



Local Nature Reserves in England: A guide to their selection and declaration

Contents

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES	3
Natural England's view	4
Getting the most from LNRs	4
Benefits for local authorities	5
SELECTION OF AN LNR.....	7
Defining a Local Nature Reserve.....	7
Legislative requirements.....	7
Natural England recommendations	7
Other criteria to consider.....	8
Size of an LNR	9
STEPS TO ESTABLISHING AN LNR	11
Securing local authority legal interest in the land.....	11
Diagram of main steps	12
Setting up a management advisory committee.....	13
Declaration.....	13
Extensions and boundary changes	13
De-declaration.....	14
National Nature Reserves	14
CONSULTATION WITH NATURAL ENGLAND.....	16
Consultation process	17
LNR management plans	17
MANAGEMENT OF LNRs	19
Managing access.....	20
Help with management	20
Establishing byelaws	21
LNRs AND PLANNING.....	23
LNRs in ENGLAND: CASE STORIES	
Sharrow School Green Roof LNR, Sheffield: high class education.....	6
Wick Golden Valley LNR, South Gloucestershire: accessible biodiversity	10
Troopers Hill LNR, Bristol: an urban breath of fresh air	15
Ferndown LNR, Stafford: motorway meadows.....	18
Crane Park Island LNR, Twickenham: explosive wildlife.....	22
Beeston Sidings LNR, Nottingham: learning on track	24
APPENDICES	
1 Specimen declaration	25
2 Specimen public notice	26
3 Checklist of information for consultation with Natural England	27
4 LNR Visitor Standards for Local People	28
5 LNR management plans	34
6 Example nature reserve agreement.....	36
7 Suggested heads of terms for an agreement over an SSSI	38
8 Recommended procedure	40
9 Information for LNR database.....	44
10 Contact information	45

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

At Natural England, we work to conserve and enhance England's natural environment and its rich biodiversity. We believe contact with nature is vital for wellbeing and quality of life, and that everyone should be able to benefit.

As accessible green spaces close to where people live, Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) can help achieve that.

Not only do they support and protect habitats and species, they allow people to get close to nature and appreciate the contribution it makes to their quality of life.

LNRs are places to play, learn and explore that can also deliver significant physical and mental health benefits. They are typically close to where people live, and can be reached on foot, bicycle or bus.

They can be ancient woodland or industrial brownfield; part of urban parks or windswept moorland; rivers and streams or lakes and marshes. Even disused quarries, railway cuttings and road verges can be LNRs.

They give individuals and communities a range of ways to get involved in the natural environment; be it wildlife watching, fossil collecting, green gyms or running – there's something for everyone.

Big or small, out in the countryside or deep in the city, LNRs are good for people and good for wildlife.

Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 gives local authorities the power to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. The term 'Local Nature Reserve' is not used in the Act but this has become the term in common usage for nature reserves managed by local authorities in accordance with the Act.

The responsibility for selecting, acquiring and making arrangements for management of these reserves lies with local authorities. Section 21(6) of the Act says that a local authority can only declare an LNR after consultation with Natural England.

It should be noted that comments about site selection and management are simply our advice. Natural England has no mandatory powers over selection or declaration, but local authorities must consult us in exercising their powers under Section 21.

This guidance outlines the purpose, selection, establishment and declaration of LNRs. It is intended principally for Natural England and local authority staff, but it may also be of interest to others such as community groups and nature conservation organisations.

Promotional leaflets *Nature is your Neighbour* and *Local Nature Reserves: places for people and wildlife* are available [here](#).

Natural England's view

Natural England sees LNRs as an important way to achieve its goal of maintaining England's rich natural heritage, and giving people access to places where they can enjoy that heritage.

LNRs are an essential part of the country's green infrastructure. They are an important way to enhance and conserve nature and ecosystem services – the services nature provides to benefit people – against threats like climate change, declining biodiversity and lack of access.

Natural England would like to see more local authorities establish LNRs and would expect that Open Space, Green Space or Green Infrastructure strategies capture LNR sites as an important part of their natural greenspace provision.

LNRs are covered by Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). Ideally, they should form part of a network of LNRs and other accessible green spaces that help to meet the ANGSt standard, which seeks a minimum of 1 ha of LNR per 1000 head of population.

More information can be found in the Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance *Nature Nearby* [here](#).

Getting the most from LNRs

Natural England believes that well managed LNRs provide places that can ***inspire people to value and conserve the natural environment***.

The natural environment is there for everyone to enjoy, learn and gain benefits from, particularly for their health and wellbeing. Communities should be able to play a leading role in helping to conserve the natural environment particularly on their doorstep. There should be the widest range of access opportunities available to provide experiences that appeal to all abilities and backgrounds.

A key aim for local authorities and their partners is to provide an integrated network of easily accessible green spaces where people can engage with the natural environment and get involved. These should be connected by routes that enable visitors to choose low carbon, environmentally sustainable forms of transport to access them.

LNRs play a key role in engaging and involving communities, especially children, in securing healthy places where they want to live. They can also help local authorities meet their biodiversity duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and Local Area Agreement targets across a wide range of national indicators.

Further information on what Natural England wants to see happen is outlined in our positions, which are available [here](#).

Natural England's overall objective is to maintain and enrich the characteristic wildlife and natural features that comprise England's natural heritage. The [Character Areas](#) we have defined give a framework to which these broad objectives can be related. Environmental sustainability and biodiversity are the guiding principles - we should pass on to future generations a heritage at least as rich and diverse and widespread as we inherited. Local Nature Reserves continue to be important in achieving these goals.

We wish to see local authorities use the powers given to them in Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 more extensively than they do at present. LNRs should be an important part of any local authority plan. Natural England staff should encourage declaration of suitable sites as LNRs and help make sure that the right management is given to them.

Benefits for local authorities

Declaring an LNR offers many benefits for local authorities such as improving local quality of life, health and wellbeing.

An LNR creates new spaces for education, enjoyment and recreation, helps attract visitors and preserves links with the local community's past.

It safeguards local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water.

Protecting and enhancing the natural heritage is also a key part of building sustainable communities. Declaring an LNR draws attention to the land's nature conservation and recreation interest, and provides a positive use for land that might otherwise be perceived as available for development.

These multiple benefits mean that LNRs can make a substantial contribution to meeting the aspirations of Local Strategic Partnerships.

In addition, LNR staff are often highly competent ecologists who can be called upon to offer local authorities advice on ecological issues.

CASE STORY:
Sharrow School Green Roof LNR, Sheffield
High class education

The Sharrow School Green Roof is the first LNR in the country to be located on top of a building.

Created in 2007, the 2,000 sq m green roof was designed to represent the variety of habitats found in Sheffield.

These range from Peak District limestone grassland and wildflower meadows, to urban brownfield sites and a wetland area with a small pond.

Bird tables and insect feeders attract wildlife, and there is even a dead tree for birds to perch in and insects to burrow into.

A webcam and weather station have also been installed to provide research and education opportunities.

Find out more about this LNR [here](#).



© Sheffield City Council

Lynn Crowe from Natural England presenting a plaque to Lynne Ley the head teacher. Also pictured (L-R): Cath Basilio (the school's architect), Jeff Lunn from Natural England, Colin Havard (chair of the school's governors), Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed and Mary Bagley (Head of SCC's Parks and Countryside Service).



© Sheffield Green Roof Centre

SELECTION OF AN LNR

Defining a Local Nature Reserve

A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a protected area of land designated by a local authority because of its local special natural interest and, where possible, educational and community value.

Legislative requirements

Schedule 11 (12) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which replaced Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, describes a 'nature reserve' as:

- land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or
- land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.

Land is managed for a conservation purpose if it is managed for:

- providing, under suitable conditions and control, special opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live, and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area; or
- preserving flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area or for both these purposes.

Land is managed for a recreational purpose if it is managed for the purpose of providing opportunities for the enjoyment of nature or for open-air recreation.

Natural England recommendations

Natural England believes LNRs should be:

- Of high value locally for environmental education and/or research.
People are more likely to be aware of and value the natural environment when they can experience it at first hand in places such as LNRs.
- Of high natural interest locally.
LNRs can help safeguard not just rare but also more common, locally valued species, habitats and geodiversity. They can play an important part in Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Local Geodiversity Action Plans.
- Of reasonable natural interest and of high value locally for enjoyment of nature by the public.

Natural England recommends that everyone should have an accessible greenspace of 2 ha within 300 m of home; at least one accessible 20 ha site within 5 km of home; at least one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km of home; and at least one 500 ha site within 10 km of home. LNRs can contribute to these targets and the ANGST standard of a minimum of 1 ha of LNR per 1000 head of population.

They can also play an important part in sustainable development initiatives.

Other criteria to consider

The Natural England LNR Visitor Standards set out what an LNR should offer to provide a quality experience for visitors. A table summarising the standards is provided in [Appendix 4](#).

