



Buckinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot update

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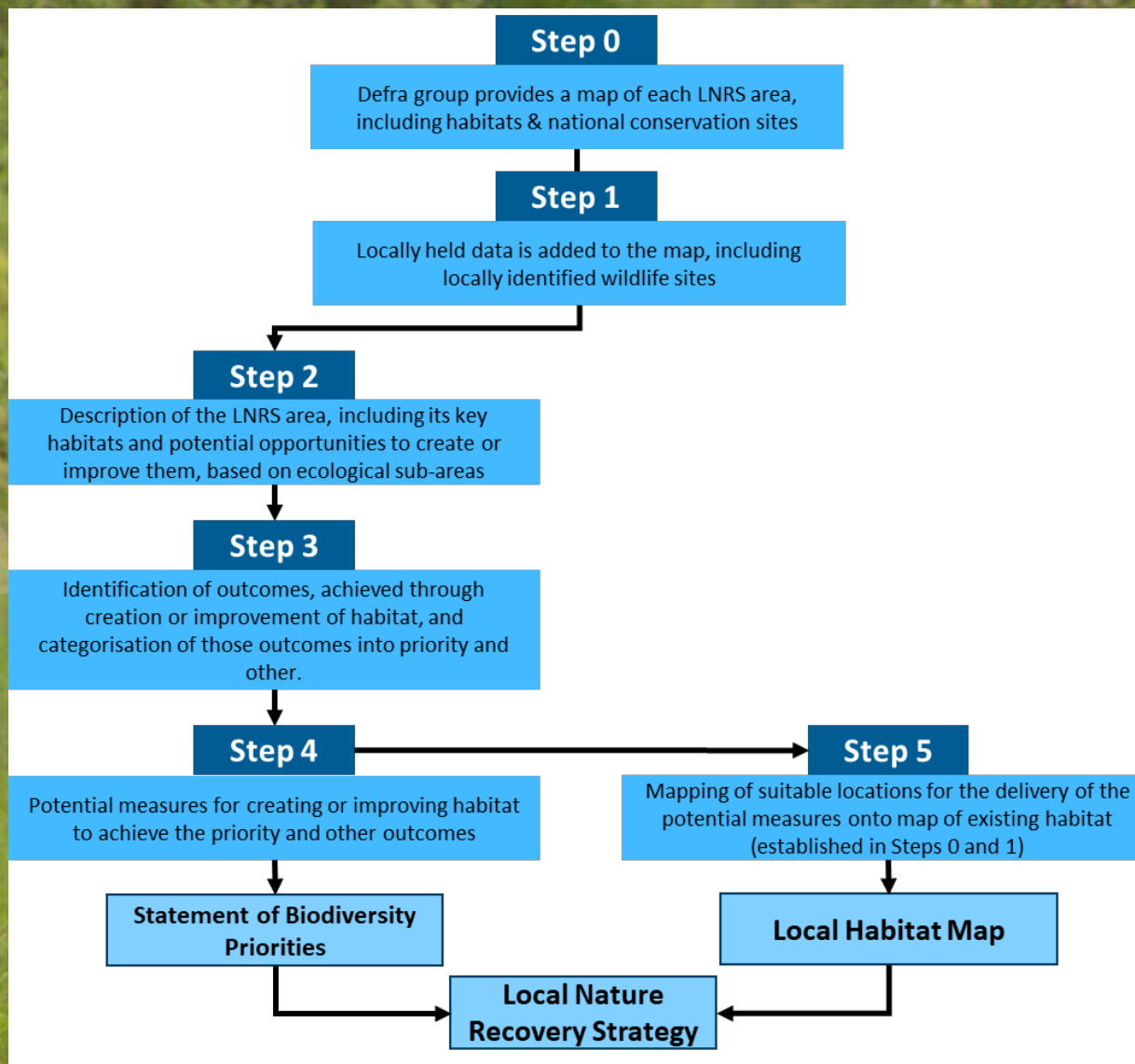


