

# Liverpool City Region Local Nature Recovery Strategy

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Merseyside  
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Advisory Service



# Who are MEAS?

- ▶ Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
  - ▶ Work within the Liverpool City Region to provide specialist environmental advice to the six Local Authorities including:
    - ▶ Ecology and planning
    - ▶ Archaeology and Historic Environment
    - ▶ Contaminated Land
  - ▶ Working with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- ▶ Merseyside Biobank
  - ▶ Local Environmental Records Centre data for North Merseyside. Carried out mapping work and data searches for the LNRS

# LCR LNRS development partnerships

- ▶ **LCRCA:** Responsible Authority for strategy development
- ▶ **Supporting Authorities:** 6 Local Authorities
- ▶ **Statutory body support:** Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission
- ▶ **Strategy development partners:** MEAS, record centres, LJMU
- ▶ **Technical (species and habitat) Group:** MEAS-led + local experts
- ▶ **Governance:** Technical Advisory Panel & Advisory Board
- ▶ **Stakeholder Engagement & Public Consultation**

# LCR Pressures.....and

*LCR State of Nature Report 2023* shows:

- ▶ Decline in habitat and species mirrors England with widespread habitat loss and fragmentation
- ▶ 5% loss of all terrestrial habitats, including 10% loss of wildlife rich grasslands
- ▶ Lowland raised bog is critically rare and heavily degraded
- ▶ 58% of woodland does not meet FC criteria for sustainable woodland management
- ▶ Only 25% of local wildlife sites and 37% of SSSIs are in favourable condition



