

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
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**LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY
PROPOSED ACTIVITY FOR SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL TO PROMOTE THE STRATEGY**

Purpose of the Report

To update members on the publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and how the Town Council might actively be involved in the delivery of the Strategy.

Background

The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was published in April 2026. The Strategy places strong emphasis on habitat connectivity, wetland restoration, woodland management, urban nature recovery, invasive species control, climate resilience and partnership delivery.

The Town Council submitted its response to the draft Strategy in October 2025.

There are several areas identified by the Town Council that are now clearly embedded within the Strategy framework:

- Urban and peri-urban green infrastructure is recognised through Priority A14 “Bring nature into towns, villages and amenity spaces.”
- Tree canopy expansion, woodland resilience and ash dieback management align with Priorities A7 and A8.
- Flood resilience, wetland restoration and river naturalisation strongly reflect the Council’s work at the Old River Bed and associated beaver project.
- Invasive species management is specifically addressed under Priority A15.
- Community participation and access to nature are embedded within Priority A16 and throughout the Strategy narrative.

The Town Council’s earlier submission highlighted the importance of:

- countryside land management,
- the Old River Bed SSSI,
- biodiversity net gain (BNG),
- woodland management,
- climate resilience,
- invasive species control,
- and stronger integration of town and parish councils into delivery mechanisms.

The final LNRS has responded positively to many of these themes, particularly around:

- urban biodiversity,
- nature-based flood management,

- partnership working,
- and community-led delivery.

However, there remain opportunities for Shrewsbury Town Council to take a stronger leadership role locally in translating the Strategy into visible projects and delivery programmes.

Key Gaps and Opportunities Identified

There are a number of gaps in the plan and therefore opportunities that the Town Council could actively pursue:

1. Urban Leadership Role

Whilst urban nature recovery is included, the Strategy remains heavily landscape and rural focused. There is an opportunity for Shrewsbury Town Council to position itself as the principal demonstrator authority for urban nature recovery within Shropshire.

2. Delivery Mechanisms for Town and Parish Councils

The Town Council requested clearer mechanisms for incorporating local council land into LNRS opportunity mapping and delivery. While partnership language is stronger in the final Strategy, there is still limited operational guidance for parish and town councils. The Town Council could work with the LNRS Co-ordinator to create better opportunities for not just the Town Council but other Parish & Town Councils to be involved.

3. Biodiversity Net Gain Readiness

The Strategy supports BNG alignment, but practical local frameworks for project development, habitat banking and investment pipelines are still emerging. This creates an opportunity for the Town Council to move early and potentially work with such bodies as the Wildlife Trust to develop localised solutions.

4. Community Engagement and Behaviour Change

The LNRS recognises community involvement as essential, but local delivery will depend heavily on practical volunteering, public education and visible local projects. The Town Council already has volunteers who work in the countryside team and has aspirations to develop the Volunteering Offer.

Areas for Consideration by Shrewsbury Town Council

There are a number of areas that Shrewsbury Town Council can provide strong leadership in the delivery of the Strategy at a local level, particularly through:

- Strategic Leadership
- Habitat & Land Management
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Community Partnership and Delivery

1. Adopt a Formal “Shrewsbury Nature Recovery Delivery Plan”

Develop a Town Council delivery plan aligning existing strategies and services with LNRS priorities, including:

- Tree & Landscape Strategy
- Countryside Management Plans
- Land Adoption Strategy
- Climate Action objectives
- Flood resilience initiatives

This would establish clear local priorities, measurable targets and annual reporting.

2. Establish Shrewsbury as an Urban Nature Recovery Demonstrator

Position the town as a countywide exemplar for:

- urban biodiversity,
- nature-based flood management,
- pollinator corridors,
- urban tree canopy expansion,
- and community-led habitat restoration.

This could strengthen future funding bids and regional partnerships.

