

To: [Nature.Recovery@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Nature.Recovery@hants.gov.uk)

Dear Hampshire County Council,

Hampshire is rich in beautiful and rare wildlife, including the Duke of Burgundy butterfly and internationally important populations of Brent geese. Our county is also home to spectacular habitats such as the internationally renowned lowland heath of the New Forest, vital seagrass beds in Portsmouth and chalk rivers such as the Itchen that support an abundance of wildlife including otters, water crowfoot and crayfish.

These vital ecosystems - our natural capital – support every aspect of life and work in the county, enabling our communities to flourish. They protect us from floods and droughts, support our health, and underpin the entire economy.

However, 48% of Hampshire's 50 most 'notable species' are in trouble. With just a few more years to reach national legal targets of halting wildlife decline and protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has an essential and urgent role to play. Hampshire's LNRS must now drive tangible action on the ground to ensure that we have a healthy natural environment, now and in the future.

**Key asks:**

- 1. Prioritise improvement of existing protected areas that are in poor condition:** Despite having a high percentage of land and coast designated for its importance for wildlife, only 44% of our Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSIs) are in good condition. These are the critical nodes in our Nature Recovery Network and should be restored as a priority.
- 2. Incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation:** The LNRS must include proper consideration of climate change uncertainties and adaptation, taking into account projected changes in habitats and distributions of species. The strategy currently lacks robust measures to combat climate impacts, including the vital need for adaptation to reduce the pressures of sea level rise on the protection and restoration of coastal wetlands.
- 3. Set targets and track progress:** The LNRS must be a living strategy, with utility and teeth. At present, the LNRS fails to set out specific, measurable targets or mechanisms for monitoring progress. While the strategy mentions a review every 3-10 years, there is no further detail on monitoring or accountability frameworks to ensure the LNRS is effective in delivering for nature. Proper governance and leadership are needed, with opportunities for the new Mayoral Authority to play a strategic role in implementation across the county.
- 4. Embed LNRS in policy, with mechanisms to ensure flow of funds for nature's recovery:** The LNRS must be embedded into decision-making and policy, including those relating to land use, planning and development and economic strategies. Implementation plans must set out the mechanisms to drive investment into nature restoration. This will include statutory requirements, such as BNG, but should also harness emerging private sector nature markets.

Devolution offers a powerful opportunity for our region to champion a nature-positive future, guided by the LNRS as a critical roadmap. Delivering a strong, evidence-based LNRS offers a valuable and vital chance to shape a stronger, healthier future for our county.

Best regards, [YOUR NAME]