Land management



Urbanisation



Pollution



Recreational activity



Climate change



Invasive species

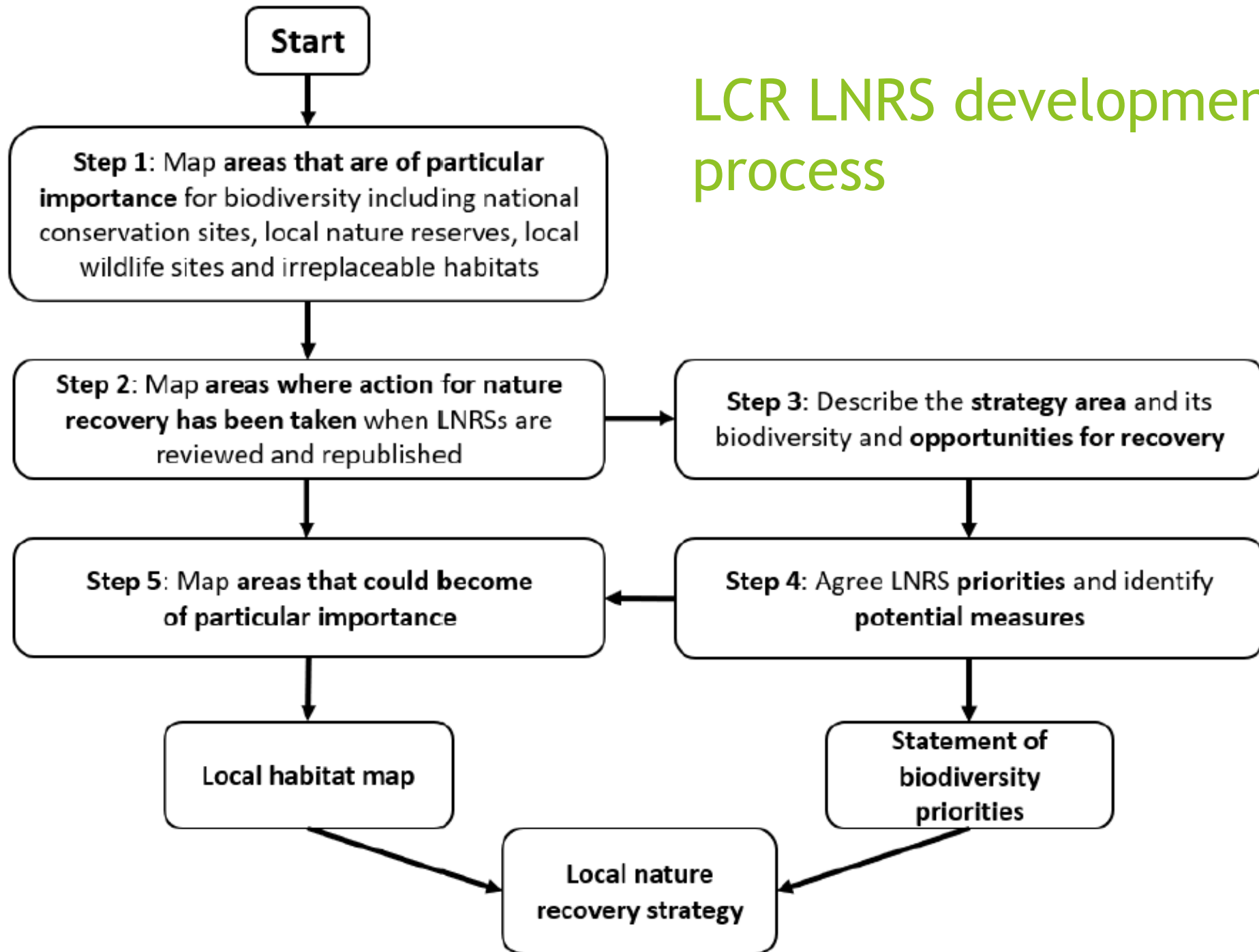
# opportunities

- ▶ Dedicated and strong partnerships for nature exist including *Nature Connected* Local Nature Partnership
- ▶ 12% increase in woodland cover in LCR since 2001
- ▶ Delivery of volunteer and community-engaged projects are vibrant with great appetite for more
- ▶ High level of engagement and understanding of the importance of nature benefits
- ▶ Academically robust evidence base (Natural Capital baseline, State of Nature report, NEIRF methodology)



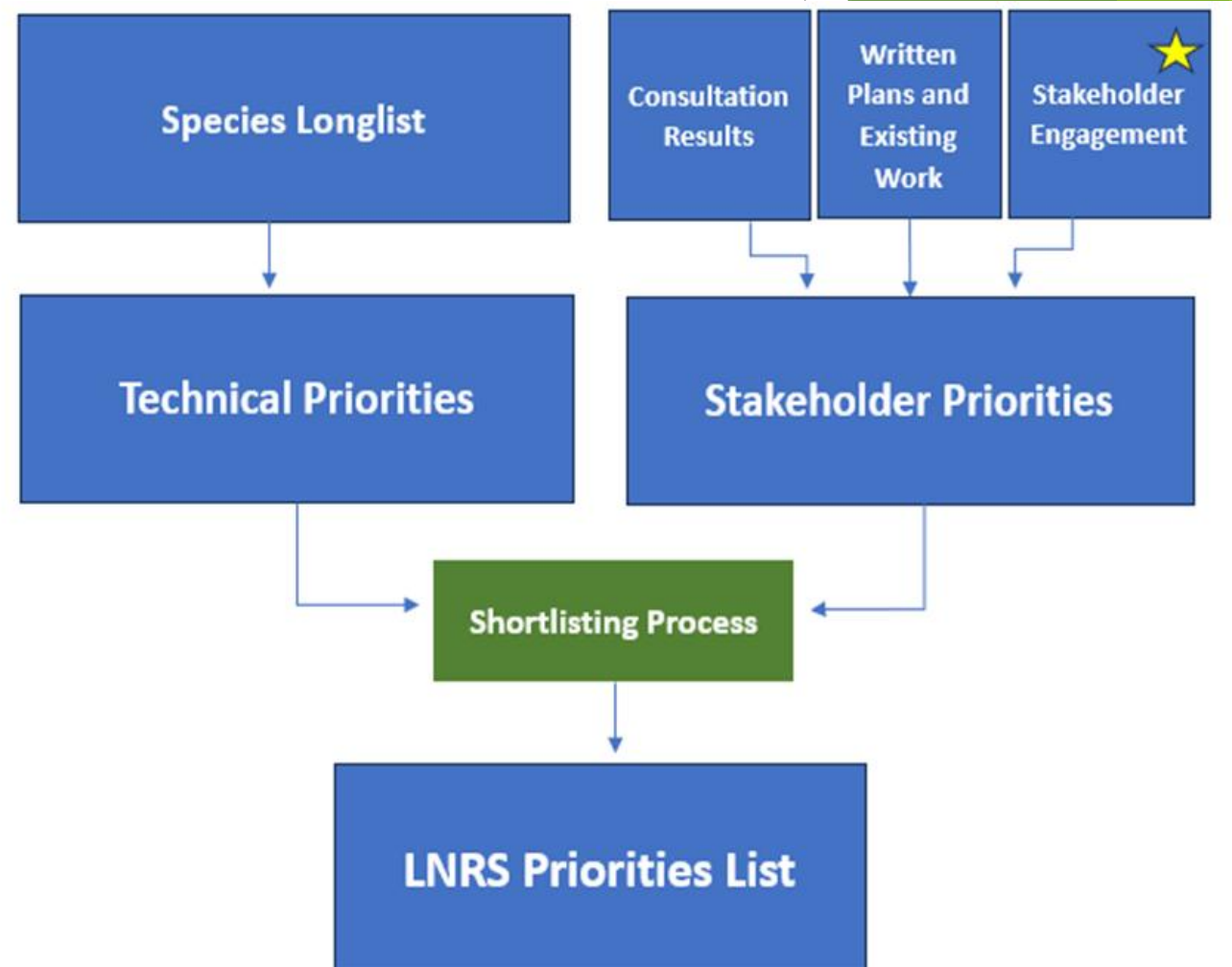
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# LCR LNRS development process