Buckinghamshire Pilot LNRS Journey



Local Nature Recovery Strategies – Buckinghamshire Pilot - Overview

- Buckinghamshire is one of **5 Pilot Authorities** testing the process to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- LNRs are a new system of **spatial strategies for nature**, that will be established in the Environment Bill 2021. They are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to help nature by that also deliver wider environmental outcomes
- LNRs will support delivery of **mandatory biodiversity net gain** and provide a focus for a strengthened duty on all public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- They will be key in guiding and channelling investment from various sources i.e. net gain ,**new Environment Land Management scheme** into local priorities for protection, creation and enhancement.



Who's involved?



*LNRS Launch Photo
Photo Credit: DEFRA*

The pilot LNRS journey

Collate existing information and data: data review, technical information from NEP biodiversity strategy; created baseline maps

- Habitats and land use
- Broader benefits provided by nature

Analysis and evaluation;
production of final reports

Feb 2021

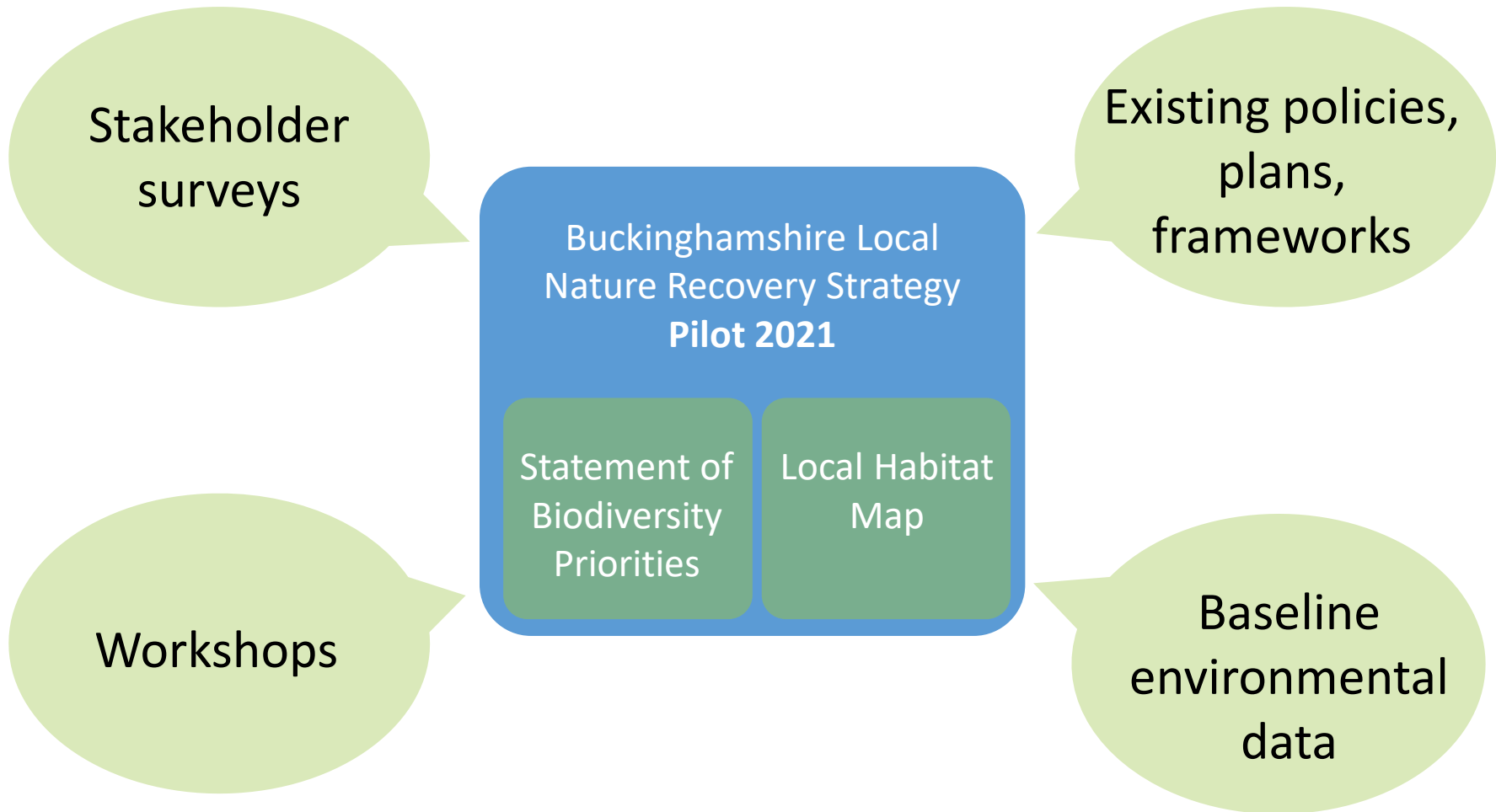
Oct –Dec 2020

May 21

Stakeholder engagement:
webinar, workshops, online
survey, farmer and land
manager survey

Mapping: where nature must
be recovered and improved

How it all fits together



LNRS Pilot Stakeholder Engagement

Over a four-week period in February the LNRS Pilot Area Team hosted:

- Introductory webinar, open to all stakeholders.
- Buckinghamshire-wide online survey, open to all stakeholders.
- Farmer, land manager, and forester online survey.
- Workshops for representatives of Buckinghamshire organisations.
- Workshops for farmers, land managers and foresters.

The aim of the stakeholder engagement process was two-fold:

- To inform stakeholders about the Buckinghamshire LNRS Pilot.
- To gain stakeholder input on three key elements of nature's recovery to be incorporated into the Buckinghamshire LNRS Pilot (outcomes for nature, environmental benefits, and activities to deliver outcomes or benefits).

