



Report to:	Climate, Energy and Environment Committee
Date:	24 October 2023
Subject:	Natural England's Work in the Region
Director:	Liz Hunter, Director Policing, Environment and Place
Author:	Tamsin Constable, Policy Officer

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To outline the mutual interest between the Combined Authority and Natural England and how this benefits the people of West Yorkshire.

2. Information

Natural England's work in the region

- 2.1 Natural England is the government advisor for the natural environment in England. It is an 'arm's length body' of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Natural England is publicly funded to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations. Working with Natural England helps the Combined Authority to build a sustainable, nature-rich and climate-ready region that supports businesses and seizes the opportunities of a carbon-free economy, building resilience to the environmental challenges of the future.

Oliver Harmer from Natural England

- 2.2 Oliver Harmer, Chief Officer for Operations, will outline how Natural England works with partners to achieve the government's nature targets. In West Yorkshire, for example, Natural England chose Bradford to launch six landscape-scale nature recovery projects across England in July 2023 at an event attended by the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin and Trudy Harrison MP, Minister for Natural Environment and Land Use.

Natural England and the WY Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 2.3 In June 2023, the Combined Authority was appointed 'responsible authority' to develop and publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for West Yorkshire. This will be one of 48 LNRSs mandated by the Environment Act 2021. Together, they will plan, map and help to drive more coordinated, practical focused action and investment in nature's recovery and help to build a national Nature Recovery Network across England. As we work towards becoming a net zero carbon economy by 2038, the LNRS will align with this work help to enhance rural and urban green spaces, parks, canals valleys and moorland, attracting new investment and jobs to create clean, healthy and nature-rich places for all. The LNRS is due to be published in 2025 and re-published every 3-10 years.
- 2.4 Regional Natural England senior advisors are working closely with Combined Authority officers to support and guide the work to produce and publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for West Yorkshire. Support from Natural England includes regular meetings, a peer-network for neighbouring responsible authorities, and a direct link to the national Natural England LNRS network for advice and guidance.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Greater collaboration between Natural England and the Combined Authority has the potential to enhance work to address the climate emergency and nature recovery which will align with the objectives of the Climate and Environment Plan.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Depleted natural environments have disproportionate impacts on people and communities. They can amplify existing inequality (e.g. health) due to the interplay between factors such as the amount and quality of nearby nature, poverty, disability, exposure to toxic air, impact of heatwaves and floods, or infrastructure barriers such as public transport and road danger. The ongoing partnership between Natural England and the Combined Authority will help to identify and prioritise opportunities for ecological equity and wider environmental benefits for more people.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 Project and programmes delivered by the Combined Authority are subject to an equality impact assessment (EqIA). This includes the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 Natural England is an important stakeholder and consultee for many of the Combined Authority's projects including major infrastructure projects and natural environment projects. For example, the LNRS will include extensive engagement with Natural England.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That Committee notes the existing relationship between Natural England and the Combined Authority.

10.2 That Committee endorses Natural England's approach to the future of this relationship, specifically around the immediate needs to publish the first LNRS.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.