3. Complete Mapping of Town Council Land Against LNRS Opportunity Areas

Expand the existing mapping work already commenced by the Countryside Team to:

- identify all priority habitat opportunities,
- assess ecological connectivity,
- identify BNG opportunities,
- prioritise habitat creation projects,
- and inform future land management decisions.

Potential outputs:

- habitat opportunity register,
- ecological network map,
- project pipeline for funding applications.

4. Develop a Nature Recovery Programme for Key Sites

Create site-specific enhancement programmes for:

- Old River Bed SSSI,
- meadows,
- river corridors,
- parks,
- woodlands,
- and adopted open spaces.

Potential projects:

- wetland expansion,
- species-rich grassland restoration,
- pond creation,
- hedgerow establishment,
- deadwood habitat creation,
- pollinator planting,
- woodland succession planning.

5. Expand Urban Tree and Woodland Resilience Work

Use LNRS priorities to strengthen:

- canopy cover targets,
- climate-resilient species planting,
- woodland diversification,
- veteran tree protection,
- and ash dieback replacement programmes.

The Council could explore creation of:

- micro-woodlands,
- Miyawaki-style planting,
- and urban cooling corridors.

6. Develop a Town Council BNG Investment Framework

Explore the feasibility of:

- registering suitable Council-owned land for off-site BNG,
- developing habitat banks,
- establishing long-term management agreements,
- and attracting developer-funded ecological enhancement.

This could generate long-term income streams for habitat management.

7. Establish a Nature Recovery Funding Pipeline

Actively pursue:

- Defra nature recovery funding,
- National Lottery Heritage Fund,
- Environment Agency grants,
- woodland creation grants,
- corporate biodiversity partnerships,
- and species recovery programmes.

A coordinated pipeline would allow projects to be “funding ready”.

8. Create a Shrewsbury Nature Recovery Partnership

Bring together:

- Town Council,
- Shropshire Council,
- wildlife organisations,
- community groups,
- schools,
- businesses,
- and volunteers.

The partnership could coordinate:

- volunteer programmes,
- citizen science,
- invasive species control,
- habitat surveys,
- and public engagement campaigns.

9. Launch a Community Nature Recovery Programme

Develop public-facing initiatives such as:

- “Nature Recovery in Your Neighbourhood”
- wildlife-friendly gardening campaigns,
- pollinator corridor schemes,
- school biodiversity projects,
- community meadow creation,
- river stewardship volunteering.

This aligns strongly with LNRS community engagement objectives.

10. Develop an Annual Nature Recovery Monitoring Report

Produce an annual public report covering:

- habitat creation,
- tree planting,
- biodiversity indicators,

- volunteer participation,
- invasive species management,
- funding secured,
- and progress against LNRS priorities.

This would demonstrate leadership and provide evidence for future funding applications.

Overall Conclusion

The published LNRS provides a strong strategic framework which closely aligns with Shrewsbury Town Council's existing environmental work and consultation response. The Town Council is already delivering many of the types of interventions promoted by the Strategy, particularly in relation to wetlands, woodland management, flood resilience and biodiversity enhancement.

The key opportunity now is to transition from alignment to delivery leadership — positioning Shrewsbury Town Council as a leading urban authority for local nature recovery within Shropshire and the wider region. Useful background:

- [Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin LNRS Overview](#)
- [LNRS Priorities and Actions](#)

Recommendations

That Shrewsbury Town Council

1. Notes the report;
2. Formally notes and endorses the published LNRS;
3. Establishes an internal officer working group led by the Countryside & Greenspace Manager;
4. Completes mapping of Council land against LNRS opportunity layers;
5. Identifies priority “quick win” habitat projects;
6. Begins development of a Town Council Nature Recovery Delivery Plan;
7. Explores BNG feasibility on suitable Council landholdings;
8. Initiates discussions with Shropshire Council on partnership delivery and funding opportunities;
9. Develops a communications and public engagement programme linked to local nature recovery;