LNRS Pilot Stakeholder Engagement

We engaged with a total of **358 stakeholders**
representing a **variety of sectors:**

agriculture and land managers
parish and town councils
central government/agencies
conservation organisations
individuals with a passion for nature in Buckinghamshire

For full details see our Summary of Stakeholder Engagement
<https://bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy/outputs/>

Stakeholders gave us lots of ideas!



The stakeholder engagement process created suggestions for **705** outcomes, **715** actions and **228** benefits that the pilot LNRS could incorporate...
ANALYSIS needed!



Statement of biodiversity priorities



The **outcomes** the LNRS is seeking to achieve and the **actions** by which they can be delivered.

Statement of biodiversity priorities - method

The responses were grouped into themes and consolidated, this resulted in a long list of 107 unique outcomes and benefits and 163 actions identified by stakeholders.

For example, the following separate stakeholder responses were used to form the single outcome '**More designated sites for nature conservation**'.

Original response wording:

- 1.introduce nature reserves to return rare flora and fauna to the Vale*
- 2.Increase the area of high quality biodiversity sites and associated buffer and connected to other sites across landscape*
- 4.Increase area of core and high quality biodiversity sites - e.g. LWS, SSSIs, local and national nature reserves*
- 5.Increase area of core and high quality biodiversity sites (e.g. LWs, SSSIs, NRs)*
- 6.Linford nature reserve is a great example of bio diversity. There should be so many more Site's like this.*
- 7.more nature reserves*

Statement of biodiversity priorities - method

The number of times an outcome was suggested by stakeholders was combined with technical expertise from Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Bucks Council Ecology, Bucks Natural Environment Partnership, local Wildlife Trust and Chilterns Conservation Board.