The following criteria should also be considered:

- Is the site the focus of local community interest and concern, or does it have the potential to capture people's imagination? Have local people (both those living and working nearby, and interested groups and users) been involved in the selection process?
- Will interested communities be involved in steering the site's development, management and monitoring?
- Is the site reasonably close to schools, community education centres and/or field study centres? Will there be opportunities for local schools to get involved and for schemes such as the Forest School programme or a Watch group to be set up?
- Are there areas where children are welcome to play?
- Is the site in an area generally lacking in publicly accessible natural heritage?
- Is there some public access – rights of approach, entry or use that are legally defined or established through long-standing use? Is the site linked to wider public access networks, green networks, other open spaces, etc?
- Is it safe and physically easy to get into and around the site, accepting that access to highly sensitive areas may need to be restricted wholly or periodically?
- Can people enjoy the access rights and feel comfortable about using the site, for example without fear of crime?
- Can people get to the site by active and public transport?
- Does the site have, or could it have, car parking, and provision for safe delivery and pick-up for educational visits?
- Does the site lend itself to being a safe educational resource, for example with good site interpretation, without adversely affecting its special interest?
- Is the site safeguarded, notably through the development plan process, or can safeguarding be included in the next Local Plan revision?
- Has the site been (or is it likely to be) identified of local importance in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan or Local Geodiversity Action Plan?
- Are there any implications for neighbouring areas, or other sites or facilities?
- Is the site's future secured for some time? There is limited benefit in investing resources in an LNR that will be de-declared and subsumed into the development cycle in the short, or perhaps even medium-term.
- What is the existing use of the site and how can this be taken into account when planning the LNR development? Will alternative provision have to be made, and will there be an overall public benefit?
- Is the site a viable management unit with appropriate access for management, etc?
- What are the likely costs to be incurred during the life-cycle of the LNR (including initial developmental, establishment, staffing costs, etc), and has provision been made for these?

FAQ

Q. Do LNRs have to have a visitor centre?

A. No, LNRs do not have to have a visitor centre and although the majority of sites do not have one, those that do, provide facilities for longer visits and better educational use of the LNR.

Q. Can an LNR include buildings, for example a visitor/education centre on site?

A. Yes, provided they add to the value of the LNR, do not detract from the peaceful enjoyment of the site and are normally less than 5 per cent in area of the site.

Size of an LNR

How big should an LNR be?

There is no definitive answer. The site should be of a minimum size to support a viable ecological interest and have the capacity to support public use. Anecdotal evidence suggests that any site less than 2 ha is probably unable to withstand heavy, multiple uses. However the size will depend to some extent on adjacent land uses and the degree of isolation of the site from other sites of similar character. Small sites can be very important if no larger sites are available in the local neighbourhood. Some geological sites can also work well as small sites.

Will it need a buffer zone?

Buffer zones are not essential but can be very useful. They are usually areas of lower value than the reserve. They can lie:

- within the LNR boundary. For example, land necessary to manage access such as a car park; reserve centres that serve important functions for the reserve; or agricultural land that supports species of special interest in the reserve; or
- adjacent to the boundary. For example, to absorb potentially damaging recreation pressures, or wildlife corridors connecting LNRs to green networks.

Buffer zones can also lie outside the LNR, for example the control of the whole of a water catchment may be needed to conserve a pool or wetland in the reserve.

FAQ

Q. What happens when there is a proposed development on an LNR?

A. If there is a proposed development on an LNR that will have an impact on the site and/or if the development is likely to result in part or all of the LNR being de-declared, then Natural England must be consulted. Examples of developments include sports facilities, medical facilities, housing, travellers' sites and environment centres.

CASE STORY:
Wick Golden Valley LNR, South Gloucestershire
Accessible biodiversity

Once the site of an ochre processing factory, the Wick Golden Valley LNR has become a haven for wildlife.

The remnants of its industrial past are now hidden among a variety of habitats including mature woodland, scrub and limestone grassland.

The River Boyd also runs through the site, providing a corridor for birds such as kingfishers and dippers, and also supporting otters and a wide variety of fish and aquatic life.

Other wildlife includes tawny owls, peregrine falcons and eight species of bats.

Much of the LNR is fully accessible. There are way-marked trails and an award-winning bat audio trail to lead visitors around the site.

The site is managed by South Gloucestershire Council in partnership with landowner Cemex and the active Friends of Wick Golden Valley, who run bat walks and other events throughout the year.

Find out more about this LNR [here](#).



© Neil Phillips Photography



© Neil Phillips Photography



© Stephen Pond

STEPS TO ESTABLISHING AN LNR

This section describes some of the actions typically required to establish an LNR. These are summarised in the diagrams on page 12 and in **Appendix 8**.

Securing local authority legal interest in the land

Under the 1949 Act, the local authority must first have or acquire a legal interest in the land in question (see **Appendix 1**) through ownership, lease or an agreement with the owners and occupiers involved (for agreement examples see **Appendices 6** and **7**).

The local authority making the declaration must also have jurisdiction over the area in which the proposed reserve lies. A local authority owning land in a second local authority's area can only declare the land an LNR if powers are delegated to it by the second local authority. For sites that extend across a local authority boundary, a joint declaration may be made by two local authorities.

Definition of a local authority

Local authorities are defined in the Local Government Act, 1972, Section 270. It says 'local authority' means: 'a county council, the Greater London Council, a district council, a London borough council or a parish or community council.'

While local government restructuring has led to changes in the principal councils' titles, the broad sweep of the definition is clear. Under Section 101 any principal local authority may delegate, by mutual agreement, its functions under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 to a parish, town or community council (or indeed to any other local authority).

Agreements and leases

Section 16 of the Act sets out the basis for agreements needed to ensure the management of the land as a nature reserve.

If the land is subject to a tenancy, both owner and tenant must be parties to the agreement. Such agreements can also be made with, for example, non-government nature conservation organisations that wish to see their reserves officially recognised as LNRs (see **Appendix 6**).

Examples of agreements are given in **Appendix 6** and **7**, though such formal agreements may not be necessary. However an agreement must, as a minimum, give the local authority a legal interest in the land, set out who is responsible for doing what, and be clear about what is being agreed to the satisfaction of all sides' legal advisors.

Freehold, leasehold and agreements all give a legal interest in land that is adequate for a local authority to declare an LNR. The distinction is that freehold and leasehold confer title to land whereas an agreement does not.

Local authorities may enter into agreements with drainage authorities in the execution of any powers available to the councils under the 1949 Act (Section 21 (5)); and may contribute toward the expenditure by the drainage authorities.

FAQ

Q. What is the normal length of lease for an LNR?

A. There is no set length but the longer the better. In practice the normal minimum length of lease is 21 years. (Some funding bodies such as the National Lottery will ask for a 25 year lease agreement).

