

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025

Subject: Publication of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Report of: Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region and Sue Johnson, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for the Greater Manchester Green City Region

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### Purpose of Report

This report presents Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Annex A) which has been developed over the last two years with our local authorities and wider stakeholders.

### Recommendations

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Endorse the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
2. Recommend that the Mayor approves the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy for publication, in his capacity as Responsible Authority for Greater Manchester.

### Contact Officers

Name of key contact Officer and email address to be included

Samuel Evans: [Samuel.Evans@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Samuel.Evans@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

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# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The GMCA is recommended to note that the co-benefits decision tool is positive for the draft strategy. There are particular positives for health, resilience and adaptation, carbon, nature and the environment.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
Equality and Inclusion	G	Everyone benefits from nature – and when all this is added together, Greater Manchester gets £1bn of essential benefits from the natural environment each year GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. Public greenspaces are one of our most frequently used public services. GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. This strategy sets out targets, priorities and actions to help nature recovery that communities can take and support in shaping decisions that affect them. Public access to greenspace often helps to support community cohesion. The priorities and actions set out in the strategy are likely to encourage greater community cohesion.		
Health	G	GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £372m in mental health benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £56m in physical health benefits each year, further enhancement to the natural environment could encourage greater levels of physical activity. The strategy promotes the right-to-grow and encourage community food growing which could encourage and enhance the accessibility and provision of locally grown produce in GM.		
Resilience and Adaptation	G	GM's natural environment provides £11m in flood risk reduction and urban cooling benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. GM's natural environment provides £11m in flood risk reduction and urban cooling benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment. The strategy encourages the enhancement of the quality and provision of green and blue infrastructure across Greater Manchester		
Housing				
Economy	G	Greater Manchester's natural assets provide over £1bn of benefits each year to Greater Manchester, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment Further enhancement in the natural environment is likely to result in job opportunities within the sector in the longer term Further enhancement in the natural environment is likely to result in job opportunities within the sector in the longer term, by providing an attractive and high-quality city-region where businesses want to invest and attractive place to live and work for employees. Greater knowledge and integration into decision making of the economic benefits of GM's natural assets will result in more sustainable use of these assets in the future Enhancing our natural environment will provide an attractive and high-quality city-region where businesses want to invest and attractive place to live and work for employees.		
Mobility and Connectivity				
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	GM's natural environment provides £38m in air quality benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment GM's natural environment provides £19m in water quality benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment GM's natural environment reduces noise pollution, benefiting communities. GM's natural environment provides £3m in carbon storage each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment GM's natural environment provides £174m in amenity benefits each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment This strategy sets out targets, priorities and actions to help everyone in the city-region to respond to the biodiversity emergency. This strategy sets out targets, priorities and actions which would help increase local community's access to greenspace. GM's natural environment provides £3m in carbon storage each year, which would increase with further enhancement to the natural environment		
Consumption and Production				
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		This proposal will have a positive contribution to achieving the Greater Manchester carbon Neutral 2038 target by encouraging actions that would help sequester carbon, including peatland restoration and tree planting.		
Further Assessment(s):		Carbon Assessment		
G	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	R Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	RR Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment					
Overall Score					
Buildings		Result		Justification/Mitigation	
New Build residential		N/A			
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance		N/A			
New build non-residential (including public) buildings		N/A			
Transport					
Active travel and public transport		N/A			
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		N/A			
Access to amenities		N/A			
Vehicle procurement		N/A			
Land Use					
Land use		This strategy aims to enhance biodiversity and respond locally to the biodiversity emergency. The creation of new habitat and enhancement of existing habitats are encouraged through the strategy. The strategy encourages the conservation of particularly vulnerable local species.			
No associated carbon impacts expected.		High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

## Risk Management

These proposals have been informed by both national and local agencies and/or policies. National regulations and statutory guidance have been followed in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

## Legal Considerations

### Requirement for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

Sections 104-108 of the Environment Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) introduce requirements to create local nature recovery strategies ('LNRs').

In that regard, an LNR for an area is to be prepared and published by the 'responsible authority'. The 'responsible authority' is appointed by the Secretary of State and for a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the 'responsible authority' is the Mayor.

The Secretary of State has made regulations on the preparation, review and publication of LNRs (the *Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023* ('the 2023 Regulations')).

Each local authority in Greater Manchester (amongst other bodies) is a "supporting authority" in respect of the LNR under Article 3 of the 2023 Regulations.

### Requirement for public consultation:

Regulation 12 of the 2023 Regulations requires a responsible body to consult on its LNRS (which must include the matters set out in section 106 of the 2021 Act) and in doing so comply with regulations 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the 2023 Regulations.

Regulation 12 also requires a responsible authority to publish all responses to the consultation within a reasonable time of the consultation concluding (see Annex B).

### Requirements for publication:

The 2023 regulations require responsible authorities to provide all supporting authorities with the final LNRS (and the intended date for publication) before it can be published. There is also a requirement to provide a copy of the LNRS to neighbouring authorities and to the Secretary of State.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

There are no financial consequences for GMCA revenue budgets. Preparation of the strategy has been cost neutral, as additional burdens funding has been made available to the GMCA to prepare the strategy. The strategy has been produced within the budget provided.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

There are no financial consequences for GMCA capital budgets.

