managers to make any changes or undertake any actions on the land that they own or manage, nor does it change any existing protections or restrictions. Instead, the strategy seeks to encourage working together for nature across our region.



Curlew

Picture credit: Paul Harris

Why do we need a LNRS?

- In Yorkshire over 25% of species have declined in the last 30 years
- Our area contains over 800 species considered to be endangered or vulnerable to extinction, including Adder, Curlew, European Eel, Water Vole and Burnt Orchid
- Only 15% of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are in 'favourable' condition, with:
 - 71% assessed as 'unfavourable – recovering',
 - 9% 'unfavourable – no change' and
 - 5% 'unfavourable – declining'
- Less than 20% of North Yorkshire and York's rivers are classed as having good ecological status



Water Vole

Picture credit: Natural England - Paul Lacey



Workshop with farmers, Selby Auction Mart

Who has been involved?

Preparation of the LNRS has been led by North Yorkshire Council with support from a wide range of organisations and stakeholders, including:

- Natural England
- Forestry Commission
- Environment Agency
- York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
- City of York Council
- North York Moors National Park Authority
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
- Forest of Bowland, Howardian Hills and Nidderdale National Landscapes' teams
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- White Rose Forest
- Dales to Vales River Network
- National Farmers Union (NFU)

During the development of the strategy, we have included the views and expertise of many interest groups and individuals across our geography. We have facilitated seven webinars, three in-person briefings for councillors, 30 in-person workshops, 30 stakeholder one-to-one interviews, 30 one-to-one sessions with land managers and farmers, and engaged with 80 different organisations and over 1,500 individuals.

Vision and principles

Our vision for restoring nature is:

To work together to enhance, expand, restore and connect our region's habitats for thriving nature across North Yorkshire and York.

Our ambition is that by 2035 our area will be an exemplar for abundant nature, and we will leave our natural environment in a better state for people and wildlife species, while supporting a prospering economy and addressing climate change.

Working with our stakeholders we have co-created 10 principles that underpin our vision. They are:

What we need to do:

1	Restore nature’s way of doing things, like recreating floodplains to manage flooding better
2	Produce food, fuel and timber in a nature friendly way
3	Connect people to nature by helping people become more aware of it, our responsibility to it and the health and wellbeing benefits it can provide
4	Manage our water sustainably for both people and wildlife
5	Enhance the character of our area



How we can do it:

6	Work across and engage communities, businesses, public bodies and not-for-profit organisations to help nature to thrive
7	Put nature at the heart of political decision making
8	Attract funding and green finance into nature
9	Prioritise and promote jobs, education, apprenticeships, and skills in delivering nature recovery
10	Monitor change by recording any changes in numbers of wildlife species, tree cover area and other habitats



Our priorities

Our priorities for nature recovery across North Yorkshire and York have been developed by working with a wide range of experts, community groups, farmers, landowners and others. Our priorities set out what we are seeking to do, and why we are seeking to do it.



Bat box building

Picture credit: Andy Steele


Priorities across North Yorkshire and York


We agreed with stakeholders several priorities that would apply across our whole geography. These are:


- Ensure the join up of habitats like woodlands and wetlands so wildlife species can move more easily
- Undertake actions to benefit key species (for example: Adder, Curlew and Water Vole)
- Control invasive species (for example Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed)
- Work with residents, communities and organisations for opportunities to get involved with nature recovery
- Improve methods for recording nature and share knowledge between organisations for improving nature


Habitat priorities


Alongside the above priorities, we have 39 nature recovery priorities, which are organised into the seven categories below:


 Farmland


 Upland

 Grassland

 Woodland

 Water and wetlands

 Urban

 Coast

Measures (actions)

Each priority has a number of measures, which are the practical ‘on the ground’ actions that would help to deliver the aims of the priority. In other words, how we could do nature recovery and where we could do it.

For example, in farmland areas, one of our priorities is to expand the hedgerow network. One of the measures (actions) to achieve this is to improve existing hedgerows by planting up gaps, carrying out hedge laying and planting trees within the hedgerow.



Planting up gaps in an existing hedgerow

Picture credit: Natural England, Peter Roworth








Rawcliffe Lake, York

Benefits from nature

Our society and economy depend upon a whole range of wider benefits from nature that help us meet our daily needs, as well as support our ability to manage the effects of climate change.

Examples of these wider benefits from nature include:¹

-  Supporting pollination of our plants and crops
-  Cooling and shading from trees and plants
-  Lowering of noise levels through absorption by trees and plants
-  Helping to regulate our climate
-  Providing us with clean water

As well as enhancing and creating habitat for nature, the priorities contained within the strategy will also make positive contributions to these wider benefits from nature that we all enjoy.

¹ Icons supplied by Natural England



Focus species

There are many rare and threatened species in North Yorkshire and York, however the declines that we have seen in these species can be reversed by enhancing, creating and connecting habitats across our geography.