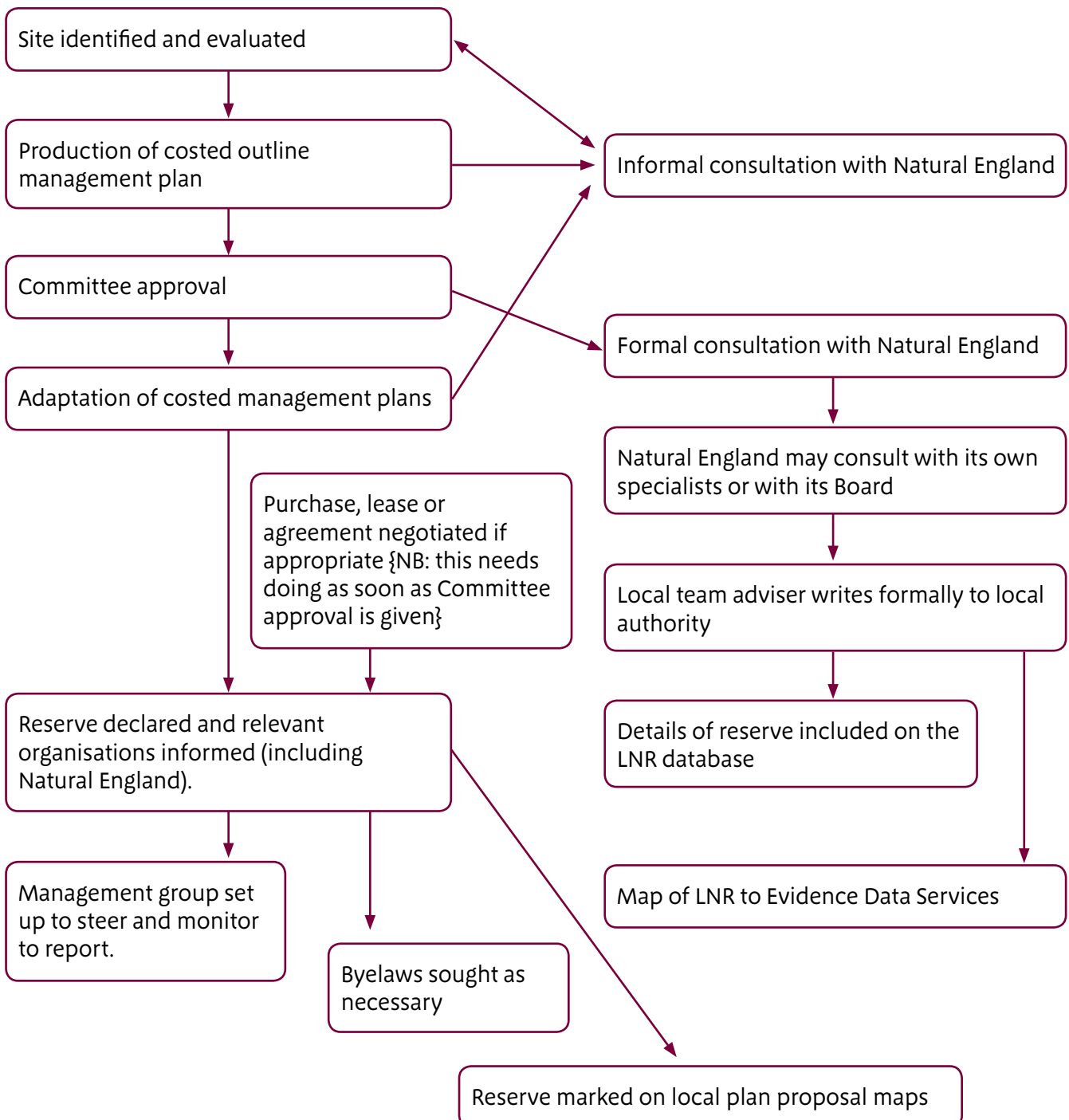
Compulsory purchase

The 1949 Act gives powers of compulsory purchase to local authorities to establish LNRs. However, compulsory purchase can only be used where the local authority is satisfied that it cannot arrive at a satisfactory agreement on reasonable terms, and has exhausted all other reasonable means to secure the reserve.

Compulsory purchase can also be employed when a breach of a nature reserve agreement prevents or jeopardizes the proper management of an LNR. This power is subject to the normal limitations and dispute procedures that apply to local authority compulsory purchase.

If compulsory purchase is involved, then a principal local authority must carry this out on behalf of the parish or community councils, under Sections 124 and 125 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Main steps in setting up an LNR



Setting up a management advisory committee

The parties involved in identifying, evaluating, declaring and managing the LNR may form a group to help steer the process, which is often termed the management advisory committee.

It could typically comprise representatives of the local authority, the local community, and potential users of the LNR, which may include environmental or other local interest groups. Ideally a management advisory committee should be established early on in the process of declaring an LNR.

Where schools are major users, it may be worthwhile setting up a junior management board, made up of young people elected by their schools to ensure their needs and ideas are fed into the management of the reserve.

Declaration

Section 19 of the 1949 Act sets out the procedures for declaration (and de-declaration) of nature reserves. Declaration establishes formal proof of the LNR and informs the public of the LNR's existence.

The local authority makes a declaration that:

- 1 the land is subject to an agreement entered into with them or has been acquired and is held by the authority; and
- 2 the land is being managed as a nature reserve.

If the agreement should end or the land to which the declaration relates ceases to be held by the local authority, it should make a declaration of this.

An example of a declaration is included at **Appendix 1**, and a specimen public notice in **Appendix 2**. These can be varied to suit the circumstances.

Before an LNR is formally declared, Natural England asks that the local authority making the declaration gives Natural England the opportunity to formally welcome the proposal. Although there is no statutory requirement to do so, it gives Natural England an opportunity to provide advice about the site and any possible issues.

The local authority may execute the declaration document in the same way that it executes any legal agreement. It is strongly recommended that any document of declaration is attached to or accompanies a map that shows accurately the boundaries of the LNR in order to avoid confusion. This is not a legal requirement but has been adopted by Natural England following best practice in the case of National Nature Reserves.

Notice of the declaration should be published in the best way that informs local and relevant people, including posting a notice up at the site entrance. Certified copies of any declaration may also be kept for public inspection in appropriate local authority offices and public libraries. This fact is usually advertised by a public notice in local and, where appropriate, national newspapers.

Upon declaration, Natural England would like to add all LNRs to a national database and LNR website. A list of required information is included as **Appendix 9**, and should be considered throughout the declaration process.

Extensions and boundary changes

Extensions or boundary changes to an existing LNR follow the same procedure. If there are existing byelaws on the site then these will have to be amended to reflect the boundary changes.

De-declaration

If any part of an LNR needs to be de-declared, for example, because land has been lost to a road-widening scheme on the boundary, Natural England must be consulted. Section 19 (3) of the 1949 Act specifically provides for this contingency, which should be pursued only as a matter of necessity.

FAQ

Q. Can a common or other accessible green space be declared as an LNR?

A. Yes, where the declaring authority has a legal interest in the site. 'Ownerless' commons and green spaces can be adopted by a local authority to obtain a legal interest in the site and can then be declared as LNRs.

Q. Can brownfield or created/artificial sites be declared as LNRs?

A. Yes, as long as the sites have some wildlife and/or geological interest or have the potential to improve with correct management. These sites are often important to local people for access to local 'natural' green spaces close to their homes. They are also valuable sites for formal and informal education and learning.

Q. Can agricultural land or orchards be declared as LNRs?

A. Yes, provided there is some wildlife and/or geological interest and the site has access to the public. Some of these sites form important links to more 'wild' sites and form part of a valuable mosaic of habitats. Old orchards are important historically and often have good nature conservation value. New community orchards can be declared as LNRs.

National Nature Reserves

Although beyond the scope of this document, it should be noted that Section 35 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 gives Natural England the powers to declare as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) any land of national importance to nature conservation which is held by an approved body and managed by them as a nature reserve.

A local authority can be an approved body. Therefore, where the land concerned is of national importance and is being managed as a nature reserve (informal or statutory), an NNR label can be applied to it while the authority retains direct control over management. When an LNR is declared an NNR, then it must be de-declared as an LNR.

CASE STORY:
Troopers Hill LNR, Bristol
An urban breath of fresh air

High on a hillside, overlooking Bristol and the River Avon, Troopers Hill LNR is one of the most spectacular wildlife spots in the city.

It mixes industrial heritage – the site was quarried for many years and contains two listed chimneys – with an acid-soil habitat that is unique in Bristol.

These soils have encouraged a wide range of plants to flourish, including bell heather, ling and broom.

Many small invertebrates also live in the LNR’s grassland and heathland, including species of national importance.

As well as butterflies, crickets, lizards and mining bees, the site also attracts many birds.

The LNR has an active group of volunteers, Friends of Troopers Hill, who organise events and maintain a website.

Find out more about this LNR [here](#).



© Friends of Troopers Hill



© Rob Acton-Campbell



© Greg Mort



© Rob Acton-Campbell



© Greg Mort

CONSULTATION WITH NATURAL ENGLAND

Under Section 21 of the 1949 Act, a local authority may only declare an LNR after consultation with Natural England.

Ideally, Natural England local staff should be consulted informally at an early stage so that any problems can be ironed out before a formal consultation is made. If the LNR is an [SSSI](#), then the local Natural England officer should be involved from the start.

Natural England has a lot of experience in the management of nature reserves and local Natural England staff can advise on management methods and costs, as well as providing advice on the special natural interest of the site if needed and how it can be managed for access.

Where formal consultation is concerned, there is a legal point to consider. It is likely that by 'consultation with Natural England', the 2006 Act means Natural England and not its officers. As a fail-safe legal mechanism, Natural England's chief executive has formally delegated authority to its advisers (Area and Regional teams) to respond to consultations on Natural England's behalf.

The Act does not specify when or what form a consultation should take. However when being formally consulted, Natural England requires:

- A statement outlining why the site was selected
- A map
- Tenure details
- An outline management plan setting out a brief description of the site aims and objectives – including actual or potential biodiversity management, opportunities to be realised for environmental education and community participation, arrangements for access and visitor management - and the management arrangements and initial management priorities
- Outline costs and funding arrangements

A full checklist is at [Appendix 3](#).

If there is no consultation with Natural England it could be argued that the 1949 Act's statutory requirements have not been met and it is possible that any declaration and associated byelaws could be declared invalid.

Consultation process

Informal discussions about the possibility of an LNR designation between Natural England and local authority.

Natural England staff ensure that local authority knows and adheres to the proper procedures for declaration, in particular that a legal interest is held in the land prior to declaration.

Local authority decides to proceed.

The Natural England chief executive asks Natural England's local team advisers to consult directly with the local authority on its behalf.

A formal letter is sent by the local authority to Natural England's appropriate team adviser outlining the proposal and seeking Natural England's views.

Local Natural England team seeks any guidance it needs from specialist teams. Where proposals are particularly complex, controversial or innovative, the case may be referred to the Area Manager or Regional Director.

The local team adviser confirms to the local authority that the consultation is complete and makes necessary advice and comments. The team adviser's letter should begin: 'Natural England confirms that it has been consulted about your proposal to declare...[the name of the site]...a Nature Reserve under the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). The requirement for consultation contained in Section 21 (6) of that Act has therefore been met.'

Local team asks to be informed once the LNR has been declared and to receive a set of declaration papers and a map. This information is then placed in the Natural England database and website. More detailed information on the site to be sent to Natural England at a later date.

LNR management plans

As good practice, Natural England would ideally like to comment on a basic management plan.