## Step 4: LNRS Priorities and measures

- Priorities are defined as: *“The end results the strategy is seeking to achieve”*
- Aspirations for habitats and species that were developed following stakeholder and public engagement.
- Potential Measures are defined as: *“Specific practical actions to achieve priorities”*
- Activities that, if done properly, will help to deliver the priorities

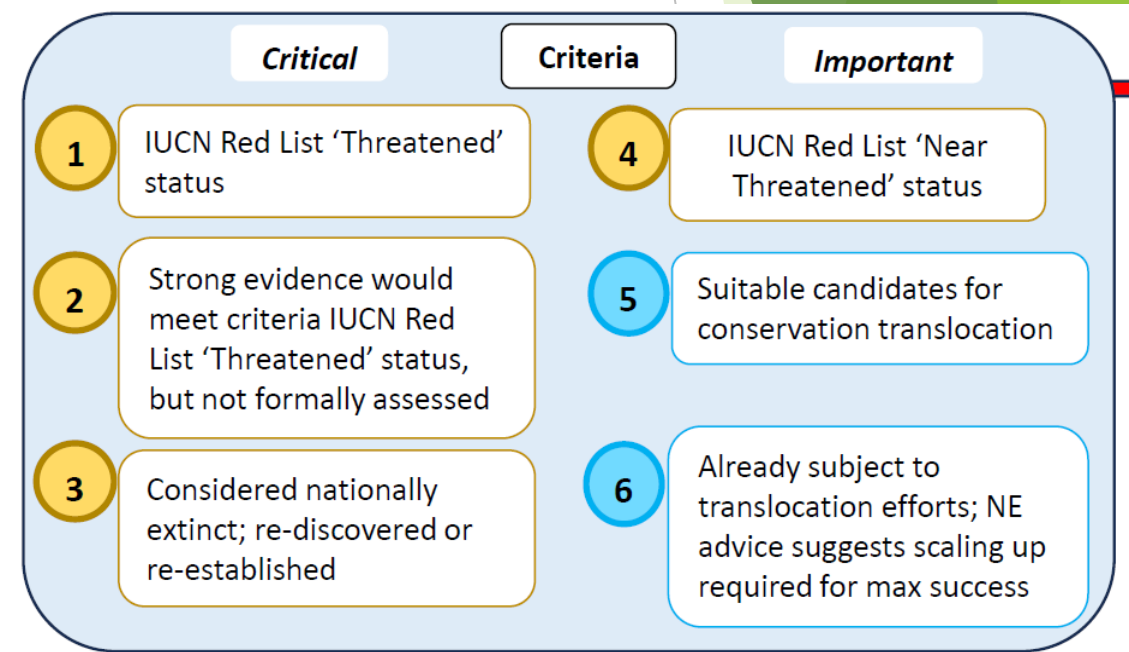


## Step 4: Priorities and measures

- ▶ As part of the species priorities creation, a longlist and shortlist of locally important species was developed
- ▶ Habitat priorities and associated measures were identified through work on the species long and short lists, consultation with local experts and public and stakeholder consultation
- ▶ A final list of 36 habitat and species priorities were developed for the LCR