Working with experts we have drawn up a list of 60 focus species and five species groups (101 species in total) that would benefit from improvements to habitats and we plan to record and monitor any increase in the number of these species in our area, to help understand if our strategy is making a difference.

- Our focus species list includes:
- Adder
 - Burnt Orchid
 - Swift
 - Hen Harrier
 - Curlew
 - White-clawed Crayfish
 - Tansy Beetle
 - Red Squirrel



Bigger, better, more, and more joined up

The diagrams below are intended to demonstrate how a fragmented landscape, without a connected and thriving ecological network can be transformed to become healthy and long lasting.

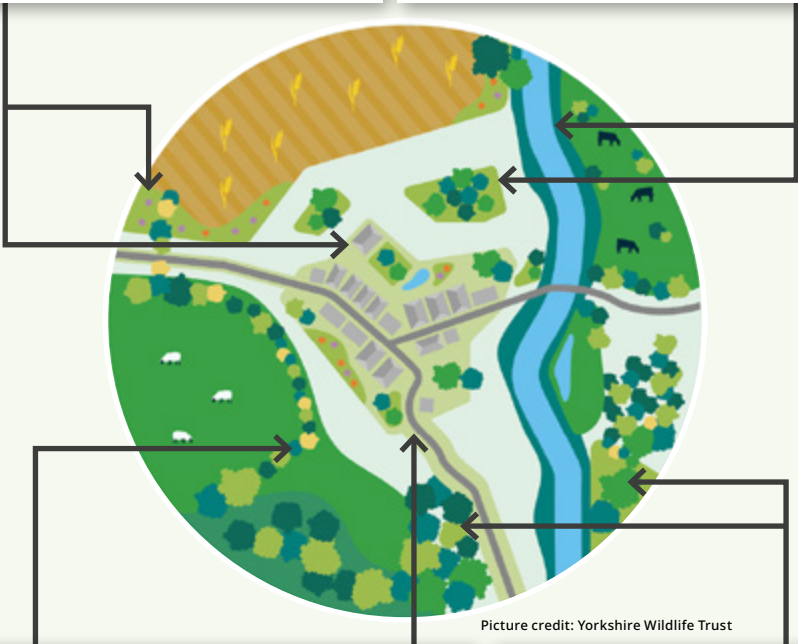
A fragmented landscape



Picture credit: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

A healthy and resilient landscape

- More** – increase the overall extent of land and water dedicated to nature conservation. E.g. Create arable margins and more urban green spaces benefiting both nature and people, as well as new protected areas
- Better** – improve the quality of existing habitats through better management and restoration. E.g. Improved management of woodlands and re-naturalising rivers, improving water quality, removing artificial barriers