Production of a plan is not a legislative requirement but the site has to be managed as a nature reserve when it is declared as an LNR.

Natural England recommends that within one year of a declaration, a reasonably comprehensive management plan should be prepared. Natural England staff are able to advise on suitable formats for management plans.

A more detailed explanation and example of an outline management plan can be found in [Appendix 5](#). There are also links to management plans in some of the case stories.

FAQ

Q. How long are management plans for?

A. LNR management plans normally cover five years but can be shorter, for example three years or annual, or even as long as 20 years. To be useful as working documents, they should be reviewed annually.

CASE STORY: Ferndown LNR, Stafford Motorway meadows

Ferndown LNR is 6.5 ha of amenity grassland and scrub near the M6 in Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Declared an LNR in 2008 and managed by Stafford Borough Council, a large amount of habitat creation has taken place, aided by the local Friends Of group.

Rare species found on site include the White Letter Hairstreak butterfly and the Broad-leaved Helleborine orchid.

Funded by a £10,000 Breathing Spaces lottery grant, meadow restoration works have successfully transformed rough grassland into species rich meadows featuring rare arable plants including Field Gromwell.

The work has been so successful that the site is now entered into a Higher Level Stewardship agreement to manage the meadows.

Find out more about this LNR [here](#).



© Stafford Borough Council



MANAGEMENT OF LNRs

Good management is essential and can increase, often substantially, the value of a site's access opportunities, wildlife or geological interest.

Where educational use and public enjoyment are concerned, high quality management is essential to get the best from the site for habitats, species and local communities. In addition to management of habitats and natural features, interpretive materials and well planned, clearly defined footpaths have important parts to play.

Site-based staff and trained volunteers can be particularly effective in maintaining and enhancing site values. On heavily used sites, staff operating from a reserve centre with general interpretative facilities and classroom(s) can help maximise the benefits to the community.

Many LNRs are used extensively by schools. LNR managers should seek the involvement of the education authority in helping to ensure that the potential of the LNR is realised, that its facilities are adequate, and that National Curriculum targets are understood and served, and that site staff have opportunities for relevant training. An annual mailing of basic literature about LNRs in the area should also go to all local schools.

LNR management should maintain the features that give the site its special interest. Where the purpose of the LNR is to give special opportunities for study or research, then the maintenance or improvement of these opportunities should be a main aim.

Thus the definition of management objectives and the development of working programmes are important from the outset. In-house ecologists or organisations such as the Wildlife Trust can help as well as Natural England staff.

The Best of Both Worlds website offers ideas on how to pro-actively manage nature sites for people and nature conservation. Find out more [here](#).

FAQ

Q. Do LNRs have to be managed?

A. Yes, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the definition of an LNR is land managed as a nature reserve or for a conservation purpose, implying that LNRs are managed. When local authorities declare an LNR they take on the duty of care to manage and look after the site. This can be done directly by the local authority or through a management agreement with another organisation such as a wildlife trust, Friends Of group, or community group.

Q. Should Natural England be consulted about work proposed on site?

A. There is a statutory requirement for consultation under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, where an LNR is also an SSSI.

If the LNR is not an SSSI then there is no mandatory requirement for Natural England to be consulted about work on the site or about changes in management.

Only when Natural England feels the need to intervene, would it ask for formal consultation over site management. For example, if there was a risk that the work might threaten the site's compliance with the 1949 and 2006 Act definitions of a nature reserve.

Managing access

Declaration of a site as an LNR does not give the public an automatic right of access. However, high quality access will make the most of an LNR's benefits, where there is no detriment to habitat or species.

A policy on access is desirable at an early stage and as part of the management plan.

The policy may range from applying strict controls on access to providing specified areas of open access with information centres, observation hides, nature trails, and facilities for people with special needs and car parks.

The policy adopted will depend on a number of factors including vulnerability of habitat, site location, topography and site condition (for example, very steep or very wet), manpower and financial resources and, if the reserve is established by agreement or lease, the wishes of the owner.

Whatever the eventual policy, it is wise to erect signs with a map that shows the access arrangements clearly.

FAQ

Q. Does an LNR have to be fully accessible to the public?

A. Well managed access maximises the benefits of bringing people closer to nature, however, there is no set requirement that LNRs should be fully accessible to the public.

Most LNRs have open access but in some cases sites have restricted access to sensitive areas. Some sites have access restrictions on part of the site for part of the year, for example bird breeding season or flowering season for rare/special plants. The best approach is to make an LNR as accessible as possible.

Q. What can LNRs offer for people with disabilities?

A. LNRs are an opportunity for everyone to experience and enjoy nature. All LNRs should provide safe and reasonable access for disabled people, in keeping with the site conditions. LNRs are not exempt from the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and information points or signage should indicate which parts are accessible.

Help with management

Natural England will consider applications for financial help for the effective management of LNRs, but funds are limited. There is no automatic entitlement to grants and the amount awarded will depend on the level of benefit for nature conservation and the money available to Natural England for grants. Details can be obtained from local offices. Grants may also be available from other organisations.

Information about grants can be found in the *Environment Funding Guide*, fourth edition January 2010, which can be downloaded from [here](#).

Practical help with management and in particular with the more specialised tasks, may be obtained from the BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), which may also be able to give basic training to volunteers.

Establishing byelaws

Local authorities have powers to make byelaws to control third party activities under Section 20 and 21(4) of the 1949 Act. It may be advisable to have byelaws if there is general access to a reserve, or part of it, to provide support to staff or police in controlling dog walkers, dog excrement problems or undesirable or unacceptable activities.

However without a declaration under Section 19 of the 1949 Act, the local authority cannot introduce nature reserve byelaws (1949 Act Section 20 (1)).

The byelaws must not interfere with the rights of an owner, lessee or occupier of the land in a nature reserve (1949 Act Section 20 (2)).

Byelaws cannot override existing rights over land. Also, only one set of byelaws can be applied to any piece of land. Therefore if introducing new byelaws, any existing ones need to be revoked and the new set applied to all of the land concerned.

Applications for byelaws are made by local authorities. LNR byelaws are confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The power to confirm byelaws derives from section 236 of the Local Government Act 1972. It allows the Secretary of State to either confirm or refuse to confirm the byelaws.

It is helpful if byelaws are submitted in draft form and accompanied by a map. Once the wording is agreed, Defra will give approval to advertise them and normally gives an approved form of words for the advertisement.

Once the byelaws have been advertised and the one month consultation period expired, two copies of the sealed byelaws and two copies of the unsealed byelaws are submitted to Defra for confirmation. After confirmation, Defra also asks for a copy of the final printed version made available to the public.

Full guidance for making LNR byelaws can be found [here](#).

Byelaws for Natura 2000 sites

A similar provision for byelaws is made in The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 for Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas). Where LNRs are also designated as Natura 2000 sites, there is the option to make byelaws under Statutory Instrument 1994 2716.

CASE STORY:
Crane Park Island LNR, Twickenham
Explosive wildlife

Once the site of the Hounslow Gunpowder Mills, Crane Park Island had an explosive past but it's now a peaceful haven for wildlife.

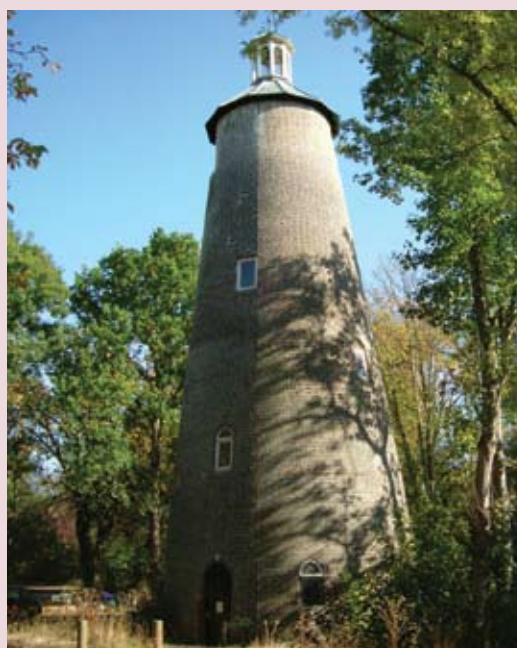
Its mosaic of woodland, scrub, reedbed and riverbank supports a rich diversity of wildlife, from foxes and herons to marsh frogs and the increasingly rare water vole.

Visitors are welcome throughout the year and the reserve has good disabled facilities including a wheelchair path.

The Grade II listed, 25 m high Old Shot Tower, a relic of the gunpowder mill, now houses a visitor centre.

It features a giant interactive wall map depicting the full course of the River Crane and its history.

Find out more about this LNR [here](#).



© Alexandra Robb



LNRs AND PLANNING

Natural England wants to encourage local authorities to consider the part LNRs can play in developing a good policy framework for nature conservation and sustainable development in their Local Development Frameworks and Area Action Plans.

Government planning guidance Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9 – see note below) clearly indicates the priority that local authorities are expected to give to nature conservation in planning.

