

---

together  
we are

---

**GREATER  
MANCHESTER**

Bolton                      Salford  
Bury                         Stockport  
Manchester                Tameside  
Oldham                     Trafford  
Rochdale                  Wigan

# **GM LNRS: Wildlife-Rich Land Guidance**

Monitoring delivery of the GM Local  
Nature Recovery Strategy

Target 3 - To restore or create  
1,800ha of Wildlife-Rich Land by 2035

Interim guidance - 2026-27

13/05/2026

# Introduction

The 2025 Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (GM LNRS) sets out a series of headline targets designed to drive forward action on nature recovery across the city region. Included within these is ‘**LNRS Target 3: To restore or create 1,800ha of new wildlife-rich land by 2035 and target delivery within the nature network**’. This note provides interim guidance on the monitoring of LNR Target 3 and will be reviewed in 2027-28. This guidance focuses on capturing the delivery of areas of new wildlife rich land, rather than monitoring all wildlife rich land in GM. This is designed to help those whose work is contributing to this target to report outcomes.

You can view the other targets set out in the GM LNRS by accessing the full strategy and associated maps and appendices here: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/our-plan-for-nature-recovery/what-does-our-plan-for-nature-cover/>.

## Background Context

The Environment Act 2021<sup>1</sup> sets out an ambitious goal to halt the decline in biodiversity in England and includes a long-term, legally binding target to “**restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside of protected sites by 2042**”, with an interim target of 250,000 hectares by 2030. This goal is also included in the Government’s [30by30](#)<sup>2</sup> plan, which in turn is enshrined within the updated [Environmental Improvement Plan 2025](#) and the [Land Use Framework 2026](#). GM’s LNRS is contributing to this, with its own regional target of restoring or creating 1,800 hectares of new wildlife-rich land in GM by 2035.

To aid monitoring efforts, Natural England (NE) have provided a formal definition of what would be considered “wildlife-rich” habitat nationally. This includes detailed and technical ecological criteria relating to certain habitat types. To recognise the local

---

<sup>1</sup> This target is described in the Statutory Instrument (SI) [The Environmental Targets \(Biodiversity\) \(England\) Regulations 2023](#) (see Part 3 and Schedule 1)

<sup>2</sup> The UK has committed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30), to support the [global 30by30 target](#) agreed at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022.

context and range of projects that help wildlife to thrive in the Greater Manchester city-region, local criteria for wildlife-rich land have also been developed. This ensures that all schemes that contribute to nature recovery and an increase in wildlife-rich land, including those which may not be able to demonstrate that they meet the strict criteria of the national definition, can be counted towards the LNRS's GM target. This local description will enable local 'organisations, communities and partnerships' to report on actions that will meet the GM-specific LNRS target on increasing wildlife-rich land.

# Wildlife-rich land: National Definition and Local Criteria

## **Natural England's national definition of wildlife-rich habitat**

Natural England provide a list of terrestrial habitats that are considered "wildlife-rich", including the UK Priority Habitats<sup>3</sup> and other habitats of medium distinctiveness as defined by Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) guidance. Where possible, to be counted as wildlife-rich, these habitats are also expected to achieve "good" condition<sup>4</sup> as defined by BNG condition assessment guidance. Those habitats that meet the National definition, and are present in GM, are listed in Table 1 at the end of this document.

A detailed description of the national target, including a full list of habitats which meet these criteria, can be found in Natural England's technical note **Environment Act Habitat Target – Definitions and Descriptions (TIN219)**:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6427187599900672>. This page also includes links to the definition and data standards for the national target.

---

<sup>3</sup> Priority Habitats in the UK are those that have been identified as being the most threatened and that are regarded as conservation priorities. They may also be referred to as "habitats of principal importance", "Section 41" or "S41" habitats as they are listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Good condition is not relevant to all habitats only those also linked to the BNG metric

## **Local criteria for wildlife-rich land**

Our local criteria for wildlife-rich land includes the **national definition (table 1)**, tailored to the natural environment of Greater Manchester, and a **range of habitat creation and restoration actions listed in the GM LNRS (table 3)**. An **additional category of “wildlife-rich” urban space (table 2)**, such as community gardens, growing spaces, highways verges and other urban greenspaces, has also been included to capture the significant contribution these spaces can make in helping wildlife to thrive in a heavily urbanised area. Those reporting on the target will have the option of providing information under the national definition (if they are able to provide the correct evidence for this<sup>5</sup>) and the local one.

