



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 5 MARCH 2026</b>
Subject	<b>GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Email: <a href="mailto:Juliet.Layton@cotswold.gov.uk">Juliet.Layton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director - Planning Services Email: <a href="mailto:Geraldine.LeCointe@cotswold.gov.uk">Geraldine.LeCointe@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Danielle Berry, Head of Natural, Built and Historic Environment Email: <a href="mailto:Danielle.Berry@cotswold.gov.uk">Danielle.Berry@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To endorse the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Annexes	Annex A – Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Part 1 – Gloucestershire’s Biodiversity and Opportunities for Nature Recovery Annex B – Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Part 2 – Gloucestershire’s Biodiversity Priorities and Potential Measures Annex C – A link to the Local Habitat Map
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Endorse the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	There was a public consultation (8 <sup>th</sup> September – 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2025) on the draft strategy which was open to all. Ward members were informed of the consultation timeline and were advised that they could respond directly to Gloucestershire County Council or share their comments with Cotswold District Council to be incorporated



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into a collective response. This response was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2025.

Following the public consultation, Gloucestershire County Council, as the responsible authority, circulated its final Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to all supporting authorities (the county's district, borough and city councils). None of the supporting authorities submitted a publication advisory notice to the responsible authority, preventing publication of the strategy.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1** This report is seeking endorsement of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (hereafter referred to as 'the strategy'). The strategy is a spatial tool, introduced under the Environment Act 2021, which identifies where and how nature recovery can be most effectively achieved across the county.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

**2.1** England is widely recognised as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. In response, the Government has made legally binding commitments to halt the decline in biodiversity and support the recovery of nature. A key part of this approach is the introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

**2.2** The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has appointed 48 responsible authorities to lead the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their respective areas. Gloucestershire County Council has been designated as the responsible authority for Gloucestershire. Collectively, the 48 strategies cover the whole of England, with no gaps or overlaps.

**2.3** Working in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, supporting authorities (the county's district, borough and city councils), together with key stakeholders such as, the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership and the Cotswolds National Landscape Board, have contributed local knowledge, expertise, and the best available information and data to inform the strategy.

**2.4** Whilst every strategy will be specific and tailored to its area, every strategy must include the following:

- A local habitat map
- A written statement of biodiversity priorities.

**2.5** These requirements must set out what the strategy aims to achieve and the practical actions that will support those aims. They should also identify where actions could be undertaken to achieve the greatest benefits and connect or expand existing areas that are important for nature.

**2.6** All public authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and must 'have regard' to the relevant local nature recovery strategy when doing so. For example, plan-makers should use the strategy to inform how they meet the National



Planning Policy Framework requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity through the planning system.

- 2.7** The Environment Act 2021 also introduced mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, requiring applicants and developers to ensure that the natural environment is left in a measurably better state than before development takes place. Proposals that create, enhance, or restore habitat in locations identified within the strategy will receive a higher biodiversity value than those delivered elsewhere, as these areas are considered more strategically important for nature recovery. This approach will encourage applicants and developers to prioritise habitat enhancement, creation, and restoration that align with local nature recovery priorities.
- 2.8** There is no requirement that any specific proposed action set out in the strategy must be carried out. Instead, the strategy is intended to guide where public, private and voluntary sectors focus their nature recovery efforts to aid in nature recovery across the county.

### **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** Part 1 (Annex A) of the strategy sets out its purpose as a spatial tool to guide the most effective opportunities for nature recovery across Gloucestershire. It is structured around six key aims:
- Safeguarding, mapping and enhancing existing biodiversity-rich sites
  - Landscape scale connectivity
  - Climate emergency
  - Our relationship with water
  - The value of mixed and wilder habitats
  - Biodiversity in our developments and settlements
- 3.2** To support these aims, Part 2 (Annex B) of the strategy describes a range of Potential Measures, which are recommended actions or management options designed to deliver one or more of the 10 Biodiversity Priorities:
- Grassland, meadows and heathlands (open habitats)
  - Woodland habitats
  - Mixed and mosaic habitats
  - Open water habitats



- Running water habitats
- Wetland habitats
- Estuarine habitats
- Nature-friendly farming and forestry
- Biodiversity in settlements and developments
- Species priorities

**3.3** The Local Habitat Map (Annex C) identifies existing areas of high biodiversity value, known as Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity, as well as areas with potential for restoration or habitat creation, referred to as Areas That Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity. The map also spatially visualises the priorities and opportunities set out in parts 1 and 2 of the strategy.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**4.1** There are no suitable alternative options. Gloucestershire County Council has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to prepare and publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Gloucestershire. Cotswold District Council has a statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and must 'have regard' to the relevant local nature recovery strategy when doing so.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

**5.1** The strategy is a spatial tool, enabling a wide range of stakeholders to identify opportunities for habitat enhancement, creation, and restoration, helping to effectively target nature recovery across Gloucestershire.

**5.2** The officer recommendation is to endorse the strategy.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** The report raises no direct financial implications.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** The report raises no direct legal implications. However, Cotswold District Council must 'have regard' to the strategy when making decisions and preparing plans.



## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** Cotswold District Council, as a supporting authority, has been actively involved at key stages in the development of the strategy helping to mitigate any associated risks.
- 8.2** The Head of Natural, Built and Historic Environment, alongside the Head of Planning Services and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning collectively responded to the public consultation, further mitigating any associated risks.
- 8.3** Prior to publication, the final strategy was circulated to all supporting authorities to confirm that it was justified by the public consultation findings and not materially deficient. Cotswold District Council, along with the other supporting authorities, did not issue a publication advisory notice.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** In Gloucestershire, the Local Nature Partnership and Climate Leadership Gloucestershire advocate for all residents to live within 15 minutes of accessible, biodiversity-rich green space. This ambition seeks to reduce inequalities in access to nature, improve public health, boost the local economy, and enhance biodiversity. The strategy outlines opportunities and examples to support this ambition.

## **10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1** The strategy directly addresses both the climate and ecological emergencies, identifying opportunities to tackle them in tandem.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** None

(END)