Background Data		OUTCOMES	Prioritisation Exercise: Select top 5 outcomes each								TOTALS
Stakeholder Popularity	SCP weighting		Example Expert 1	NEP	FC	NE	EA	CCB	BBOWT	BC	
	1 H	More designated Roadside Nature Reserves	1								0
		Increased resilience of Chiltern Beechwoods SAC	1		1			1			
	1										2
	1 M	Protection of the AONB	1	1		1		1			3
	1	More large designated sites (more than 200ha)	1						1	1	2
	2	Favourable condition of SSSIs		1	1	1	1		1	1	6
		Designated sites are protected by suitable habitat buffers		1	1	1	1	1		1	6
	5 H										6
	10 H	Ancient Woodland (and irreplaceable habitats) protected and in favourable management		1	1		1	1	1	1	6
	12 H	More sites designated for nature conservation		1		1			1		3
	9	Reduced pressure on sites of higher nature conservation value due to there being more alternative Accessible Natural Greenspace				1			1	1	3

Statement of biodiversity priorities - results

The 54 prioritised outcomes are presented under the following Defra headings (national objectives):

- to restore protected sites on land (including freshwater) to favourable condition so nature can thrive
- create or restore additional wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites
- support work to increase woodland cover
- recover threatened and iconic animal and plant species by providing more, diverse and better connected habitats
- achieve a range of environmental, economic and social benefits, such as carbon capture, flood management, clean water, pollination and recreation

Example outcomes and activities

NRN Objectives	Outcome (prioritised)	Associated Activities (consolidated, from stakeholder input)
Protected Sites	More sites designated for nature conservation	- Restore and create and buffer designated sites - Designate more sites for nature conservation
Wildlife rich habitat (other)	More Lowland Calcareous Grassland	- Better protection for priority habitats - Coordinate management of chalk grassland and encourage livestock grazing - Develop a habitat bank to support BNG policy and direct funds to the right sites
Woodland	More hedgerows in better ecological condition	- Better management of hedgerows and plant trees in existing hedges - Develop a habitat bank to support BNG policy and direct funds to the right sites
Species and Connectivity	Better habitat connectivity across farmland	- Better support for land management to increased biodiversity, reduced soil erosion and enhanced carbon sequestration (using direct drilling, min-till, cover crops and good crop rotation) - Engage and support landowners to manage their land for nature. Including access to advice and funding and via facilitation groups and farm clusters. - Encourage uptake of environmental stewardship schemes - Coordination between the LNRS, ELM and BNG - ELM to recognise whole farm systems
Ecosystem Services	Better flood attenuation through functioning floodplains, and soils	- Payments for land set aside to flood - Reconnect rivers with their floodplain - Understand groundwater in Chilterns and gravels of Thames, re suitability for NFM and interaction with infrastructure - Better understanding of flooding (upstream causes) and better flood warning and resilience (especially relating to groundwater)



Local habitat maps

Acknowledgements: Dr Sam Sinclair, Dr Siso Larrosa,
Professor Bob Smith, Biodiversify



Mapping biodiversity priorities

- We trialled the use of Systematic Conservation Planning to develop the Bucks Local Habitat Maps
- Biodiversify led the prioritisation, with key decisions made by the Pilot Area Team working group who also led the stakeholder engagement process
- Ultimately a local habitat map will be designed to reflect the shortlist of biodiversity priorities
- The 2 maps presented today are options for consideration by Defra to evaluate the method used, in order to determine an approach for the LNRs in 2022

Bucks Local Habitat Maps

- Based on 4 zones – representing existing sites for nature conservation, priority habitats, and areas for opportunity to restore or recover nature & wider environmental benefits
- Draws on available environmental data and many stakeholder priorities
- Presents 2 options with total coverage ranging from approx. 40% to 70% of Buckinghamshire, to explore what the maps mean to different stakeholder groups
- Represent proposed locations for delivering both the priority outcomes for nature and other environmental benefits (= action on the ground)

Bucks Local Habitat Map

- **Zone 1 - Protected sites and nature reserves**
 - Nationally or locally designated sites for nature conservation
 - Land owned and/or managed by eNGOs (BBOWT, National Trust, Woodland Trust)
- **Zone 2 - Maintain and Enhance**
 - Priority habitats
 - Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland, Ancient Replanted Woodland
 - Other important habitats: scrub, rivers and ponds