## **Number of attachments to the report: 2**

- Annex A: Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Annex B: GMCA Response to the Public Consultation

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

## **Background Papers**

- [Greater Manchester State of Nature Report 2024](#)

## **Previous GMCA papers**

- [GMCA Paper March 2022 – Biodiversity Emergency](#)
- [GMCA Paper March 2023 – Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)
- [GMCA Paper March 2024 – Progress in tackling the Biodiversity Emergency in Greater Manchester](#)

- [GMCA Paper October 2024 – Endorsement of the Draft-for-Consultation of a Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)

## **Key Decision**

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

## **Exemption from call in**

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No

# 1. Background

- 1.1 Greater Manchester Combined Authority declared a biodiversity emergency in March 2022. This reflected the need for more urgent and ambitious action to tackle the decline in the diversity and abundance of key species and habitats across the city-region.
- 1.2 The extent of this decline is set out in our first “State of Nature in Greater Manchester” report, published in March 2024. Bringing together available local evidence, it set out the declining trends in local wildlife populations, the challenges in growing and managing our most important spaces for nature, the use of land and pressures this puts on nature and the varying degrees of access to which people across the city-region have to nature. This all puts the benefits we receive from the natural environment under increasing pressure, particularly for health and wellbeing, flood risk reduction and carbon sequestration and storage.
- 1.3 There have been efforts across Greater Manchester, across the private, public and third sectors, to try to halt this decline. Despite these, the decline continues, reflecting the broader picture across England.
- 1.4 Over the past two years, a draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been developed to respond to the biodiversity emergency and set out how and where everyone can work together to help nature recover across the city-region. A total of 48 individual LNRS strategies cover all of England, collectively forming a National Nature Recovery Network.

## 2 Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy

### What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

- 2.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a range of measures to seek to halt and reverse biodiversity decline. This included the requirement for LNRS to cover the whole of England, to set out where and how efforts should be focussed locally to contribute to halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity.
- 2.2 The draft Greater Manchester LNRS (see Annex A) sets out how and where we should focus action to try to reverse biodiversity decline and work towards better access to nature for all.
- 2.3 The strategy is aimed at encouraging all organisations, communities and residents to take action to support nature’s recovery. It will be of particular importance for

landowners and will incentivise investment, particularly through Biodiversity Net Gain and environmental land management schemes.

2.4 In preparing the strategy to meet local needs as well as the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, underpinning regulations and statutory guidance, officers have been working with the ten local authorities and stakeholders across the city-region over the past two years to develop the strategy.

2.5 GMCA ran a public survey in early 2024, which received over 800 responses, and held a wide range of workshops, events and other engagement sessions with public, private and VCSFE organisations which collectively informed the preparation of the draft-for-consultation of the LNRS in autumn 2024.

2.6 From 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, a public consultation was conducted on the draft Greater Manchester LNRS. This was promoted via various channels and an in-person drop-in event was held at a venue within each local authority during this period. The consultation received 427 responses. A full report of the consultation responses will be published on the GMCA website and the response to the consultation is attached to this report (at Annex B).

### **3. What does the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy contain?**

3.1 In alignment with the requirements under the Environment Act 2021, regulations thereunder and the statutory guidance issued to responsible authorities, the strategy covers the following:

3.1.1 **Vision:** The strategy sets out a shared vision for nature recovery - “to work together to deliver a resilient network for nature across the city-region, connecting and enhancing wild spaces so that people and nature can thrive.”

3.1.2 **Aims:** The strategy sets out a series of high-level aims to help deliver on this vision, including:

- Enhance and protect: Safeguard, enhance and restore wildlife-rich spaces.
- Create and connect: Create more wildlife-rich resilient spaces, where they will expand and connect spaces for wildlife and people.
- Build resilience: Manage and reduce pressures on our environment and waterways and maximise nature’s role in adapting the city-region to climate change.

And to achieve those aims, that we need to:

- Act together: Work together to take action for nature and embed space for nature and people to thrive across all our communities.
- Accelerate action: Boost the pace and scale of action for nature in response to the biodiversity emergency.
- Improve access: Improve local access to nature and ensure there are more opportunities to enjoy nature responsibly, in those areas which need it the most.
- Engage and value: Better engagement with nature and recognition of its value in our lives and economy.

3.1.3 **Targets** – New quantitative targets to help track progress towards nature recovery are set. These include:

- To increase the amount of land designated for nature by 5,000ha by 2035, growing this from 11% to 15% of the city-region.
- To bring 50% of sites designated for nature into active management for nature conservation by 2035.
- To restore or create 1,800ha of new wildlife-rich land by 2035, and target delivery within the Nature Network.
- To provide at least 3 ha of accessible green space per 1,000 residents by 2035.
- To reduce spills from combined sewer overflows into our waterbodies by disconnecting 150ha of land from our drainage network by 2030.
- To better adapt the city-region to the impacts of climate change by expanding our tree canopy cover from 15% to 17% of the city region by 2035.

3.1.4 A mapped **Nature Network** across GM to help drive forward nature recovery, including:

- Core local nature sites – existing valuable areas for nature.
- Nature recovery opportunity areas – areas where action and investment should be focused across the city-region to build better connect greenspaces for nature and people, alongside other land uses.

3.1.5 **Priorities and actions** – the strategy sets out specific priorities and actions for a series of different broad habitats found across Greater Manchester, including urban greenspaces and buildings, and for particularly vulnerable local species.



3.2 The strategy is attached at Annex A.

## **4. Approval by Supporting Authorities**

4.1 As part of the statutory process, the ten Greater Manchester local authorities, the Peak District National Park Authority and Natural England, as Supporting Authorities, have all approved the draft LNRS for publication.

4.2 A version of the strategy has also been provided to Neighbouring Authorities and the Secretary of State.