### GM Local Wildlife Rich Land Criteria

Land in Greater Manchester where dedicated action has been taken to support wildlife to thrive. This includes:

- (1) Land where the natural or semi-natural habitat types listed in Table 1 have been created or restored. If you are able to report these are in good condition (where relevant), as defined by BNG guidance they will also meet the National Definition ([TIN219](#)).
- (2) Land where features have been installed to support wildlife in an urban space. Table 2 lists the qualifying features required to be present on a site.
- (3) Land where an GM LNRS action has been taken to create or restore habitat. Table 3 lists the qualifying GM LNRS actions.

## **What actions count as restoration or creation?**

Action that restores or creates wildlife-rich land where this habitat is currently absent will count. Importantly, it should result in increasing the amount of new wildlife-rich land, not just improving the condition of existing wildlife-rich habitat. In other words,

---

<sup>5</sup> Please note that only data which meets the Natural England definition will count towards the national Environment Act 2021 target

the action only counts if it's on land that doesn't currently meet any of the habitat definitions listed above and in the Tables. The only exception to this is any action involving restoring one of the listed habitats if it is currently in a "degraded" state).

## **What is a degraded habitat?**

The following habitats may be considered degraded and consequently their restoration counts towards this target:

- action on any terrestrial habitats not currently identified in Table 1 as wildlife-rich but where the objective is to develop the site into a wildlife-rich habitat.
- any existing habitat developed on drained peat where hydrological restoration is required to restore the peat;
- freshwater habitats: these are rarely lost but can be severely damaged so they are no longer wildlife-rich; actions which restore water quality, hydrology, morphology, riparian habitat and natural biological assemblages can count towards the target (just restoring one element won't count, unless the others were previously unimpacted);
- Restoring native woodland on "Plantation on ancient woodlands" (PAWS);

**Table 1: Wildlife-rich habitat types**

Broad habitat type	General habitat type	Intermediate type	Precise habitat type
Wildlife-rich habitat mosaics			Wildlife-rich mosaic habitat
			Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land priority habitat
Wildlife-rich arable field margins			Arable field margin priority habitat
Wildlife-rich grassland habitat	Wildlife-rich grassland - type unknown	Wildlife-rich acid grassland - type unknown	Lowland dry acid grassland priority habitat
			Wildlife-rich lowland acid grassland
			Wildlife-rich wax cap grasslands in the uplands
		Wildlife-rich upland dry acid grassland	
		Wildlife-rich neutral grassland	Lowland meadows priority habitat
			Upland hay meadows priority habitat

Broad habitat type	General habitat type	Intermediate type	Precise habitat type
Wildlife-rich coastal floodplain grazing marsh habitat			Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat
			Wildlife-rich floodplain wetland mosaic
Wildlife-rich peatland habitats	Wildlife-rich peatland habitat - type unknown	Wildlife-rich fen habitat – type unknown	Lowland fen priority habitat
			Reedbed priority habitat
		Wildlife-rich bog habitat – type unknown	Upland flushes, fens and swamps priority habitat
			Blanket bog priority habitat
Wildlife-rich heathland habitats			Lowland raised bog priority habitat
			Lowland heathland priority habitat
			Upland heathland priority habitat
Wildlife-rich inland rock and scree habitats	Wildlife-rich inland rock and scree habitats		Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats priority habitat
Wildlife-rich lake habitats			Eutrophic standing waters priority habitat

Broad habitat type	General habitat type	Intermediate type	Precise habitat type
	Wildlife-rich lake habitat (greater than 2ha) – type unknown		
Wildlife-rich pond habitat			Pond priority habitat less than 2 ha
Wildlife-rich rivers and stream habitat			Rivers and stream priority habitat
Wildlife-rich native woodland habitat	Wildlife-rich native woodland: broadleaved & wildlife rich mixed woodland		Lowland mixed deciduous woodland priority habitat
			Upland oakwood priority habitat
			Wet woodland priority habitat
Wildlife-rich wood pasture and parkland habitat			Wood-pasture and parkland priority habitat
Wildlife-rich traditional orchard habitat			Traditional orchards priority habitat