Bucks Local Habitat Map

- **Zone 3 - Restore or Recover**
 - Potential restoration areas for priority habitats
 - Woodland – high priority, managed and unmanaged
 - Chilterns AONB
 - Roadside Nature Reserves
 - Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
 - Ecosystem Services Opportunities
 - to sequester and store carbon
 - to reduce surface runoff
 - to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality
 - to ameliorate air pollution
 - to regulate local climate (e.g., reduce urban heat)
 - to increase access to natural greenspace

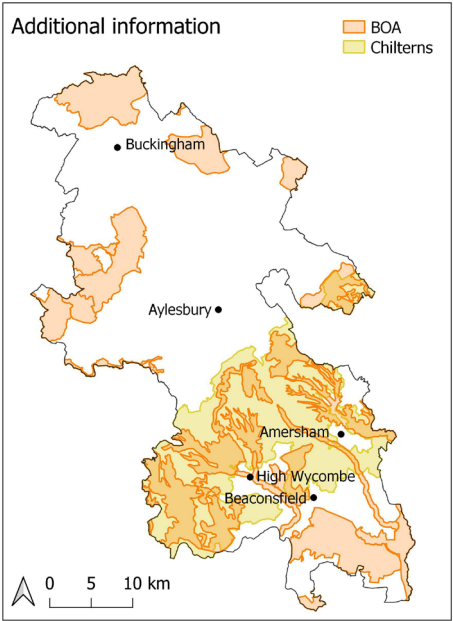
Bucks Local Habitat Map

- **Zone 4 – Wider Landscape**
 - Areas outside of zones 1 – 3, which are still deemed important to support nature's recovery, but do not contain spatially distinct features that were used in the mapping (e.g., planting or restoring hedgerows, creating wildflower meadows, implementing green infrastructure in urban areas, etc)

