

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Citizen Survey Results
November 2025



Somerset's LNRS

Somerset Council is in the process of developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), to guide action and investment in areas where nature recovery is most needed.

The LNRS will act as a blueprint for protecting nature in Somerset, and will:

- Map our most valuable existing habitats
- Agree priorities for reversing the decline in biodiversity
- Map opportunities for nature recovery and wider environmental goals

The responsibility of the LNRS was devolved by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in June 2023, who stated that it is a statutory requirement for Somerset Council to consult with the public throughout the development of the LNRS.

Additionally, Natural England, who are acting as an advisory body to LAs and CAs for the purpose of LNRS, have emphasised the importance of the LNRS being developed with input from key stakeholders (landowners, developers, farmers etc.) and the wider public.

This report presents insight gathered from the Somerset's LNRS Public Consultation.

Social Media Promotion

- Somerset Environmental and Ecological Newsletter (SEEN)
- Posters displayed by Parish Clerks
- Social media promotion and newsletter articles by partnering organisations

Partnership & Group Presentations

- Webinar for farmers and landowners
- Somerset Council Scrutiny Committee presentation
- Quantock Hills National Landscape presentation
- Local Nature Partnership Food & Farming sub-group
- Somerset Local Nature Partnership

Community & Parish Events

- Somerset Parishes conference workshop
- Parish Clerks meeting presentation.
- South East Local Communities Network (LCN) presentation
- Nature & Environment Day stall
- Climate Fair stall
- Wilder Communities Day stall

Public consultation on the draft LNRS

The consultation of the draft LNRS ran from the **19th September 2025 – 9th November 2025**

Respondents were recommended to read the draft strategy before filling in the survey, and were allowed to answer as many or as little questions as they liked