They are encouraged to take account of nature conservation outside the national network of SSSIs (Para 4) and to include policies relating to the management of important landscape features (Para 23) and to the possible provision of new habitats (Para 24).

All Local Development Frameworks should include criteria-based policies against which development proposals can be judged. LNRs which are also SSSIs or Natura 2000 sites are subject to a much higher level of protection.

In 1994, the importance of LNRs was strengthened by their specific mention in Objective 16 of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan to: 'Encourage local planning authorities to make reasonable provision for LNRs and natural green spaces in local plans...'

Declaration and management of LNRs can also help local authorities comply with their strengthened duty of care for biodiversity under the NERC Act 2006 Part 3, Section 40.

It is essential therefore for local authorities to develop Local Development Plans and Area Action Plans that reflect the local and regional importance of LNRs in the development control process.

PLEASE NOTE

PPS9 is in the process of being updated at the time of writing. The consultation draft emphasises the importance of green infrastructure and the need to include policies in Local Development Frameworks. You can view the consultation draft [here](#).

CASE STORY:
Beeston Sidings LNR, Nottingham
Learning on track

This 4 ha site on former railway sidings gives visitors the chance to see a diverse range of animals and plants.

Field voles, shrews, kingfishers and dragonflies are just some of the species that have made their home on or along the river, in reedbeds, woodland and scrubland.

The LNR's urban location also makes it ideal for Forest School sessions, where local children can experiment with the natural environment in a safe setting.

Typical activities include tree climbing and shelter building. Not only are they fun but they're also a great way to build children's self-esteem and awareness of nature.

Find out more about this LNR [here](#).



© Nottingham City Council



APPENDIX 1
Specimen declaration

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

No..... Declaration 20.....

In pursuance of Sections 19 and 21 of the above-mentioned Act, and all other powers enabling them in that behalf, the Council hereby declares that the land containing ha or thereabouts situated in the Parish of in the County of and shown edged on the attached plan (has been acquired by the Council) (is the subject of an Agreement entered into with the Council under Section of the above-mentioned Act) AND in pursuance of Section 19 (2) of the above-mentioned Act and all other powers aforesaid the Council hereby further declare that the said land is being managed as a Nature Reserve.

This declaration may be referred to as the Nature Reserve No.....

Declaration 20.....

Given under the Common Seal of
the Council this day of SEAL
Two thousand and

(Signed)

(Signed)

APPENDIX 2
Specimen public notice

NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1949
DECLARATION OF NATURE RESERVE PARISH OF COUNTY OF.....

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in pursuance of Section 19 of the above-mentioned Act that by the Local Nature Reserve Declaration [.....Ref No], made on the day of __/__/__ hectares or thereabouts situation in the Parish of in the County of..... and shown edged on the plan attached to the said Declaration (has been acquired by the Council) (is the subject of an Agreement entered into with the Council under Section..... of the above-mentioned Act) and that the said land is being managed as a Nature Reserve.

Certified copies of the said Declaration with plan attached have been deposited for public inspection free of charge at the office of at from Monday to Friday inclusive during the normal office hours.

Dated this day of __/__/__

(Signed)

on behalf of the Council

APPENDIX 3

Checklist of information helpful for consultation with Natural England

It would be helpful for Natural England to have as much information as possible in order to assess proposals quickly and to give constructive advice. There is no statutory requirement to submit this level of detail.

- 1 Site name.
- 2 District and County.
- 3 Proposed declaring authority.
- 4 Area in hectares.
- 5 Map on A4 sheet showing site location.
- 6 Map on A4 sheet showing site boundary (1:10,000 scale as well as larger scales if necessary). Also an electronic version if possible.
- 7 Site ownership. Details of local authority's legal interest if not freehold owners.
- 8 Description of the habitats and species of interest based on a full survey of habitat types. The description should include a map showing the distribution of the main habitat types mentioned. Information about uncommon species should be included.
- 9 Description of the value of the site's main natural and physical features.
- 10 In the case of sites where geological features are the primary interest, or an important part of the interest, a description with maps/diagrams is helpful.
- 11 Description of the value of the site to schools (where appropriate), and the type and scale of current use.
- 12 Description of the value of the site as a place in which local people can enjoy contact with wildlife (where appropriate).
- 13 The features and values described in 8-12 should be placed in the context of the local authority area, preferably as a separate section.
- 14 Outline of past uses of the site in so far as these are known.
- 15 Any known constraints on management, eg soil toxicity, wayleaves, tenancies, rights of common, mineral rights separately owned.
- 16 Purpose of formal declaration as an LNR.
- 17 Outline management policies/objectives/prescriptions, including access.
- 18 Outline of capital and revenue costs in first year.
- 19 Staffing proposals for an LNR.
- 20 Proposed links with voluntary nature conservation bodies and site users.

In a lot of cases this information will be contained in published documents such as nature conservation strategies, local biodiversity action plans, descriptions of important geological sites or in the local authority plans. If so, then a photocopy, or reference to relevant documents will suffice if Natural England holds copies.

APPENDIX 4

LNR Visitor Standards for Local People

Local Nature Reserves are mostly visited by local people. Children in particular are key users of these sites, especially where they are within about 300 m of their homes, a distance we know most parents are comfortable with in allowing their children to roam unaccompanied from home.

Given that most LNRs are close to where people live, the vast majority of visits are made on foot, by bike and public transport.

These service standards for visitors have been developed as a way of encouraging improvements in the quality of LNRs and also raising awareness of what they can offer. They are voluntary and should be applied as appropriate to the site conditions and the identified needs of users.

We see LNRs as particularly important because of their locality close to where people live, enabling access on a daily basis. They are great places for people to get close to nature, are places for play, exploration and outdoor learning and provide huge health benefits for both physical and mental health and well being. They also offer individuals and communities opportunities for involvement at levels that suit them, whether it is watching and recording wildlife, green gym activities or events; there is usually something for everyone.

Natural England wishes to raise the standards for visitors to all types of green spaces, our focus being in particular more natural sites (National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves and Country Parks) but also promoting the creation and enhancement of natural areas within more formal green spaces. Through this we can deliver the best offer for people to access nature and improve the delivery of ecosystem services.

We have developed an accreditation scheme for Country Parks launched in August 2009, which is open to LNRs and similar sites that might benefit from this recognition. We have a new framework of service standards for NNRs which has been adopted for Natural England's most visited NNRs and which we would like to offer as best practice for other NNRs.

What follows is our visitor service standards for LNRs, which we have developed with LNR managers and with community groups and school children who use their local sites. As we gain more knowledge about how people engage with their LNRs, we will build on these standards to ensure they are fit for purpose. Your feedback is helpful.

The following table is divided into themes with both **expected criteria**, which we would consider essential for the majority of LNRs to meet, and **desirable criteria**, which provide added value in improving the visitor experience.

We recognise that some of the expected criteria will be difficult to deliver on small sites in particular but also recognise the huge importance that some small sites have for communities particularly where open space is limited, eg in built-up urban areas. It may be the **only** experience of the natural environment that some people have and the first taste of adventure outdoors for huge numbers of children. We also recognise the challenges these standards present to resource strapped managers, who along with their communities have to be even more inventive and resourceful to deliver excellent LNRs.

Location and size	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
An identifiable boundary.		This helps to identify the site within its wider surroundings and should not be seen as a barrier to accessing it.
Desirable		
Links from the site to the rights of way network, permissive access routes or other adjoining public open space or open access areas where feasible.		This locates the site within a wider network of routes and green spaces providing a wider variety of visitor experiences nearby and can reduce the need for duplication. It can encourage sustainable travel within a wider area.
Preferably at least 2 ha (5 acres).		LNRs' size varies greatly from under 1 ha to many hundreds of hectares, however a 2 ha site is considered to offer a variety of functions, which managed sensitively, will not compromise the wildlife value. Small sites may be the only public spaces available in an area and they can provide tremendous value for wildlife and people alike.
Accessibility	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
Entry is free of charge.		
The site is easily located from the surrounding area, readily accessible to the local population it is intended to serve and the entrances are both obvious and welcoming.		Access to the LNR should be easy to find by active travel, ie good signage for walking, cycling and by public transport. The LNR should be promoted to local people, particularly children, so they know the site exists and they are welcome to visit and enjoy it. High fences and walls with few entrances, locked gates and limited opening times all act as both physical and psychological barriers to access. Entrances may need to be adapted to accommodate pushchairs and wheelchairs. Consider children's entrances/exits.
Evidence of a Site Access Plan in place that has been developed following an access audit and addresses the requirements of the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) to ensure indoor and outdoor facilities provided are inclusive and accessible and are relevant to the site conditions. This should include additional facilities for visitors with restricted mobility, eg easy going trails, accessible seats and picnic benches, signage and relevant site information in a range of accessible formats.		Adopt a 'least restrictive access' approach to planning and managing access on site. Consider short circular taster routes for newcomers to the LNR. Also an easy going route where feasible particularly if much of the site is steep and difficult to access. Further guidance can be found here . Getting to and around a site, however, is not just about physical access. There are other barriers that stop people visiting, eg feeling unwelcome, concern about anti-social behaviour, lack of personal confidence, time, poor health and being isolated. Outreach activity, events on site and community involvement will all help considerably in overcoming these barriers.