Broad habitat type	General habitat type	Intermediate type	Precise habitat type
Wildlife-rich scrub habitat	Wildlife-rich scrub - type unknown		Wildlife-rich blackthorn scrub
			Wildlife-rich bramble scrub
			Wildlife-rich gorse scrub
			Wildlife-rich hawthorn scrub
			Wildlife-rich hazel scrub
			Wildlife-rich mixed scrub
Wildlife-rich hedgerows and lines of trees	Native species rich hedgerow		Hedgerow priority habitat
			Native Species-Rich Hedgerow with trees
			Native Species-Rich Hedgerow - Associated with bank or ditch
			Native Hedgerow with trees - Associated with bank or ditch
			Native Hedgerow - Associated with bank or ditch

Broad habitat type	General habitat type	Intermediate type	Precise habitat type
			Native Hedgerow with trees
			Line of Trees (Ecologically Valuable)
			Line of Trees (Ecologically Valuable) - with Bank or Ditch

**Table 2: Criteria for inclusion of an urban site**

Criteria – creation of an urban site which includes the following:	Feature	Tick those that apply
Food - at least <u>two</u> of these features:	Nectar and pollen-rich flowers or wildflower meadow species, particularly UK native (preferably <i>locally</i> native) species, drought-tolerant species and a range of early to late flowering species (see <b>Appendix 1</b> for species list)	
	Trees and shrubs that flower and fruit/bear berries, particularly native species.	
	Wild patch of naturally growing wildflowers – such as nettles, dandelions, daisies, brambles	
	Bird feeders - a range of suitably-placed, accessible feeders	
Shelter/ breeding sites - at least <u>three</u> of these features:	Native hedge	
	Bee homes including solitary bee home	
	Insect home	
	Dead wood, log pile or tree stumps	
	Rock or stone pile	
	Nesting box for birds and bats	
	Hedgehog house	
	Amphibian or reptile hibernaculum	
	Patches of lawn/grass left to grow long	
Mature tree		

Criteria – creation of an urban site which includes the following:	Feature	Tick those that apply
	Compost heap or bin or wormery	
	Leaf pile in quiet corner	
	Climbing plants	
Water - at least <u>two</u> sources of water:	Wildlife pond (no fish)	
	Bucket or container pond	
	Water available at different heights, including at ground level	
	Bird bath	
	Bog or permanently wet area	
	Drought resistant plants	
Connectivity - at least one of these features:	Mixed native hedge along boundaries	
	Rows of trees or shrubs	
	Long strips of long grass	
	Gaps in fences for hedgehogs and other wildlife	
Management - at least two of these practices:	Use of peat-free compost	
	Avoiding pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or slug pellets	
	Water butt	
	Seed heads and stems left uncut overwinter	

**Table 3: Actions from the GM LNRS Priorities and Actions**

LNRS Action Code	LNRS Wildlife rich land actions	Further criteria that must be met for inclusion
Urban 1.1; Urban 2.1	Enhance and increase diversity of existing green spaces and create dedicate wilder set aside areas for nature	Only in combination with other actions
Urban 1.2; Urban 2.6	Create more nature-friendly multiple-use spaces, such as wellbeing gardens, community grow spaces or orchards, that provide habitats for urban species and benefit people.	Criteria in Table 2 should also be met
Urban 1.3; Urban 2.3; Urban 4.4; Urban 6.2	Increase or expand nature-rich green spaces where they will provide stepping stones or corridors that better connect existing green space and reduce barriers to species movement.	Only in combination with other actions
Urban 4.6	Create dedicated space for water and wetter habitats by installing sustainable drainage and providing sufficient space for river corridors.	Only in combination with other actions
Urban 2.2	Create and maintain longer grasses and wildflower strips.	
Urban 3.1	Enhance and increase the species diversity of streets and highways verges, with longer grasses, native wildflower strips or meadows and more dedicated spaces for nature.	

