

## Equality Impact Assessment

Please see details below. When ready, approve or reject the request using the link below.

**Name of policy:** Local Nature Recovery Strategy

**Department:** Environment & Transport

**Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment:** Vicky Cormie

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**What is the proposal?:** Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are new statutory duty placed on local authorities as a result of the Environment Act 2021. They are 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. The LNRS covers Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

**What change and impact is intended by the proposal?:** They will support the delivery of international, national, and local targets and commitments on nature and the wider environment. They are intended to support the recovery of nature, address environmental issues such as climate change and pollution, improve access to nature and result in improvements in health and wellbeing.

**What is the rationale for this proposal?:** To comply with the requirements of the new statutory duty and to develop a LNRS that achieves the intended outcomes.

**What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?:** As the development of the LNRS is part of an England-wide Government policy to recover nature, data from Natural England was received on a range of equality aspects in relation to nature. These include: areas of high deprivation and low access to nature; combined green space and public rights of way inequalities; socio-economic statistics; sports play and active recreation; proximity to land with permissive access; accessible natural green space inequalities (pop density) (IMD); access to nature close2home; access to greenspaces standard (ANGSt); green blue infrastructure assets including access points and

private gardens.

In addition, the Council utilised the overall demographic data for the LNRS area (Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland) to inform which demographic groups are to be targeted for the communications and engagement plan.

**What does it show?:** The data showed that the LNRS area (Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland) has a very diverse demographic profile with higher densities of demographic diversity in Leicester City and in some of the Market Towns.

The data also showed that there was a correlation between deprivation and poor access to green spaces as well as increased exposure to environmental factors such as air pollution, litter and noise pollution.

In addition, it was noted that aging populations in rural areas are becoming more isolated. Also, it was noted that people with disabilities, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and young people in particular on average access nature less.

**What engagement has been undertaken so far?:** The Council has procured professional engagement consultants and works closely with Natural England's Senior Adviser on Inclusion. The specification for the engagement contract included the requirement to be able to engage effectively with a wide range of audiences including those from different demographic backgrounds.

The engagement has been divided into two broad categories namely engagement with key stakeholders such as farmers, environmental groups and public sector organisations, and engagement with a wider audience including, residents, businesses, faith and BAME groups as well as people from the other protected characteristics.

The Council's Environment team, Engagement team and the Business Intelligence team worked closely in designing and developing the LNRS' engagement plan and mechanisms. All Communications teams from the 10 local authorities within the LNRS area collaborate closely to ensure effective delivery of the communications and engagement for the LNRS across the area. Further cooperation is undertaken with the communications teams of partner organisations such as parish and town councils, National Farmers Union, Countryside Landowners Association, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, National Forest Company, Forestry Commission, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The Council is also part of the East Midlands Inclusions Hub which brings together the responsible authorities developing the LNRSs across the East Midlands with equality and inclusion groups from the area to discuss and learn about the issues that the group members have in relation to accessing etc nature and how best to engage and involved the group members in the development of the various LNRSs.

So far, online briefing sessions have been undertaken with key stakeholders and some of the community groups with engagement with equality and inclusion groups due to take place during June and July 2024. This will take the form of several community group workshops led by the consultants reaching inner city and rural residents, young people, faith, BAME and other minority groups and nine resident workshops in each of the local authority areas, several awareness events such as the Riverside Festival and Harborough Carnival. In addition, there will be at least three workshops with farmers, landowners and land managers with one designed specifically for young farmers.

Additionally, stakeholders and residents have been engaged through an online survey and a Social PinPoint interactive map which allows residents to add comments and suggestions.

**What does it show?:** As part of the surveys demographic data is being gathered. To date, over 700 responses have been received. In early May 2024 an assessment of the respondents showed that the following groups were under represented: parents under 18; people aged 18-34; under 18's; people of non-white heritage; residents from Leicester, Oadby & Wigston, North West Leicestershire and Hinckley and Bosworth. Following this, there has been a greater emphasis to address this under representation through the respective communications teams and partner organisations.

**Evidence documents upload (optional):** FINAL Report to Steering Group 8th February 2024.pdf, LNRS - Inclusive Engagement with Communities 011223.pdf

**Age:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities.	No

**Disability:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities. An improved access to nature for people with disabilities is sought.	No

**Race:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new	No

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
employment opportunities. An improved access to nature for BAME groups is sought.	

**Sex:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities. It is hoped that women will feel safer in the countryside and in green spaces.	No

**Gender Reassignment:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities. It is hoped that gender reassigned people will feel safer in the countryside and in green spaces.	No

**Marriage and Civil Partnership:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities.	No

**Sexual Orientation:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities. It is hoped that people of different sexual orientations will feel safer in the countryside and in green spaces.	No

**Pregnancy and Maternity:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities.	No

**Religion or Belief:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities. It is hoped that people of different religions and beliefs will feel safer in the countryside and in green spaces and improving their access to nature.	No

**Armed Forces:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be	No

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities.	

**Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, armed forced, or disadvantaged communities:**

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
Overall, the Council is seeking to increase understanding, appreciation, access and enjoyment of nature. This group will benefit from improvements to the environment, reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding, heat stress, resulting in improvements in health and wellbeing. There will be increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature as well as new employment opportunities. It is hoped that the LNRS would, to some extent, address issues of rural isolation, deprivation and health inequality as well as addressing some of the needs of deprived or disadvantaged communities.	No

**Action Plan:**

What concerns were identified?	What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale
While there have been no specific concerns identified for any of the protected characteristics, it is recognised that the existing data did not identify the specific concerns, issues and reasons behind these for the various groups. The Council is seeking to gather this information through the residents LNRS survey and the Social PinPoint interactive map.	The planned actions include the residents survey, Social PinPoint interactive map, focused groups, tailored briefings, targeted workshops, awareness events, community group workshops (including with groups representing many of the protected characteristics). There will also be a formal public consultation exercise.	These actions will be delivered by a range of people including Council officers from the Environment team, Engagement team, Trueman Change (engagement consultants), supporting authorities and partner organisations.	The communications and engagement phase is planned to take place between 14 March - 11 July 2025. The public consultation exercise will take place for 8 weeks during January-February 2025.

**Action plan document (optional):** LNRS Project Workbook (LIVE).xlsx

**How will the action plan and recommendations of this assessment be built into decision making and implementation of this proposal?:** The input and contributions from the various organisations, groups, residents etc will play a vital part in the development of the LNRS and the identification of

the nature priorities and measures that will be taken to support the recovery of nature, achievement of wider environmental benefits and improvements in health and wellbeing across the LNRS area.

**How would you monitor the impact of your proposal and keep the EIA refreshed?:** As part of developing the LNRS, a consider how the LNRS will be monitored is needed. This will include considering how equality data will be gathered, analysed and used to inform changes to the LNRS. While some of this will be done as part of developing the LNRS, it is likely that there will be an action within the delivery plan to develop this aspect more fully.

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