Character	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
Provides access to nature near where people live, ie must predominantly consist of natural or semi-natural landscape, and have local nature conservation and/or geological interest and value, and /or have high value for environmental education or research, and/or have high value for the informal enjoyment of nature by the public.		This might include brownfield sites as well as man-made sites such as railway cuttings and quarries that have geological interest in particular. Having access to the natural environment is considered as very important to communities. Children in particular want to learn more about wildlife by visiting their LNR.
Less than 5 per cent of total area is covered by buildings.		This gives an idea of what proportion of the reserve should be considered the maximum amount given over to buildings to encourage limited development on a site.
Management of the site's local biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape character and historic environment.		This should be based on a sound knowledge of the site, its bio and geodiversity, landscape character and history and outlined in a management plan. Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans can both add relevant knowledge here.
Facilities	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
Natural areas where children are welcome to play and explore.		A priority for children and their parents / carers. Consider some child centred facilities to encourage this, eg tunnel paths and entrances, lower level viewing points for wildlife watching, natural features for climbing, sitting, jumping, socialising such as tree trunks and boulders.
Simple, well located facilities accessible for visitors of all abilities, eg seats and picnic benches.		Consider the type, location and arrangement of seats throughout the reserve as resting points, places for quiet contemplation, socialising and views of landscape and wildlife.
Desirable		
Self guided trails including the use of new technologies, eg downloads to GPS/ mobile phones or other, as they are developed and becomes available.		Seen as essential by residents in the pilot. Web based information is preferred as it is easy to update and doesn't intrude on the site itself. It can also be made available in different formats to meet the needs of varied users. Social networking sites such as Facebook are seen as a good way for managers to communicate with users.
Promoted self-guided health promoting activities eg Green Gym, Health Walks, quiet space.		Natural England has recently developed some Green Flag Award supplementary guidance comprising a health check that introduces some of the elements that contribute to providing healthy places for healthy people.
Staff and trained volunteers to organise activities.		Seen as an essential standard amongst visitors who want to learn more about a site and take part in organised events. Could include play rangers and outreach staff with links to, eg schools, community and youth groups.

Seating or picnic areas in close proximity.		
Secure cycle parking facilities at or near entrances. Cycle or horse trails where appropriate.		Cycling / horse riding on site may be appropriate at some LNRs, particularly where there are bridleways or cycle routes. These will need managing, including the promotion of a code of conduct to avoid potential conflict with other users.
Links to Local Communities and Neighbourhoods	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
The community is actively welcomed to the site, eg LNR Friends Of group or similar established to give local communities and other visitors the opportunity to directly engage with the management and development of the site.		Many people would like to be actively involved with looking after and promoting their LNR. This needs to be supported in ways that they can do this on their own terms and match their skills and abilities and the time they can commit. Advice on involving communities with their local greenspace can be found here .
Active promotion to less represented sectors of the community. Actively working towards visitor diversity reflecting the cultural and social diversity of the local communities.		This is particularly important in areas that include ethnic communities. It should be remembered that different sectors of the community have different needs and this should be taken into account in any plans.
Promotion of the site's local biodiversity, geodiversity and historical environment for its nature conservation, environmental education and recreation value		Make links to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan relevant to the site. Get to know what is special about the site's bio- and geodiversity and its history.
Outreach programme to engage and involve local people, including under-represented groups, and link local schools and businesses with the reserve. Ensure that the facilities and programme meet their needs for outdoor learning, provided the site is suitable.		
Desirable		
Junior Management Group including Watch groups created to develop enthusiasm and knowledge in the next generation.		Advice on setting up and supporting a Watch group can be found here .
A programme developed to aid the improvement of mental and physical health and well-being of both individuals and the local community.		This may be a high priority for some LNRs and their communities. Consider links with local surgeries and the Primary Care Trust. See the Natural England Health Check for further guidance. Activities could include Health Walks or Green Gym exercise .

Management	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Essential		
Opportunities for local community and wider volunteer involvement in management of the site, its visitors, facilities and events.		Advice on involving communities with their local greenspace can be found here .
Up to date management plan being actively implemented.		This will set out how the site is currently managed and what future plans there are for its improvement. Within the plan, the nature conservation and biodiversity aspects of management need to be balanced with the management of visitors to the site.
Staff / volunteer presence, depending on the site needs.		This can make a site feel safer and encourage more use. Realistically a daily staff presence is difficult to achieve for most LNRs except through a volunteer network.
Where the management of the site is taken on by another organisation or trust a management agreement should be in place.		This will set out clearly what the responsibilities of both parties are and what actions are expected by each. It should be made publicly available.
Desirable		
Achieved or working towards Green Flag Award (GFA) or Green Pennant Award status.		People want quality places to visit and this nationally recognised award ensures the site meets a minimum quality standard. The Pennant is particularly suited for community managed LNRs. Achieving the standard can help to secure ongoing support from site owners and local politicians to ensure that quality is retained. Application guidance can be found here .
Activities	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
Year round programme of guided walks and events designed to engage, inform and inspire visitors about the natural environment and the values of the site they are visiting.		This should target specific user groups and visitors and/or attract specific new groups / individuals eg young people. Consideration should also be given to the provision of activities for disabled people (with restricted mobility, learning difficulties or sensory impairments), the elderly and/or parents with pushchairs
An outdoor learning programme involving local schools and after-school clubs. This can contribute to targets across the National Curriculum.		This may be developed by site staff with local school and after-school staff according to the suitability of the site and what it can offer, and the number of children and visits that can be accommodated.
Desirable		
Development of some activities to give Friends Of groups and the community a wider experience of the LNR.		Engagement of the local community can be delivered through arts, drama and music activities. In areas of cultural diversity this is a particularly useful method of engagement particularly when linked with specific communities. An audit of all the local clubs and societies will help to identify new audiences.

Involvement of the community in fundraising and new opportunities should they arise.		
Programme of activities and events that promote healthy living, outdoor learning and environmental awareness.		
Information and Interpretation	Tick if met	What do we mean?
Expected		
Clear and welcoming entrance signage and path way-marking, but not overdone so as to keep the 'wild' feel of sites		The participants in the community consultation felt that this was an important feature.
Information/ interpretation available in formats and languages that meet the needs of a range of local visitors		This can be made accessible in a number of formats. Web-based information which can be downloaded is increasingly popular.
Information regarding the nearest toilets and whether these are accessible for disabled visitors.		Most LNRs won't have public toilets on site. This will restrict the length of stay for some visits.
Visitor and education engagement plan developed and being implemented which considers the cultural and social diversity of visitors and the needs of local schools.		As part of the visitor engagement plan, the visitor needs for site information and interpretation should be identified and implemented.
Emergency contact details of LNR manager.		This might also include other useful contact details that visitors would find helpful, eg for reporting experiences both positive and negative of the site, wildlife records, joining a Friends Of group.
Desirable		
Information available about other LNRs and green spaces nearby, where they are, how to reach them and what visitor facilities to expect.		
Provision of information about the broader environmental agenda and how people can contribute or participate.		Getting across key messages about the ecosystem services the LNR supports and how to maintain these for the benefit of both the environment and people. Encouraging people to take action for environment particularly where it mitigates the negative impacts of climate change.
Interpretative information interactive and supported by use of new technologies as they become available and developed.		
Teachers' pack created with help of local schools.		

APPENDIX 5

LNR management plans

Nature conservation site management plans vary enormously in both style and detail.

They should be working documents of a manageable size, which can be used as work plans. The plan needs to be simple and relevant to the complexity and size of the site.

The suggested outline management plan can be used in conjunction with your organisation's own format for management plans.

To gain the support and interest of site-users and local people it helps to involve them in the management planning through consultation. The degree and timing of consultation needs to be decided locally, but a relatively small amount of effort can gain a great deal of support.

A summary plan is sometimes used instead of a full management plan. This is a concise version of the full plan, which should include all the subject areas of the full plan and all costs associated with management of the site.

These summary plans are used for a variety of uses eg if the full plan is not ready at declaration of the LNR; to help local authorities allocate resources to the LNR; to make a case for funding (eg National Lottery); or for new staff or people who need a quick overview of plans for the site.

Every LNR should have a summary plan, whether or not a more comprehensive management plan has been prepared.

Sources of information

Local Nature Reserve Management Planning Guidance: the process and the Plan.
Scottish Natural Heritage

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/where-to-go/nature-reserves-and-parks/lhrs/>

A guide to producing park and green space management plans. CABE Space, 2004

<http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/producing-parks-and-green-space-management-plans>

CMS (Countryside Management System) Guide to Management Planning 2005

<http://www.esdm.co.uk/Portals/o/cms/CMS%20Plan%20Guide%202005.pdf>

Outline management plan

Avoiding jargon, the site description should outline the main features of the site rather than just the important species. You will need workplans for site staff and timetables showing when each operation will be carried out. You will also need surveys of your site and a statement of the reasons for selecting your site objectives.

The plan should contain the following:

1 Vision statement

A short statement outlining how the site will look once you have achieved your objectives.