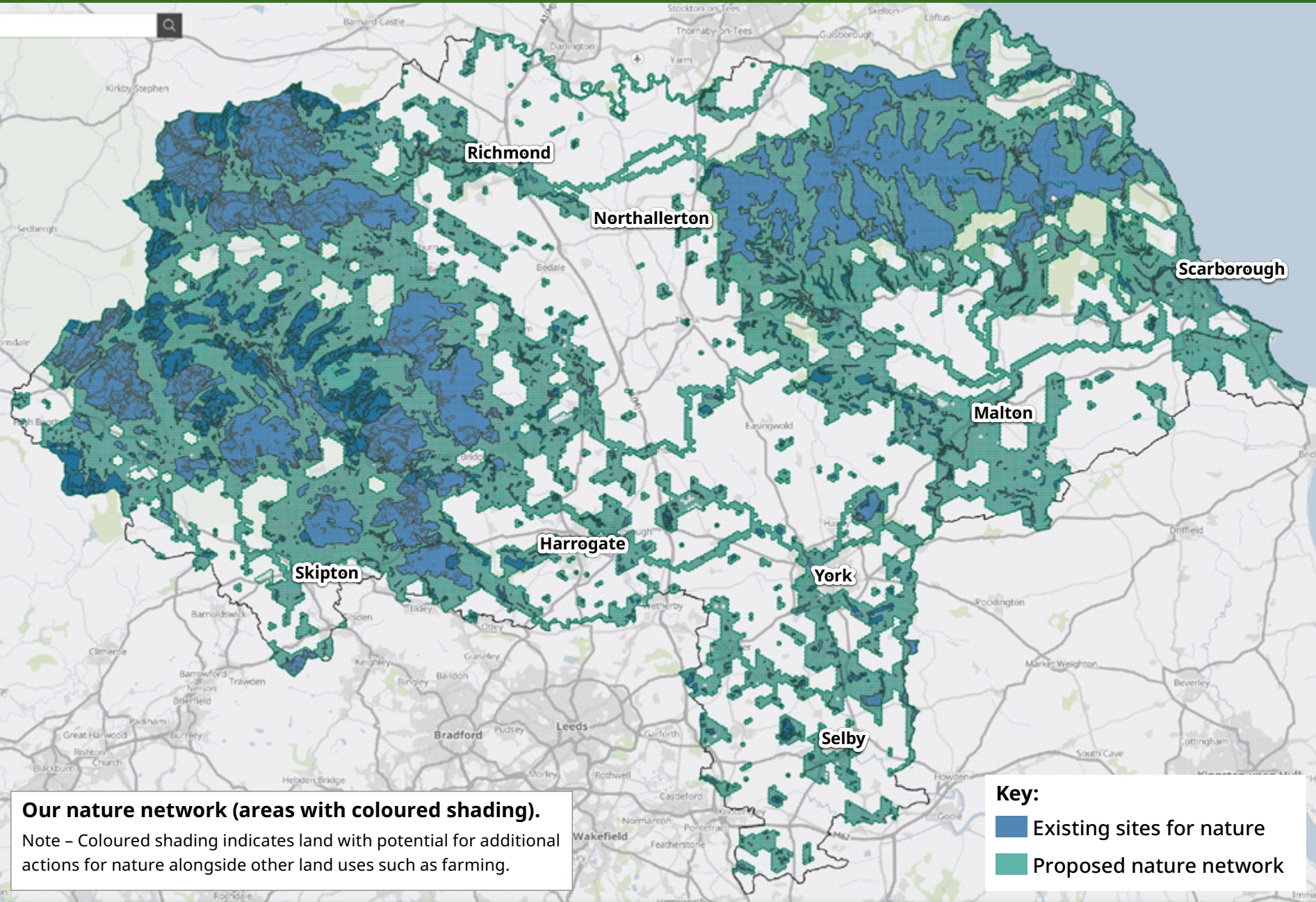


Picture credit: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

- Joined** – create connections on and between land, water and sea, allowing for wildlife movement and genetic exchange through corridors and stepping stones. E.g. Create and restore hedgerows and manage road verges to increase biodiversity
- Bigger** – create larger, more contiguous areas of habitat, to reduce fragmentation. E.g. Increase the extent of woodlands and create buffer zones around sensitive sites

Our nature network - Local Habitat Map

Our nature network (Local Habitat Map) provides a vision to create a connected network of habitats across North Yorkshire and York. It will form part of the proposed national nature recovery network across England. The Local Habitat Map can be accessed here: www.northyorks.gov.uk/lhrs-documents



Ways to help nature thrive – what you can do

Everyone in North Yorkshire and York can contribute to our vision 'to work together to enhance, expand, restore and connect our region's habitats for thriving nature across North Yorkshire and York'

Residents and community groups can help nature to thrive in their local area, while landowners, land managers, farmers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can work at a bigger scale to aid nature recovery, particularly by working in partnership.

North Yorkshire Council will continue to support partnership working for nature recovery in our area.

Residents

Private gardens make up a significant proportion of our total land area and there are several measures within the strategy that can be undertaken in gardens to benefit nature, such as planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers, reducing the frequency of lawn mowing, and creating small areas of water such as ponds and rainwater gardens. Action across a neighbourhood can also expand and connect natural habitats, supporting a wide variety of species.

Residents can use the strategy to:

- Inform the measures (actions) they can carry out in their gardens and local parks
- Join a citizen science group involved in recording and monitoring changes in the number of species in our area

- Join a volunteer programme run by organisations such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (Team Wilder), St Nicks (Green Corridors) in York, and the Lower Ure Conservation Trust (LUCT) near Ripon

Landowners, land managers and farmers

Over 70% of our land area is farmed and we also have many large estates across our geography. Much of this land is managed for food, fuel or timber, but there is great potential to better integrate natural habitats alongside these productive uses, bringing down costs for farmers through reduced input costs, supporting nature and making our land more resilient to climate change.

Landowners, land managers and farmers can use the LNRS to:

- Understand how their land fits within the Local Habitat Map and the nature network
- Inform the measures (actions) they could carry out on their land
- Inform and support applications for funding and delivery of projects



Monitoring water quality

Picture credit: Charlie Fox



TadCrafters meadow creation

Picture credit: Andy Steele



Team Wilder Empowerment Day - Urban Tree Huggers

Picture credit: Jo Rawson, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust



Forestry Commission woodland advisor working with farmer

Picture credit: Forestry Commission

Find out more

We hope you found this short summary document informative. Please do consider exploring the Local Habitat Map for North Yorkshire and York and reviewing our other documents: www.northyorks.gov.uk/lhrs-documents

A paper copy of all the documentation is available at the North Yorkshire Council Customer Services Hub, Campus Buildings, Treadmills, East Road, Northallerton, DL6 1AU (open office hours, Monday to Friday)

Contact us

Online: northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us

By telephone: For further information call **0300 131 2 131** and say '**nature recovery**' when prompted

North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

You can request this information in another language or format at northyorks.gov.uk/accessibility