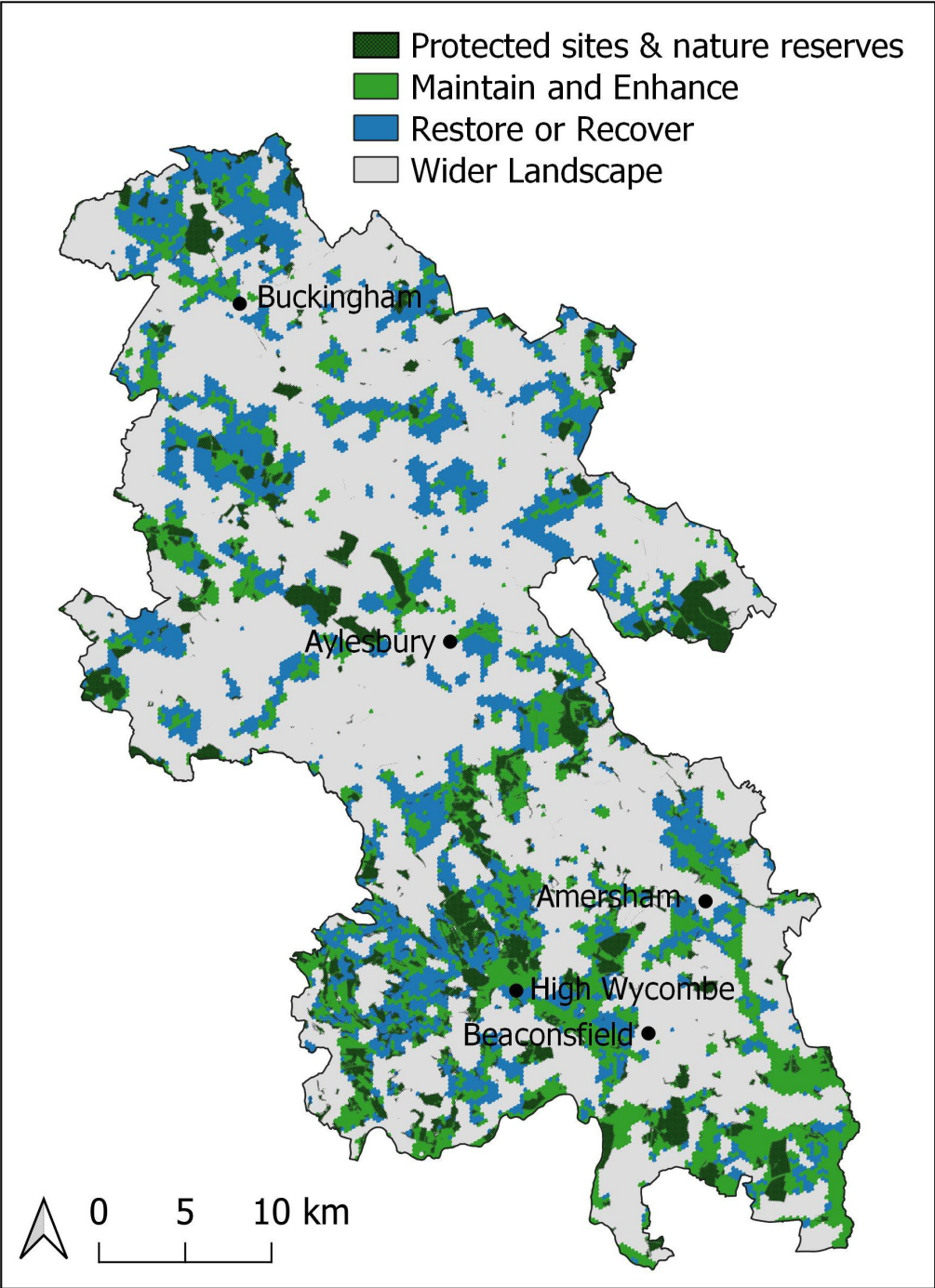
Map 1

Network: 639 km² (41% of Bucks)

Zone	area_km2	prop of bucks
Protected sites & NRs	159.48	10.19%
Maintain & enhance	212.64	13.59%
Restore or recover	267.23	17.08%



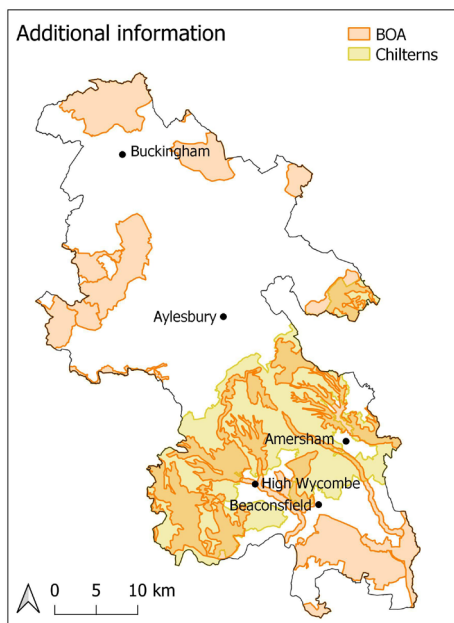
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL



