

# Limitations and constraints on preparation of the Worcestershire LNRS

## Related documents:

- [Datasets within the Local Habitat Map](#)
- [Stakeholder Engagement Report \(section 7: managing risks and conflict\)](#)

The following limitations and constraints were experienced during preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

## Data

### Data reliability, age and bias

- A cut-off date of 25 years was applied to species records to ensure the shortlisting process was applied to recent data. The Local Biological Records Centre and local experts were consulted where species had 5 or fewer records to validate their suitability for incorporation within the long list. Some species with very few records were therefore excluded from the longlist at an early stage.
- Data-gaps in species records are assumed. It is accepted that species recording tends to naturally bias to the more visible and easily recorded species leaving gaps around cryptic and more challenging species to differentiate.
- Geographical bias in recording effort results in clustering of records where specialists and experts predominantly survey and report data.
- There is a lack of consistent and complete condition data for designated sites (both local and nationally designated sites). In particular, the age of some survey data associated with non-statutory nature conservation sites was less than optimal.
- Periodicity of updates to large datasets conflicted with LNRS preparation timescales e.g. an updated Worcestershire Ancient Woodland Inventory is anticipated but was not available at point of Draft LNRS publication.

### Lack of data

- Predicted changes in species abundance and distribution due to climate change impacts presents a constraint on identifying appropriate actions to address many of these effects on priority species.
- Recreational disturbance thresholds on protected species are poorly understood.
- Understanding of the 'functional linkage' of land in Worcestershire to the Severn Estuary SAC/Ramsar is incomplete.

### Data acquisition, storage, curation and exchange limitations

- The requirements of the GDPR Regulations placed limitations on data processing.

- Licensing constraints imposed by the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement prevent republishing and distributing some datasets and consequently prevent or limit the ability to map or otherwise spatially describe certain Potential Measures.

### **Limitations on the interpretation and application of remote sensing data**

- Identification of nature restoration opportunity areas, particularly grassland creation / enhancement and woodland creation / enhancement, made use of modelled ecological networks. These models are underpinned by a mix of ground-truthed, desktop and remote sensed data analysis. Remote sensing data has inherent confidence thresholds against which certain habitat types can be readily categorised (e.g. hierarchies set out in the Crick Framework). The use of multiple habitat datasets, processing assumptions, and consequent environmental and computational constraints mean the interpretation and application of remote sensed data, particularly at high-spatial resolutions (i.e. field-scales), leads to constraints in the resolution of certain complex habitat types. Because of this, only 'high' priority opportunity areas were used in the mapping of Potential Measures, so as to focus on areas with greatest confidence and urgency of delivery. Users are cautioned that site-based evaluation will be required to inform the scope, design and implementation of field-scale conservation interventions.

## **Resources and advice**

- The release of funding and the publication of non-statutory guidance was coincident with the production timeline of the Draft LNRS, which constrained both the capacity available to undertake preparation work and the necessity to modify preparation and consultation methodology during production.
- The limited availability of specialist and expert volunteer assistance able to support the LNRS's Task and Finish Group workstreams also presented a constraint to production scope and timetable.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

- Time constraints on undertaking stakeholder engagement required audiences and the methods used to communicate with them to be prioritised and targeted.
- A focus on digital engagement platforms such as webinars, promotional films, questionnaires and interactive maps allowed wider outreach without a particular geographic limitation but in turn this creates a constraint on 'genuine' two-way communication and prevents mediation should point-of-conflict arise.
- Conversely, physical 'face-to-face' consultation and engagement events facilitated two-way conversations and peer-to-peer information exchange but were resource intensive. This type of engagement activity was focused on key audiences including landowners/farmers, species experts/groups and Parish Councils.
- Engaging with 'harder-to-reach' audiences such as farming businesses and communities was seasonally constrained. This was mitigated by collaborating with organisations already hosting events for this audience e.g. by attending meetings and workshops organised by CLA, NFU and existing county-based farmer facilitation groups.

## Restrictions on legal scope of LNRS

- Stakeholder input during LNRS preparation included information that fell outside of the scope of permitted activities capable of being secured as an LNRS Measure, such as a) identification of threats and pressures on sites or species which could not be addressed using a habitat creation/enhancement or nature-based solution approach, or b) suggested priorities that sought to address issues around physical access to nature e.g. condition of the PROW network.