

Cheshire and Warrington Local Habitat Map Instructions and FAQs

This document provides guidance on how to use the Cheshire & Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) mapping which is the Local Habitat Map element of the LNRS. It also contains some frequently asked questions (FAQs) for ease of reference. The link to the mapping is here: [Cheshire & Warrington LNRS](#)


Any further questions on how to use the mapping or about its functionality then please check the FAQs below or contact: naturerecovery@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

About the Local Nature Recovery Strategy / Local Habitat Map

The Environment Act 2021 required preparation of LNRS for areas in England identified by Defra. 48 LNRS cover the whole of England and include mapping of each area, which shows existing Core Local Nature Sites (existing national and local designations) as well as Opportunity Areas for Nature Recovery that were created during preparation of the LNRS. See the documentation for further detail on why, how and who created the LNRS and its Local Habitat Map as well as the drivers and uses for this tool: [Cheshire & Warrington LNP: Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)

Initial Guidance Pop Up

When you click the link to the mapping you will first see a pop-up box providing some initial information on the mapping, its purpose, how to use it and where to get further information. Click the enter box to close the pop up. If you select 'Don't show this again' you will not get that pop up when you access the mapping later.

This pop up can be accessed at any time by clicking the info icon  near the centre of the orange banner at the top of the map.

This pop up explains some functionality such as how to turn on / off layers and how to dock the features pop up boxes that appear when clicking a location in the map. We recommend reading the pop up carefully before using the mapping.

What is displayed when you first access the Local Habitat Map

Two layers are already turned on when you first access the map.

Core Local Nature Sites – these are the statutory Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity. These are statutory (protected under UK, EU and International Law) and non-statutory (recognised in local planning policy as being of importance in the local area⁵¹) designated sites and irreplaceable habitats. These are the most important sites for nature, core areas of our ecological network and the foundation of our nature network, that we need to protect, restore, improve, connect and expand.

Opportunity Areas for nature recovery which were created using a nature first approach. The map was created using ecological network modelling that looked at the resistance to species movement in the landscape (e.g. transport and infrastructure effects). Alongside this, the Ecoservr model was used to assess where modelled areas achieved the best ecosystems services score to help focus areas for potential nature recovery, deliverable in the next ten years which also achieve wider environmental benefits. (See Appendix 4 for further technical detail).

Map Layers – the navigation panel

The panel on the right hand side of the screen provides the functionality to switch on / off different layers of mapped information in the LHM.

Please note that to view other layers faster, the Core Local Nature Sites and Opportunity Areas for Nature Recovery layer should be switched off by simply unticking the orange tick boxes next to those two layers on the panel. Please see further sections below to understand how to navigate and use the layers.


The panel can be minimised to view more of the map by clicking on the double upward pointing arrows at the top of the panel. You can also use the Map Layers icon at the top of the screen to toggle the panel on and off.




Mapped actions – explanation and functionality

To get the most out of this map, we have provided a layer information list within the map layers panel, detailing all the specific, mapped practical actions for nature recovery and their associated Priority and action reference numbers (see Local Nature Recovery Strategy for further information).

You can turn on actions layers as follows:

1. Turn off the Core Local Nature Sites and Opportunity Areas for Nature Recovery by unticking the orange boxes
2. Tick the box next to the section of mapped actions you want to view (e.g. Watercourses) – patience is needed whilst the layer loads
 - a. Note that if you do not tick the main Mapped Actions box theme title then none of the actions underneath that title will be displayed
3. To view all the actions in that layer that are mapped please click on the right facing arrow next to the Action title 
4. To select specific actions to view the mapping for a single or two actions then leave only your items orange ticked – turn layers on and off to see functionality at a broad scale

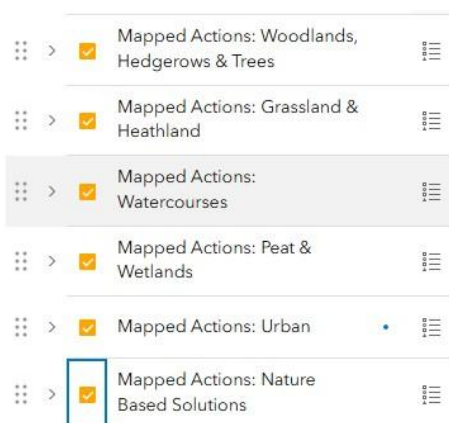
You can move a Mapped Actions section or mapped actions within a section up and down the list on the Map Layers panel by clicking and dragging the layer via the six dots  to the left of each item. A four cross pointer will appear when you do so. This allows you to prioritise mapped actions when looking at several layers in the mapping.

You can turn the view of each Action's legend (coloured symbol) on and off by toggling the right hand icon next to each action.