## Step 4: Species longlist

- ▶ Species technical group formed of local experts and local environmental record centres (Merseyside Biobank and Cheshire Record) to help develop a species longlist.
- ▶ Species felt to be of local importance were also included.
- ▶ A total of 483 species were included on our final long list.





## Step 4: Species Shortlist

- ▶ The species on the longlist were measured against eight criteria to identify which of the species the LNRS can best support
- ▶ Species meeting criteria B - D are the species most likely to benefit from the LNRS
- ▶ Shortlist species were then further grouped into assemblages that would benefit from the same thing
- ▶ Where a species required specific, individual recovery measures, species-specific priorities were created to for inclusion in the priority long list
- ▶ A total of 385 species on the final shortlist

A: Needs more / bigger / better-connected habitat

B: Needs targeted habitat management

C: Needs improvements in environmental quality

D: Needs bespoke conservation actions

E: Needs better evidence base / on-the-ground action is not a priority

F: Needs action outside England

G: Vagrants / Occasional visitors

# Prioritisation

- ▶ Following the species shortlisting work and discussions with the habitat group, a list of priorities for species and habitats was created.
- ▶ This long-list of priorities was scored to pull out priorities that would have the most impact both on individual species and on wider ecosystem services.
- ▶ Measures for each of the final priorities were established through workshops, suggestions from partners, and expert knowledge.
- ▶ These measures were then incorporated into the Step 5 work and mapped onto habitats identify areas that could become important for biodiversity.

# LCR species priorities and measures

- ▶ Red squirrel: Expand the range and increase the population of red squirrels
  - ▶ Woodland creation and management designed to favour red squirrels
  - ▶ Grey squirrel management across the LCR
- ▶ Natterjack toad: Increased populations of natterjack toad
  - ▶ Scrape creation and management around existing natterjack populations
  - ▶ Additional natterjack habitat creation to increase connectivity between existing populations, and to allow colonisation of new areas.
- ▶ Reptiles and amphibians: Increase the distribution and population of reptiles and amphibians
  - ▶ Management of habitats for reptiles and amphibians.
  - ▶ Creating habitats corridors to allow reptiles to move and disperse through the region
  - ▶ Creation of new pond networks and associated habitats.
  - ▶ Management of existing ponds as a mosaic of habitats from new ponds to late succession ponds that are transitioning to other habitats

# LCR species priorities and measures

- ▶ Willow tit: Increased populations of willow tit
  - ▶ Reduction in competition from other bird species such as blue tit and great spotted woodpecker.
  - ▶ Maintenance of low canopy, early succession wet and damp woodlands with dense scrub layers and available dead wood for nesting.
  - ▶ Creation of new woodlands and scrub through planting and natural regeneration.
- ▶ Harbour porpoise: Support the population of harbour porpoise using the estuary
  - ▶ Maintenance of a tidally dynamic “hunting highway” for this species currently using the deep shipping lanes in the Mersey Estuary.
- ▶ Black poplar: Increased number of black poplar trees
  - ▶ Increased planting of female trees using genetically confirmed black poplar trees.
  - ▶ Planting males and females in proximity of each other to allow nurseries of native saplings to form.
- ▶ Grey seals: Protection of grey seal from recreational disturbance
  - ▶ Safeguarding of locations regularly used by seal populations

# LCR species priorities and measures

- ▶ Bats: A network of dark corridors to allow bats to move across the landscape
  - ▶ Create and maintain dark corridors for bats providing year-round feeding and roosting opportunities.
  - ▶ Installation of biodiversity enhancements in new developments.
- ▶ Forester moth: Improved habitat and increased range of forester moth.
  - ▶ Management of grassland and heathland to increase the population.
  - ▶ Improved heathland management.
- ▶ Ground nesting birds: Increased population and wider availability of nesting opportunities
  - ▶ Provision of undisturbed areas for ground nesting birds
  - ▶ Land management for farmland birds