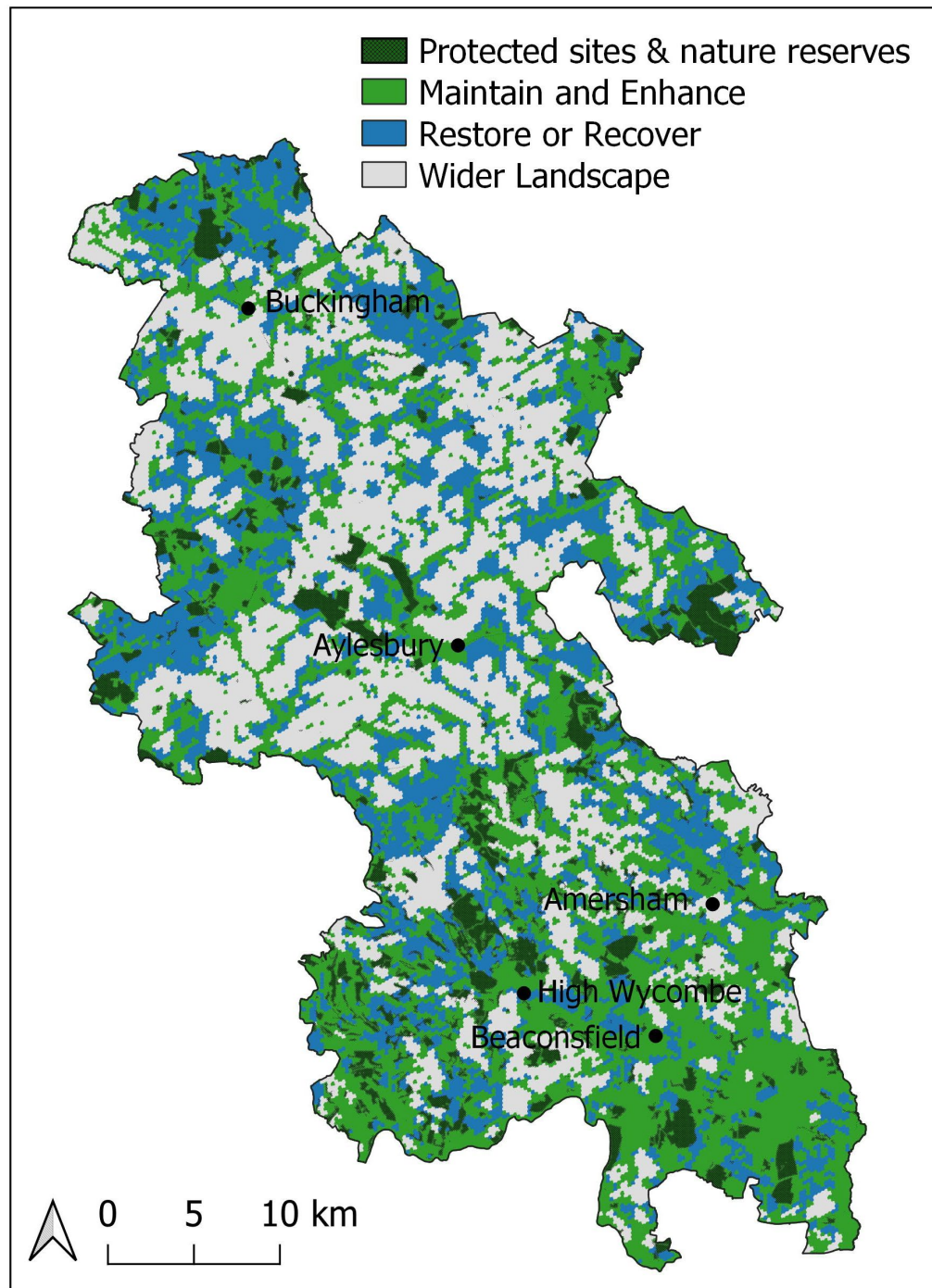
Map 2

Network: 1,084 km² (69.3% of Bucks)

Zone	area_km2	prop of bucks
Protected sites & NRs	159.48	10.19%
Maintain & enhance	537.25	34.33%
Restore or recover	387.70	24.77%



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What needs to happen for the map to be finalised?

- As part of the final LNRS, agreement needed on:
 - Total area coverage of Bucks of the local habitat map (compared to the baseline of 14.9%)
 - The number and meaning of the zones
 - The priorities that are mapped (e.g., after another round of consultation we may end up with a different list to that developed for the Pilot)
- Final map will need to be interrogatable, showing landscapes where particular priorities exist and specific activities to support nature's recovery could be implemented



Lessons learnt



Lessons Learnt?

- Data - we got bogged down in it!
- Early engagement - common understanding of what LNRS is and process being followed
- Resource - project management, GIS, engagement
- Time - 6 months was not enough
- Issue of standardisation amongst pilots
- Monitoring and delivery - not picked up in pilot process
- Defra – learning from all 5 pilots – feeding into guidance and secondary legislation for LNRSs



Thank you