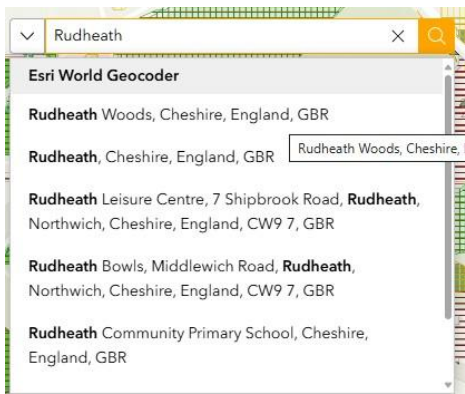
Viewing actions mapped to a specific location

You can zoom in and out of the map using the +/- icons on the top left hand side of the screen or by using a mouse roller with the pointer positioned over the map. You can select locations by clicking in a relevant location on the zoomed in layer. The more mapped actions layers you have turned on the better informed your findings will be.

By clicking a location on the map, you can view the actions mapped for that location where all the Mapped Action layers are turn on.



Alternatively if you want to view a specific known location to see what actions are mapped, you can also use the 'Find address or place function' (top left of the screen) to enter a location or post code or mapping reference and then click the orange magnifying icon to search or use the drop down list that appears once you start typing to select your location. **'Find address or place function' example**



Specific locations (where actions are mapped) can be clicked on to view a pop-up box showing the habitat type and all proposed actions for nature recovery for that location with the relevant Priority for each action shown too. Remember to tick all the mapped actions layers on the right-hand panel to enable viewing all mapped actions for your site/s.

You can then view each mapped action by using the left and right arrows at the bottom left of the pop-up box to scroll through; or you can view a list by clicking the icon to the right of the '1 of X' section bottom right of the pop up.

If you only want to view the actions for a specific habitat, then please tick the mapped actions layer associated with the habitat priority and action and untick all other boxes.

Action layers overlap, so you can rearrange the layer order by clicking and dragging the dots to the left of the layer name to move the item up the list and give it priority in the mapping display.



The pop-up box can be docked to the side of the map by clicking the Dock button at the top of the pop up box – this will dock the box to the top right hand area of the screen, allowing you to view more of the map. To undock simply click the docking icon again.



Having regard to the LNRS

Where sites are being looked at for planning purposes it should be noted that the mapped actions will enable strategic significance uplift in the Defra Metric for Biodiversity Net Gain.

National Planning Practice Guidance requires planning departments and applicants to have regard to the LNRS which includes both mapped and unmapped actions [sometimes referred to as measures]. Unmapped actions in the LNRS are applicable wherever relevant in an LNRS area, so users should also review the full list of actions in the main document or [Appendix 7](#) (which supports delivery of LNRS) to ensure all actions are considered for planning sites.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of sites mapped on the LHM?

There is no requirement on the Responsible Authority or any other body to deliver the LNRS so, unlike a local plan, opportunity sites included in the mapping are not statutorily designated as a result of being included. The LNRS is an evidence base for how nature recovery can be achieved in the most effective and deliverable way. The LNRS does not preclude development and cannot be used as evidence against development but it should inform how that development is designed and delivered to benefit nature recovery.

Do I have to deliver what is mapped at a location?

There is no requirement on land owners / managers to deliver what is mapped in the LNRS at any location. The LNRS mapping provides the best informed opportunities for nature recovery at a location but is guidance only. However using mapped actions to inform planning or funding applications will likely make that application more successful since it reflects the LNRS evidence of what is most appropriate at that location.

Why aren't all actions mapped everywhere?

LNRS is a guide to the best opportunities for nature recovery that can realistically be delivered in the next 5 to 10 years. The Secretary of State will determine when LNRSs across England require review which is likely to be between 3 and 10 years from the date of publication.

Why isn't the data downloading when I have followed the instructions?

Due to the amount of data that each layer holds, sometimes it will take longer to download. Normally, the data downloads quicker when zoomed in, but this could change depending on your Wi-Fi bandwidth and the amount of users on the map at the time.

Is the LNRS relevant for projects separate from BNG?

Yes, it is. The aim of the LNRS and its Local Habitat Map is to ensure that the correct actions (measures) are undertaken to enable nature's recovery and give any project the highest chance of success. There are unmapped actions, which need to be taken into consideration, that could complement the mapped actions. Therefore, it is important to seek expert advice for the site.

Are the Opportunity Areas and mapped actions in the Local Habitat Map completely accurate?

No, they aren't. The Local Habitat Map is based on the best available data from national and local datasets including maps provided by farmers and landowners. Before undertaking any project or BNG site, we recommend that you contact the relevant authorities, landowners or land agents for on the ground survey data.

Will the Environmental Land Management schemes limit actions in the Local Habitat Map that farmers / landowners want to do on their land?

No, It will not. Farmers and landowners are not legally bound to undertake the actions mapped on their land. However, there is a higher likelihood of better outcomes if they do. Although the LNRS has been stated, in the Agricultural Transition Plan (revised) 2024, as being intrinsically linked to the environmental land management schemes, further advice or guidance is awaited from DEFRA.