Section A

About you

Section B

Draft
Statement of
Biodiversity
Priorities

Section C

The Local
Habitat
Map

Section D

Further
comments

Section E

Equality
monitoring

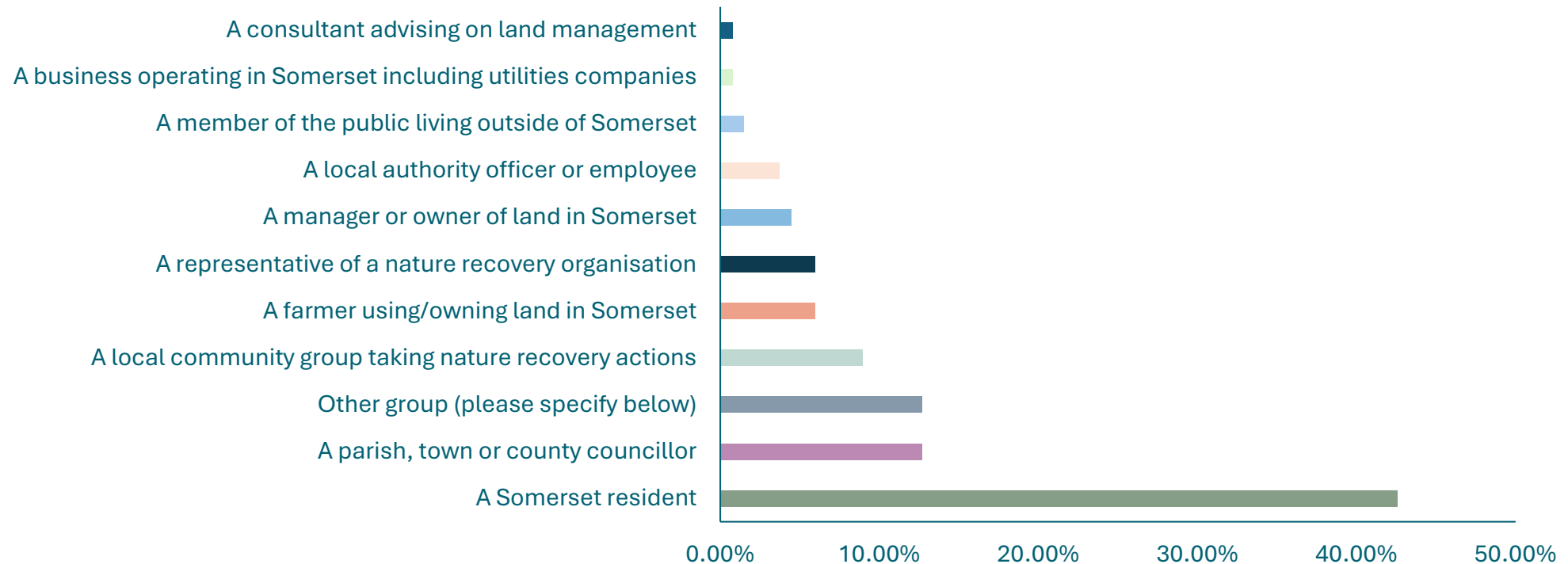
Who we engaged with

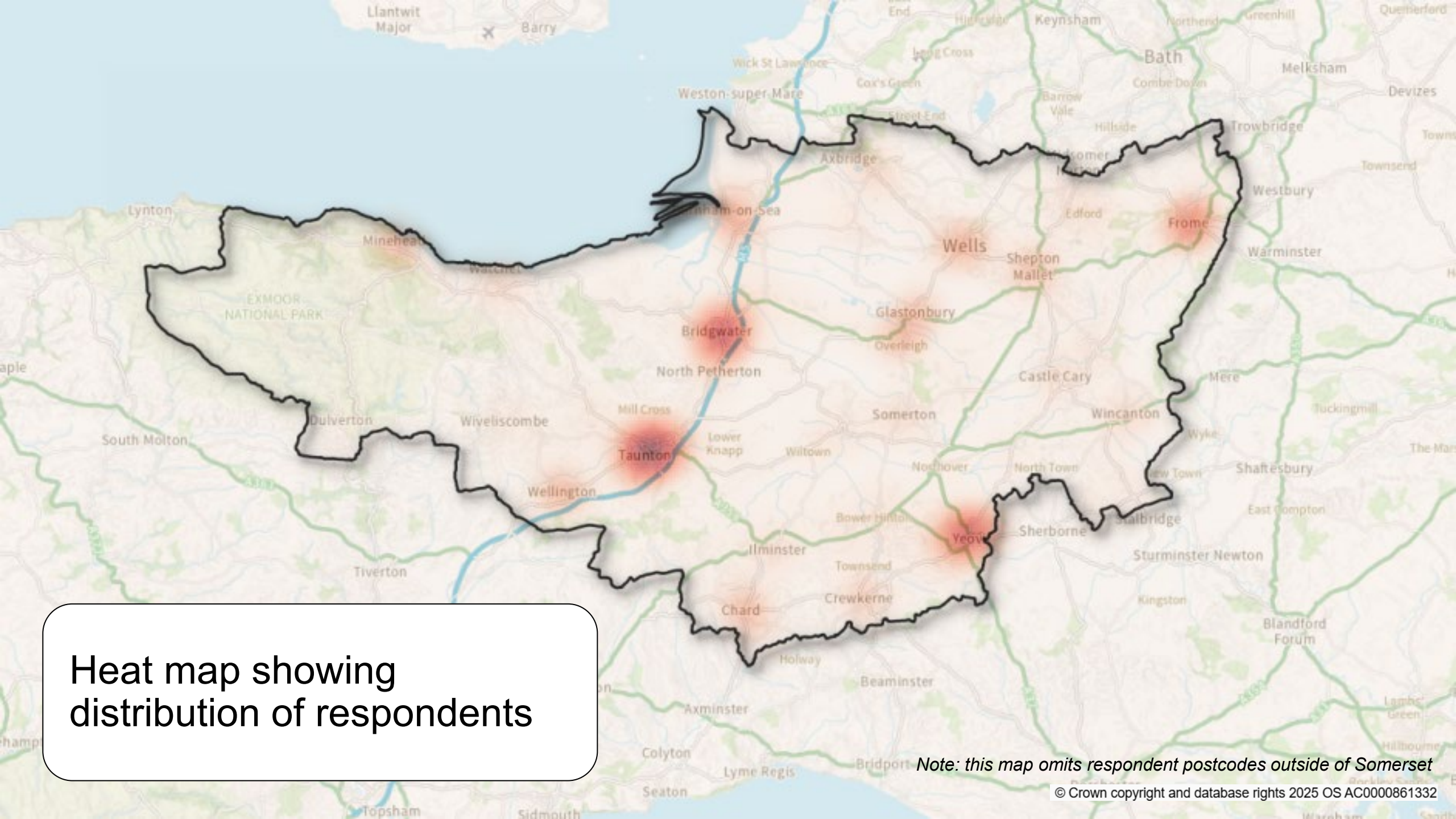
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The public consultation received **151 responses**