LNRS Action Code	LNRS Wildlife rich land actions	Further criteria that must be met for inclusion
Woodland 2.1	Native woodland and scrub creation or establishment, where it will connect existing woodland and scrub	
Woodland 2.2	Expand existing woodland and scrub and other woodland fringe and transitional habitats	
Woodland 2.3	Planting or establishment of trees, woodland and scrub where they will play a role in natural flood management, control of pollution or reduce soil erosion.	
Woodland 3.1	Targeted urban tree and woodland planting where it will increase connectivity, climate adaption and accessibility.	
Woodland 3.2	Create new and enhance old or traditional orchards and urban community woodlands, and work to ensure better access for communities.	Actions to create new orchards or urban community woodlands only
Woodland 4.2	Safeguard, manage and restore the species diversity and structure of existing hedgerows.	Actions to restore only.
Woodland 4.2	Create more native hedgerows, particularly, where they act as corridors between existing trees and woodlands, or where they could intercept diffuse pollution or reduce soil erosion.	

LNRS Action Code	LNRS Wildlife rich land actions	Further criteria that must be met for inclusion
Rivers 3.1	Make water channels more natural and complex, re-meander channels and reconnect to floodplains where feasible.	
Rivers 3.3	Restore and maintain more natural banks, in appropriate locations, and reduce invasive species*.	Actions to restore only
Rivers 4.1	Expansion, creation or restoration of a variety of waterside habitats, including woodlands, wetlands and meadows, where they will better connect existing habitats.	
Rivers 4.2; Rivers 6.5	Improve mobility for aquatic creatures by removing barriers, daylighting buried or covered waterbodies or installing by-pass structures, where feasible*.	
Rivers 5.1	Install more sustainable drainage schemes, natural flood management schemes and permeable surfaces, in areas which will benefit nature and are most at risk of flooding.	Only in combination with other actions
Rivers 6.1	Restoration and reconnection of canalside habitats, including targeted woodland creation and tree planting.	
Lowland 2.1	Restore degraded wetland sites and areas of restorable deep peat, particularly where they will connect remaining wetland habitats.	

LNRS Action Code	LNRS Wildlife rich land actions	Further criteria that must be met for inclusion
Lowland 2.2	Create more patchworks of wetland habitats and transitional habitats, particularly around remaining and restored lowland raised bog, fens and other wetland habitats.	
Lowland 5.2	Create a variety of new ponds and resurrect ghost ponds, in the right places to connect existing ponds.	
Grassland 2.1	Creation or restoration of species-rich grasslands and lowland heath, particularly where they will expand or act as stepping stones or corridors.	
Grassland 2.2	Creation and maintenance of transitional areas or more mosaics of habitats, on the boundaries between grasslands and other habitats.	Actions to create transitional habitats only.
Grassland 3.1	Allow areas of urban grasslands to grow long and flower and increase species diversity through planting or other measures.	
Grassland 4.2	Set aside dedicated patches of sympathetically managed or uncropped areas, along field boundaries, margins, corners or less productive areas, particularly where they will connect.	
Grassland 4.3	Create and maintain forage areas and homes for species on farmland, alongside food production.	

LNRS Action Code	LNRS Wildlife rich land actions	Further criteria that must be met for inclusion
Grassland 5.3	Support switch to diversified plant species for grazing livestock, establish and maintain herbal lays or species-rich hay meadows	
Upland 1.1; Upland 4.1	Stabilise, rewet and restore deep bare peat towards active blanket bog.	
Upland 1.2	Encourage more diverse native vegetation and more flower-rich habitats on existing upland moorlands.	
Upland 1.3	Create transitional habitats or corridors to increase linkage between our uplands and lowland habitats, where conditions allow.	
Upland 2.1	Restore more naturalised wet areas, flushes and ponds.	
Upland 2.2	Create rough, diverse grasslands around flushes and wetlands, wet in some areas with rushes around flushes and springs.	
Upland 2.3	Reduce and slow land drainage and encourage natural flood management.	Only in combination with other actions
Upland 3.2	Increase woodland and tree regeneration and planting, with varying density from closed canopy woodland in some places to scattered trees in others.	
Upland 3.3	Encourage moorland and clough edges to 'scrub up', to improve diversity, securing soils and slowing water flow.	