2 Site details and assessment

This describes the current status of the site. It should include the site's name, grid reference, size, land tenure, site status, biological and geological information. It should also include current usage, access, interpretation, educational and other facilities. Put the site in context with the surrounding communities and other green spaces. Also identify the strategies and policy statements that impact upon the site and its management, and how they affect the aims and objectives for the site. Maps are effective tools for showing information such as land tenure, habitat information and site context and should make the document easier to understand.

3 Site aims and objectives

State the aims and objectives for the site. Make it clear whether they relate to the whole site or particular habitats or parts. These are your ambitions for the site and the role it will fulfil.

4 Methods and action plan

Set out the methods for achieving the aims and objectives for the site. State the management operations and include timescales and stocking density for sheep/cattle etc. Identify who will do the work, how much it will cost, required resources and when it will happen.

5 Reporting and evaluation

The management plan should be kept up to date and reviewed regularly – at least every five years. Reviews usually begin towards the start of the fifth year. Reviews should be initiated if changes, either external or internal, will significantly affect site management. The period of a plan and its review may be flexible. Many plans are revisited annually even if they are not fully rewritten for several years.

Evaluation of the previous five years will show success to date and allow you to reassess your objectives. Do methods and resources need to be altered and are new objectives needed?

Stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation and input into future requirements.

APPENDIX 6

Example of a nature reserve agreement

There is no need for so formal an agreement as this. It does, however, show the range of matters which need considering. Any agreement needs to make absolutely clear what is agreed and who is responsible for doing what. So long as the legal advisors of all the parties to the agreement are satisfied, this is all an agreement requires.

Dated 24 October 1974

The Mayor Alderman and Burgesses of the London Borough of Ealing and the Selbourne Society
Agreement declaring Perivale Wood Middlesex to be Nature Reserve.

An AGREEMENT under the seal dated 24th of October 1974 and made between The Selborne Society Ltd whose registered office is at 2 Greycoat Place, Westminster, London SW1 1SD (hereinafter called "The Society") of the one part and The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the London Borough of Ealing (hereinafter called "The Council") of the other part.

WHEREAS

- (1) The Society is a Charity registered under the Charities Act 1960 with No. 267635 and the property more particularly described in the schedule hereto and known as Perivale Wood is a separate charity known as "the Gilbert White Memorial" but has been registered as a subsidiary charity of the society (all which property is hereinafter called "the Reserve").
- (2) The Reserve was acquired for and on behalf of the Society firstly by an Indenture of Conveyance of Sale dated the 2nd day of March 1992 made between the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England (1) and Arthur Holte Macpherson and Julian Sorrel Huxley and Arthur Gilbert Dacre Farrer (2) and secondly; by a conveyance on sale dated the 5th day of November 1931 made between the same parties as were parties to the said Conveyance of 2nd March 1992 and this Deed is supplemental to the said Conveyances.
- (3) By Declarations of Trust dated respectively the 20th day of April 1922 and 26th November 1931 and made between the parties of the second part to the said two conveyances (thereinafter called "the Trustees") of the one part and the Society of the other part (to which this Deed is supplemental) it was recited that the Reserve had been purchased by moneys provided by the Society and the Trustees declared (inter alia) that they held the same property upon trust to use or allow the same to be used either as a Nature Reserve or Bird Sanctuary and that the same should be known as the Gilbert White Memorial and the said property should be subject to the control and management of the Bird Sanctuary Committee nominated by the Society or such other committee or persons as should from time to time be nominated by the Society.
- (4) Whereas Sir Julian Sorrel Huxley is the only surviving trustee of the two declarations of trust and at the request of the Society he applied to the Charity Commission for an order vesting the legal estate in the Reserve in the Official Custodian for the Charities and by an order dated the Second day of October 1974 (to which this deed is supplemental) the Charity Commission made the said order.
- (5) The Society and the Council have mutually agreed to enter into this Agreement in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as amended.
- (6) The Council has consulted Natural England which has given its consent to the establishment of the Reserve as a Nature Reserve.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY AGREED between the parties hereto as follows:

- 1 The Council will within 28 days from the date of this Agreement declare the Reserve a Nature Reserve and The Society will manage the Reserve as a Nature Reserve within the meaning of Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. That is to say for the purpose of:
 - (a) Providing under suitable conditions and control special opportunities for the study of and research into matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area.
 - (b) To carry out the provisions of the Management Plan at its own expense.
 - (c) To provide facilities for properly supervised parties of students and school children to use the Reserve in connection with the purposes described in Clause 1 hereof in such numbers as may be compatible with the achievement of such purposes.
 - (d) To establish a Reserve Management Committee that shall be a standing committee of the Society.
 - (e) To submit an Annual Report to the Council as to the management of the reserve.
- 2 The Council shall not be required to give any assistance whether financial or otherwise in the management of the Reserve but may under Section 20 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 make such bye-laws as they may think fit for the proper control thereof. The Council shall submit a draft of any proposed bye-laws to the Society and shall consider any representations made by the Society in relation to such draft bye-laws.
- 3 Subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 as amended or any enactment replace the same the Council will permit the carrying out of all works necessarily incidental to the purposes described in Clause 1 hereof and will permit the erection of any necessary boards or signs drawing attention to the Reserve or any bye-laws which may be made in relation thereto.
- 4 This agreement shall continue in force for a term of 21 years and thereafter until determined by either party hereto giving to the other twelve months' notice in writing expiring at any time. In witness whereof the Common Seals of the parties hereto have been hereunto affixed this 24th day of October one thousand nine hundred and seventy four.

The Schedule above referred to

Firstly the land conveyed by the said conveyance dated 2nd March 1922 being ALL THOSE pieces of land and wood (known as Perivale Wood) situated in the Parish of Greenford in the county of Middlesex containing in the whole Twenty five acres three roods and thirty eight perches or thereabouts and more particularly described in the First Schedule thereto and delineated on the plan annexed to the said Conveyance of 2nd March 1922 and thereon coloured pink.

And secondly all that triangular piece of land conveyed by the said conveyance dated 5th November 1931 being all that land containing three roods or thereabouts situated in the Parish of Greenford in the County of Middlesex bounded towards the North by Perivale Wood aforesaid and coloured pink on the plan drawn in the margin of the said conveyance of 5 November 1931.

THE COMMON SEAL of the SELBORNE SOCIETY LIMITED was hereunto affixed in the presence of:

APPENDIX 7

Suggested heads of terms for an agreement over an SSSI under Section 15 of the Countryside Act 1968

1 Parties

1) Natural England,
1 East Parade,
Sheffield,
S1 2ET

2) Owner(s):
Owners Agent:
Owners Solicitor:

2 Description of the land:

Area: ha shown edged in green on the attached plan.

Local Authority:

County:

3 Owner's obligations

a) To manage the land in accordance with the Agreed Management Policy.

b) There will be provision for the Council, its staff and other persons authorised by the Council to have access and enter on to the land, to erect hides, fences and markers, and to take specimens of scientific interest. Access to the land will be with vehicles along the route marked blue and without vehicles along the route marked brown on the attached plan.

c) Not to assign or part with his interest in the land unless his successors agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

4 Council's obligations

a) To pay the annual consideration.

b) To comply with the terms of the Agreed Management Policy.

c) To provide identification documents for members of their staff and all persons authorised by the Council.

5 Financial provisions

a) £ per annum to be paid annual in advance.

b) There will be provision for either party to require a review of further payments due at intervals of years.

c) Short Term Agreements signed

Date(s):

Sum(s) paid:

6 Agreed Management Policy

The land will be managed in accordance with an Agreed Management Policy which may be varied or amended by agreement between the parties.

7 Positive conservation

There will be provision for the Council to repay to the owner the cost of any approved works carried out on the land which are of benefit to nature conservation.

- 8 Term Years from Except that there will be provision for the Council to terminate the agreement earlier or require its modification if:
- a) the land ceases to be of scientific interest,
 - b) there is a breach of the agreement by the owner, or
 - c) conditional exemption from Inheritance Tax is granted.

