



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 4.3

## Local Nature Recovery Strategy Grant

To:	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board
Meeting Date:	30 November 2022
Public report:	Yes
Lead Member:	Councillor Bridget Smith, Lead Member for the Climate and Environment Change
From:	Steve Cox, Associate Director
Key decision:	No
Forward Plan ref:	n/a
Recommendations:	<p>The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:</p> <p>Approve the creation of an expenditure budget to enable payment of £16,304 to Cambridgeshire County Council towards preparation for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p>
Voting arrangements:	<p>A simple majority of Members present and voting</p> <p>To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.</p>

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Combined Authority has received a grant of £16,304 from the Department of Food and Rural Affairs for local capacity building for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It is recommended to passport this grant to Cambridgeshire County Council to lead the preparatory work on behalf of the Combined Authority.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature established by the Environment Act 2021. They are designed as tools to encourage more coordinated practical and focused action and investment in nature. They are part of a broader, strengthened duty on local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. At their core, LNRS need to deliver two main outputs: a list of priority opportunities for habitat improvement and restoration in the strategy area; and a local habitat map which contains existing nature sites and habitats, with locations of the priorities for future habitat improvement and restoration.
- 2.2 Government has indicated that there will be circa 50 LNRS areas across England each with a 'responsible authority'. The Combined Authority has been proposed as the responsible authority for the area covering Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Confirmation on the areas and the specific guidance on production is awaited from government.
- 2.3 Leaders agreed earlier this year to endorse the County Council as the operational lead on the LNRS on behalf of the CPCA (because of the capability on ecology), with the need for a steering group representative of all councils. Production of the LNRS would involve working closely with Natural Cambridgeshire, as our Local Nature Partnership.
- 2.4 Government want a 'working document' LNRS in place to influence the start of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (November 2023). Government have yet to issue their guidance on LNRS production and what constitutes an appropriate working document. This is important because one of the roles of LNRS is to interact with the planning system regarding 'extra' credits for Biodiversity Net Gain in priority habitats.
- 2.5 Government has committed to funding LNRS production as a new duty arising from the Environment Act. It has provided an initial capacity grant of £16,304. This report seeks approval to passport this LNRS capacity grant to County Council for it to set in place the project management of the LNRS and initial engagement on scope.

## Significant Implications

### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Combined Authority has received a grant for this activity from DeFRA to the sum of £16,304. The Board is requested to approve the expenditure budget to enable the funds to be spent.

- 3.2 Further funding for LNRS production (not yet determined) has been indicated by government in recognition of this as a “new duty” on local authorities.

## 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 A Memorandum of Understanding will be agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council on usage of the capacity funding for initial stages of scoping the LNRS .

## 5. Public Health Implications

- 5.1 The capacity funding has a neutral impact on public health. The LNRS when developed has the potential to improve access to nature, which has positive impacts on public health

## 6. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The LNRS process is designed to have positive impacts on the natural environment. Depending on the type of habitat improvements there may be positive impacts on climate change issues.

## 7. Other Significant Implications

- 7.1 None.

## 8. Appendices

- 8.1 None.

## 9. Background Papers

- 9.1 None.