LNRS Action Code	LNRS Wildlife rich land actions	Further criteria that must be met for inclusion
Upland 3.4	Target woodland creation, tree planting and the creation of leaky dams, where they will also contribute towards slowing water flow.	
Upland 5.3	Maintain, restore and increase upland hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field boundaries as important habitats.	

## Appendix 1: List of nectar and pollen-rich flowers/Wildflower species

\*Indicates non-native species, or potentially non-native depending on the taxonomy or seed mix, these species should ideally only be used on sites such as community gardens, wellbeing gardens, allotments and other similar sites contained urban sites to reduce risk of spread into the wider environment.

Trees and shrubs	Wildflower mix - general	Nectar and pollen-rich flowers	Early Spring flowering	Summer flowering	Late flowering
Bramble	Autumn hawkbit	Agastache*	Alyssum*	Heather	Buddleia*
Flowering currant*	Betony	Betony	Aubretia*	Hebe*	Ceanothus*
Goat willow	Bird's-foot-trefoil	Borage*	Dandelion	Honeysuckle	Common sunflower*
Hawthorn	Black medick	Broad bean*	English bluebells	Lavender*	Cone flower*
Hazel	Bladder campion	Buddleia*	Forget-me-not*	Red valerian*	French marigold*

Trees and shrubs	Wildflower mix - general	Nectar and pollen-rich flowers	Early Spring flowering	Summer flowering	Late flowering
Holly	Bluebell	Bugle	Garlic mustard	Yarrow	Goldenrod*
Honeysuckle	Bulbous buttercup	Catmint*	Grape hyacinth*	Common Mallow	Honeysuckle
Wild rose	Chamomile*	Chives*	Honesty*	Purple toadflax	Hyssop*
	Cock's-foot	Comfrey	Primrose	Verbena*	Ice plant*
	Common agrimony	Cranesbill*	Sweet rocket*	Wallflower*	Ivy
	Common mallow	Curry plant*	Sweet violet		Lavender*
	Cow parsley	Figwort	Wallflower*		Meadow saffron
	Devil's-bit scabious	Foxglove	White deadnettle		Michaelmas daisies*
	Dropwort	Heather	Winter aconite*		Red valerian*
	Dyer's greenweed	Honeysuckle	Wood anemone		Sedum*
	Feverfew*	Knapweed			Sweet scabious*
	Field Scabious	Larkspur*			
	Foxglove	Lavender*			
	Goatsbeard	Marjoram*			
	Grape hyacinth*	Mints*			
	Greater knapweed	Nasturtium*			
	Harebell	Poached Egg plant*			
	Hoary plantain	Rosemary*			
	Kidney vetch	Sage*			
	Lesser knapweed	Snapdragon*			
	Meadow buttercup	Thistles			

Trees and shrubs	Wildflower mix - general	Nectar and pollen-rich flowers	Early Spring flowering	Summer flowering	Late flowering
	Meadow cranesbill	Toadflax			
	Meadowsweet	Verbascum*			
	Musk mallow	Viper's bugloss			
	Nettle leaved bell flower	Woundworts			
	Ox-eye daisy				
	Perforate St John's Wort				
	Pignut				
	Primrose				
	Purple loosestrife				
	Red campion				
	Red clover				
	Ribwort plantain				
	Salad burnet				
	Scentless mayweed*				
	Selfheal				
	Sheep's-fescue				
	Small scabious				
	Sweet cicely*				
	Teasel				

Trees and shrubs	Wildflower mix - general	Nectar and pollen-rich flowers	Early Spring flowering	Summer flowering	Late flowering
	Toadflax*				
	Tufted vetch				
	Viper's bugloss				
	White campion				
	Wild carrot				
	Wild daffodil				
	Wild thyme				
	Yarrow				
	Yellow rattle				
	Yorkshire-fog				