# Estuarine and Coastal priorities and measures

- ▶ Sensitively managed, interconnected and dynamic coastal habitats: promoting natural processes, varied and biodiverse habitats, and a resilient coastal landscape.
  - ▶ Further creation of notches along suitable dune habitats.
  - ▶ Safeguarding and conservation of important breeding and roosting bird populations.
  - ▶ Maintenance and improvement of the mosaic of coastal habitats along the coastlines in-line with any existing SSSI management plans. Promote dynamic natural processes and opportunities for species dispersal under climate change.
  - ▶ Co-ordinated grazing across the coast to ensure habitats are correctly managed and stocked with the appropriate levels of livestock
- ▶ Appropriate management of coastal and estuarine recreation.
  - ▶ Safeguarding and conservation of important breeding, feeding and roosting bird populations.
  - ▶ Creation and improvement of suitable alternative natural greenspaces to the coast.
  - ▶ Implementation of disturbance mitigation measures including any set out in future local mitigation strategies.

# Estuarine and Coastal priorities and measures

- ▶ Improved water quality within the marine, estuarine and intertidal areas.
  - ▶ Creation of reedbeds, wet woodland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, and other wetlands to promote natural processes. Safeguarding and conservation of important breeding and roosting bird populations.
  - ▶ Creation of settlement ponds, reedbeds and tree or shrub barriers in areas with high pollutants and run-off to improve water quality.
  - ▶ Restoration of natural floodplains, reedbeds, wet woodland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, other wetland habitats and river morphology to promote natural processes.
- ▶ Clay cliffs in good habitat condition that are allowed to follow their natural processes.
  - ▶ Improved management of clay cliffs.

# Estuarine and Coastal priorities and measures

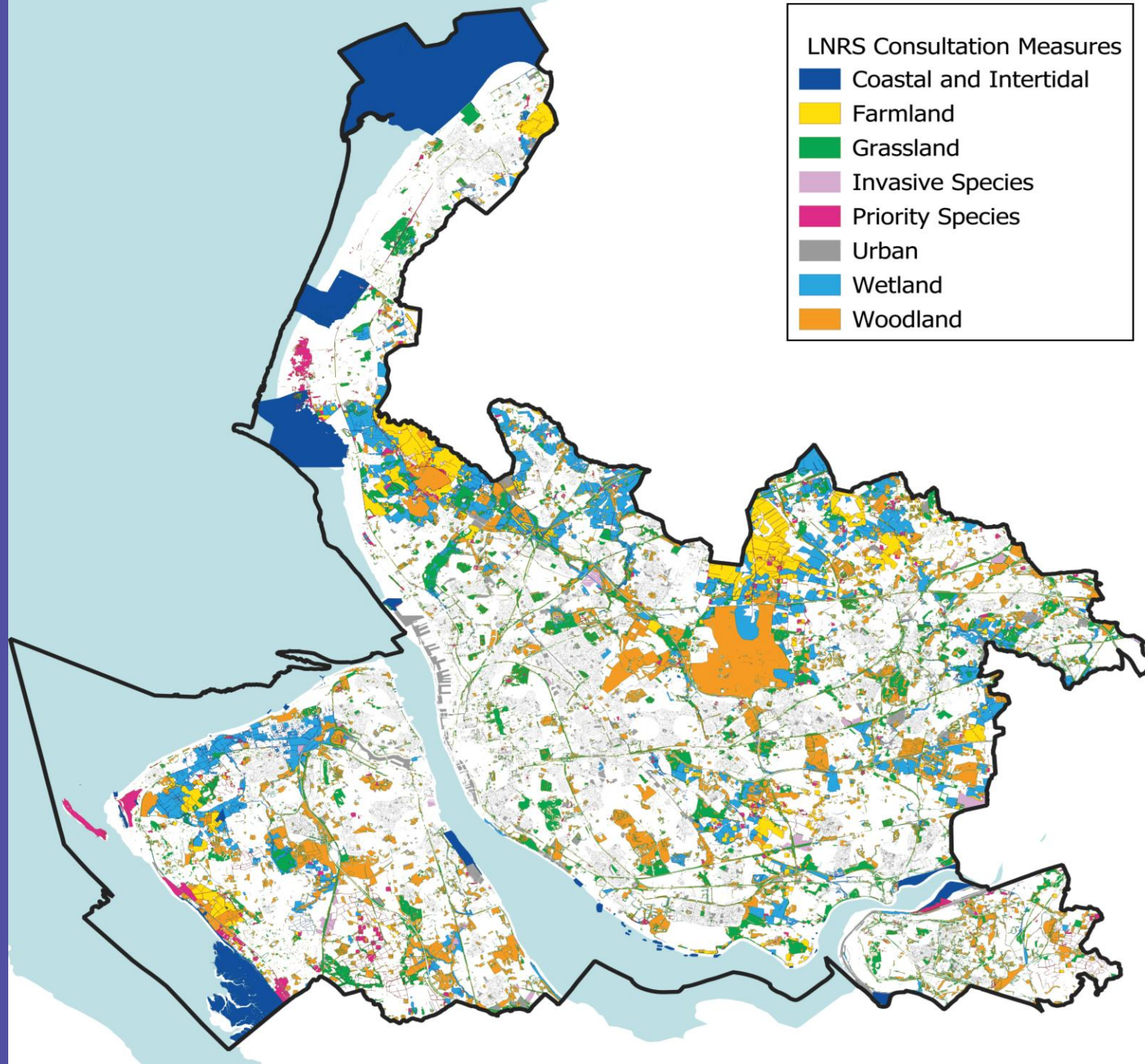
- ▶ High quality estuarine and intertidal habitats, with functionally linked land in good condition.
  - ▶ Expansion and creation of saltmarsh and other intertidal habitats.
  - ▶ Management of salt marsh and other intertidal habitats to better reflect the natural processes and morphology.
  - ▶ Creation of artificial habitats on hard engineering and infrastructure to create more habitat for estuarine and coastal species.
  - ▶ Removal of abandoned boats along coastal areas of the region.
  - ▶ Sensitive long-term management of functionally linked land - maintaining open grassland and farmland with areas of standing water, with minimal disturbance in the winter.
  - ▶ Allow natural regeneration of salt marsh and other important intertidal habitats where they start to develop and mitigate external pressures where they occur.
  - ▶ Seagrass habitat restoration and reintroduction where appropriate.



# Liverpool City Region

## Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 36 priorities for nature recovery
- 85 measures to achieve priorities
- 68 of these measures are mapped
- Measures mapped on 33% of strategy area (37% of land area)



# Marine Nature Recovery within the LCR

- ▶ Following guidance from DEFRA, the extent of the LNRS was down to the low water mark
- ▶ Marine priorities and actions are not included
- ▶ LNRS document identifies ‘hooks’ to marine e.g.  
the strong local support for addressing marine recovery, along with referencing Northwest Marine Plan and Marine Net Gain.
- ▶ Marine species that will benefit from coastal and estuarine measures are included in the strategy e.g. grey seal
- ▶ MEAS have discussed with MMO/Natural England how the methods use to develop the terrestrial LNRS can be applied to marine habitats
- ▶ Protected Sites Strategies may have a role...

# Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy Refresh

- ▶ Existing Nature Conservation Strategy lapsed in 2015
- ▶ Refresh led by Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership (SCLP)
- ▶ Funded by Natural England and Sefton Council as a Protected Sites Strategy research project
- ▶ Project managed by MEAS
- ▶ Adopted and delivered by the Partnership
- ▶ Supported by volunteers and the community
- ▶ Delivery Plan for the Sefton Coast Plan adopted in 2017
- ▶ Goal to achieve Coast-wide favourable status
- ▶ Wider benefits for people and the local economy

## SCLP members:

Cabinet Members  
and Ward Councillors  
Sefton Council departments  
such as Green Sefton and  
Highways  
MEAS  
Natural England  
The Environment Agency  
United Utilities  
Mersey Forest  
The National Trust  
RSPB  
Lancashire Wildlife Trust  
Sefton CVS  
CPRE Lancashire  
Community members,  
experts and volunteers



# LCR LNRS Consultation

- ▶ **Consultation live until 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025**
- ▶ <https://lcrlistens.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy/>