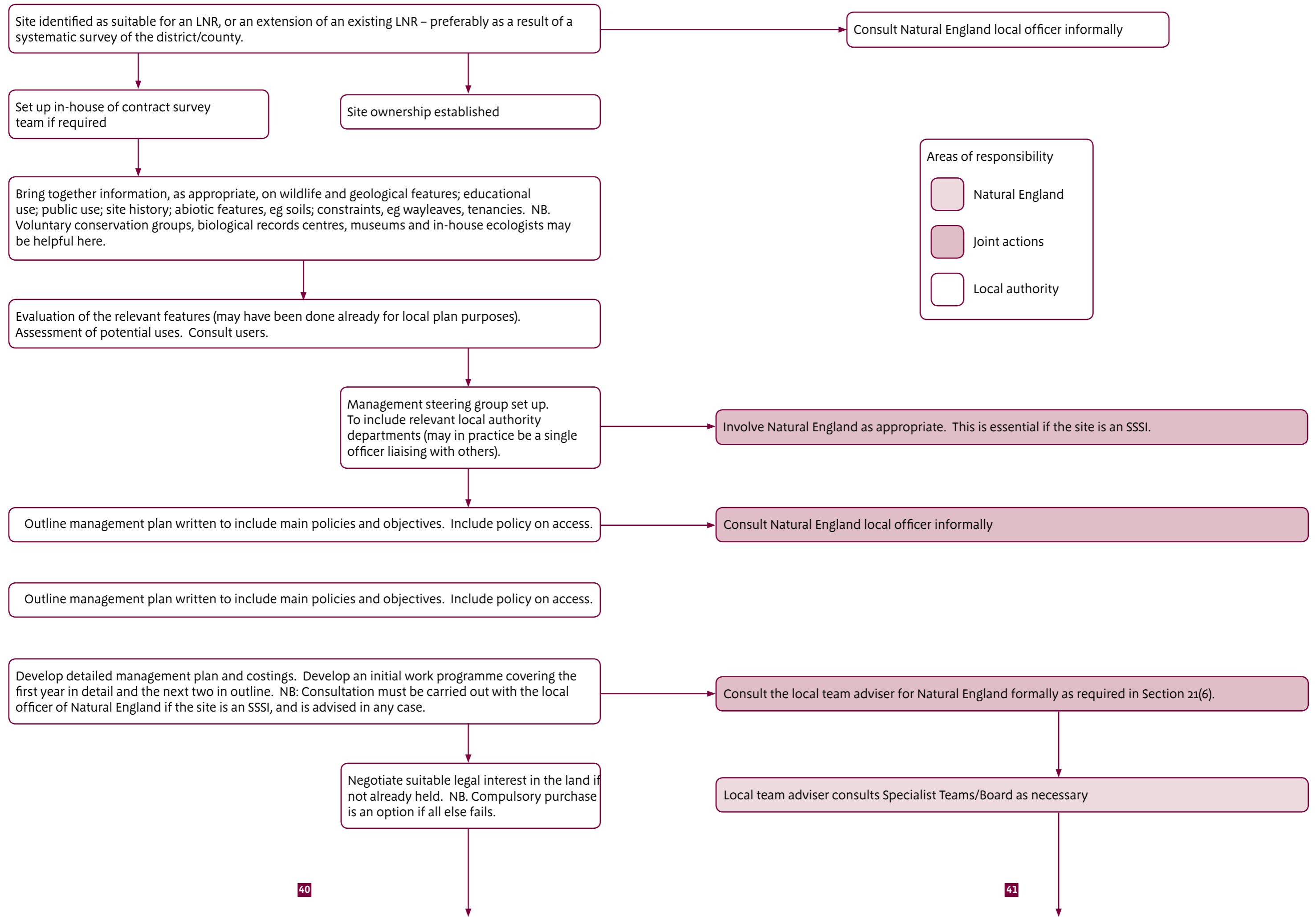
9 Arbitration

There will be provision for arbitration in the event of dispute between the parties.

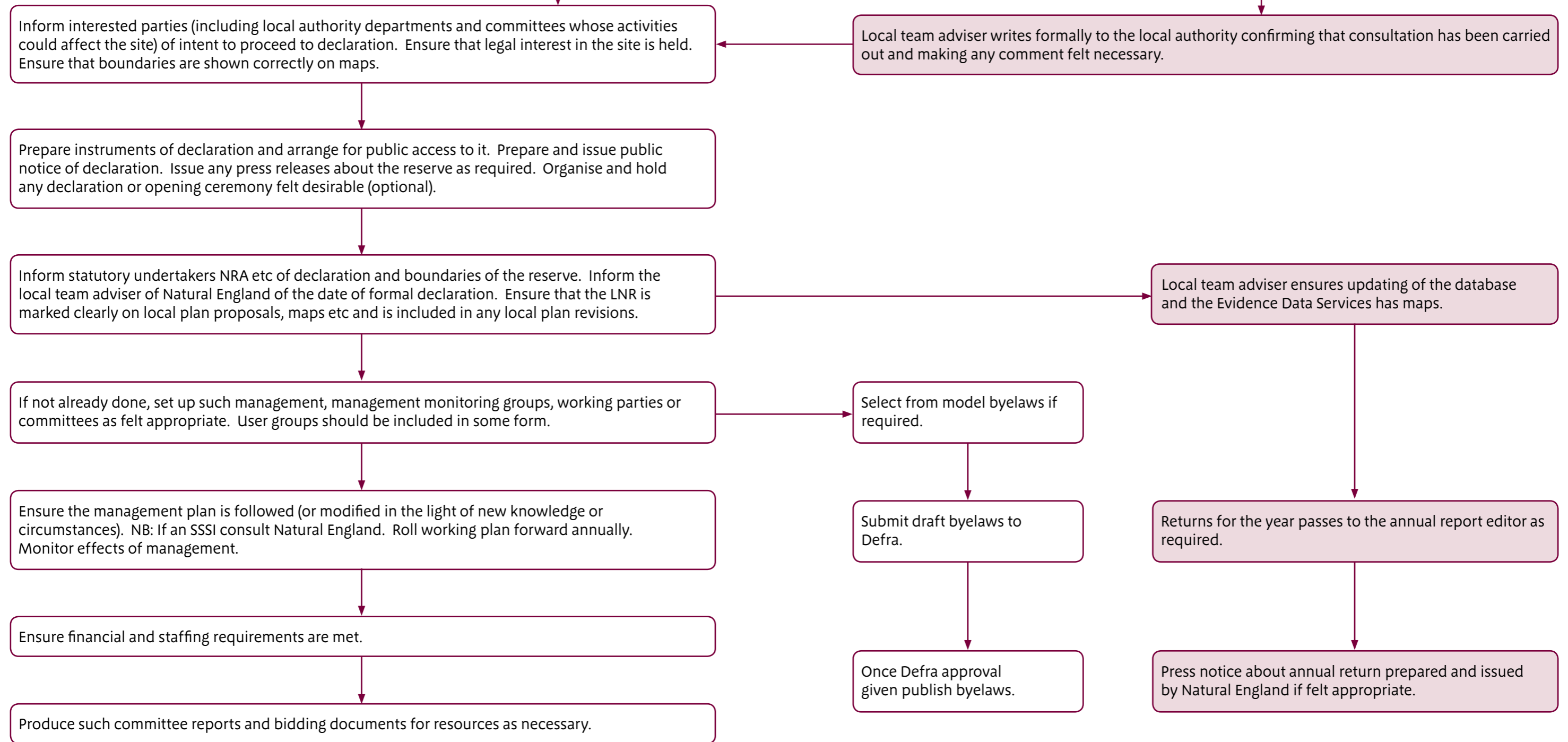
10 Consultation

- a) If the owner wishes to consult with the Council he shall apply to:
- b) If the Council wish to consult the owner they shall apply to:

APPENDIX 8 Recommended procedure



APPENDIX 8 Recommended procedure



APPENDIX 9

Information required for Natural England LNR website and database

Upon declaration, Natural England would like to add all LNRs to a national database and LNR website. The following information should be provided:

- Site name
- Declaration date
- Declaring authority
- Local authority catchment – if different to declaring authority
- County
- Area/size (ha)
- Location – description of where to find the site eg South Bradford off the Axx road next to y country park
- Grid Reference – six figure OS grid eg SX 981 654
- Postcode – where known
- Other designation eg SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar, RIGS, SNCI, Country Park, SAM (Scheduled Ancient Monument), in AONB, Heritage Coast, Millennium/Doorstep Green or pocket park, common, Open Access, Green Flag/Green Pennant Award etc
- Type – urban, urban fringe or rural
- Category – biological, geological or both
- Nature of habitat – predominant habitat eg grassland, wetland, woodland, heath etc
- Ownership – local authority, conservation body, other. Please include name and contacts of owner.
- Management – local authority, conservation body, local community/friends group, other. Please include name and contacts of the main managers
- Date of last management plan and its duration
- Byelaws – have byelaws been adopted?
- Educational use – eg for school visits etc?
- Has any part of the site ever been de-declared? If yes please give reason
- Location
- How to get there – include various forms of transport
- Visitor facilities eg visitor/education centre, toilets, refreshments, all ability access, footpath network, cycle route, picnic tables and benches, bird hides, interpretation
- What to see: eg habitats, species, geology, archaeology, industrial past, other historical interest etc
- Volunteers/Friends Of/Watch groups - contacts for further information and getting involved including telephone and email
- Website address
- Photographs /pictures of the site or events on site. Remember to label with title and site name and include a photo/picture credit where known
- Anything else of relevance.

APPENDIX 10

Contact information

Natural England Enquiry Service on
Tel. 0845 600 3078
or e-mail enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk.
or on our website at
http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/contact_us/default.aspx

and ask for your relevant local LNR contact.

For more information on Local Nature Reserves and to search for individual sites see the Natural England [website](#)

Cover photograph:

River dippers at Crane Park Island LNR © Alexandra Robb



Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

© Natural England 2010

ISBN 978-1-84754-215-1

Catalogue Code: NE301

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Natural England publications are available as accessible pdfs from: www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0845 600 3078 or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk