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**Title of report:** Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Supporting Authority Consultation

**Report :** Suffolk County Council, in collaboration with others, is preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Suffolk, as required under the Environment Act 2021. The aim of the Strategy is to halt the depletion of nature and support its recovery. It sets out actions for different sectors to take to contribute to achieving this aim. Implications for Ipswich Borough Council include identifying where off-site Biodiversity Net Gain provision through the planning process would provide the greatest biodiversity benefit. All public authorities will also need to have regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies under the strengthened Biodiversity Duty. Suffolk County Council is required by regulations to seek Ipswich Borough Council's formal approval of the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy at two key stages: firstly, before it may consult the public on the draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (the current stage), and again after the public consultation, in relation to any subsequent changes made to it (expected in the summer 2025). The report proposes Ipswich Borough Council's high level response to formally support the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy proceeding to public consultation. The regulations allow Ipswich Borough Council 28 days in which to formally support or object to the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The strategy was shared formally with Ipswich Borough Council on 15 January 2025 and the period for response will end on 11 February 2025. This is the same date as the February Executive meeting at which it is scheduled to be considered. Therefore, the report seeks approval for the submission of the Council's formal response to the Suffolk LNRS on 11 February following the Executive meeting and to certify the decision as exempt from call-in in order to meet the regulatory deadline. This approach would require a further report to Executive following the public consultation process and that this would provide further opportunity for supporting authorities to formally support or raise legitimate objections to the responsible body.

**What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis? Please select all that apply.:** Published data - e.g Census, State of Ipswich report

**Service area:** Planning and Development

**Corporate Manager:** James Fairclough

**Corporate Manager email:** James.fairclough@ipswich.gov.uk

**Links to supporting documents where available:**

<https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/ipswich/files/2024->

**Please upload any supporting documents:** Local Plan  
equality\_impact\_assessment\_appendix\_5\_eia\_report - A12.pdf

**What is proposed?:** The Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) supports a 'Nature Recovery Network' of opportunities and priorities for nature restoration at the local level in Suffolk by: identifying priority species and habitats for nature recovery; mapping the most valuable areas for nature that currently exist; and mapping specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature, which also contribute to wider environmental goals.

It identifies 23 'key species' ranging from mammals through to plants and invertebrates; a range of 'priority habitats' which includes Habitats in Urban, Built and Garden Environments; and 15 'flagship assemblages' of species as the focus for nature recovery efforts. A notable assemblage for Ipswich is 'Urban, Built and Garden Environments', naming the hedgehog as the flagship species.

It is proposed that Ipswich Borough Council formally supports the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy to progress to public consultation. Executive is also recommended to certify the decision as exempt from call-in, to meet the regulatory deadline for submission. A further report will be brought before the Executive in Summer 2025 to seek approval of the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy before its final publication.

**Why are the changes being introduced?:** Suffolk County Council's Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out proposals to halt nature loss and support its recovery, under the Environment Act 2021. The Executive report sets out a proposed response and a process to enable Ipswich Borough Council, in its role as a 'supporting authority', to formally support the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy proceeding to public consultation, within the timescales set out in the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.

**What evidence is being used to support this Equality Impact Assessment, and how is it being used?:** The Equality Impact Assessment for the adopted Ipswich Local Plan, which includes an assessment of Local Plan Policy DM8 'The Natural Environment'. The policy seeks to protect designated wildlife habitats, ensure that new development incorporates measures to provide net gains for biodiversity and enhance ecological networks within the Borough. Thus, the policy relates closely to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy aim to halt nature depletion and support its recovery. The Equality Impact Assessment of the Local Plan indicates neutral impacts on protected characteristics and concludes that: 'Policy DM8 seeks to enhance conditions for biodiversity throughout the borough for the benefit of all groups. There are likely to be no equality issues associated with this policy.'

**How will this change be implemented?:** The Executive resolution will be implemented through submitting Ipswich Borough Council's formal response to Suffolk Council Council, supporting the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy, within the 28 day period set out in regulations. Without the formal support of supporting authorities, Suffolk County Council may not proceed to public consultation. It will be the responsibility of Suffolk County Council to actually conduct the public consultation on the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**Age:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on age.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Disability:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on disability.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Marriage & Civil Partnership:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on marriage and civil partnership. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Race:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on race. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Pregnancy & Maternity:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on pregnancy and maternity. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Religion or Belief:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on religion or belief. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Gender Reassignment:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on gender reassignment. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Sex:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on sex. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**Sexual Orientation:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Enabling Ipswich Borough Council to respond to the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy within prescribed timetables will have no impact on sexual orientation. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not expected to impact on protected characteristics groups, as it supports nature recovery for its own sake and for the services the natural world delivers to all people, such as food. Ipswich Borough Council's support of the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will enable Suffolk County Council to publish the strategy for full public consultation open to all.

**I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives:** I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives

**The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):** By carefully considering whether Ipswich Borough Council's response to support the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy could impact on protected characteristics, and by checking back to the Equality Impact Assessment of a related Local Plan Policy DM8 The Natural Environment in relation to the subject matter of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):** By supporting the timely progression of the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy led by Suffolk County Council to public consultation. When the Strategy is in place (expected summer 2025 and to be subject to a further report to the Executive), work can begin on its implementation to support the benefits that nature delivers to everyone.

**The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):** By supporting the timely progression of the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy led by Suffolk County Council to public consultation. When the Strategy is in place (expected summer 2025 and to be subject to a further report to the Executive), work can begin on its implementation to support the benefits that nature delivers to everyone.

**The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s):** Suffolk County Council as the responsible authority will set out monitoring and reporting requirements for the Draft Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

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