94.78% of respondents lived in Somerset, of which **42.54%** identified their role in the consultation as a 'resident'.





Heat map showing
distribution of respondents

Note: this map omits respondent postcodes outside of Somerset

Key Findings

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LNRS Consultation: Key Themes

Document Clarity and Accessibility

- Too long, contains jargon, repetitive elements

Vision and Purpose

- Concerns about the aspirational, non-binding nature of the strategy
- Concerns around accountability and responsibility
- Concerns about the impact of developers and the engagement with planners

Priorities and Potential Activities

- Suggested amendments to the measures and priority outcomes for the eight habitats
- Suggested changes to the Species Priorities List

Delivery and How to Get Involved

- Highlight existing community-led initiatives
- Encourage partnerships across all stakeholders, engage with farmers throughout delivery
- Emphasise actions for individuals, communities and parish councils
- Concerns around funding and resourcing

Consultation Response Summary



- Elevate European eel as a targeted species and improve freshwater connectivity
- Recognize hedgerows, traditional orchards, and fungi, as priority features
- **Nature-led approaches** like rewilding and Exmoor pony grazing

- Link nature recovery to flood prevention, water quality, and climate adaptation
- Address **emerging threats**: microplastics, PM2.5, chemical sprays, and invasive species

- Farmers and landowners fear how LNRS will affect **eligibility for funding** from existing schemes
- Concerns about lack of funding, staffing, and clear timelines for implementation
- Concerns about **greenwashing** and the restrictive nature of private finance

- **Simplify language**
- Reduce jargon
- Create an **FAQ section**
- Increase use of **infographics** and bullet points

- Make LNRS a **stronger material consideration** in planning decisions
- Clarify how BNG will be applied and monitored
- Establish **enforcement mechanisms** for biodiversity commitments

- Empower communities, volunteers and parish councils
- **Education schemes** and field trips for schools
- Provide clear guidance and funding for local groups

Consultation Response Summary

Our Responses

Species & Habitat Prioritisation

Document Clarity

Enforcement

Climate Resilience

Resourcing

Engagement

- Introduce a **Jargon Buster** section
- Edit wording of Lawton Principle
- FAQ section will be prominent on the Council's LNRS webpages

- European eel is strengthened through its addition to the targeted species list and measure now having specific mention of brushed eel passes.
- Hedgerows, orchards are raised in importance through updated hedgerow/orchard measures.
- Nature-led approaches are reflected in explicit support for nature-friendly habitat restoration and working with natural processes.

- LNRS now clearly identified as an evidence base that can be used as a material consideration.
- Clearer explanation of how BNG aligns with LNRS priorities and mapping
- Clarified that existing laws, not the LNRS, provide enforcement for biodiversity commitments.

- LNRS explicitly recognises that restoring nature delivers multiple environmental benefits beyond biodiversity,.
- Expanded pollution text to explicitly acknowledge threats from chemical sprays, and strengthened invasive species control by embedding it across multiple habitat types

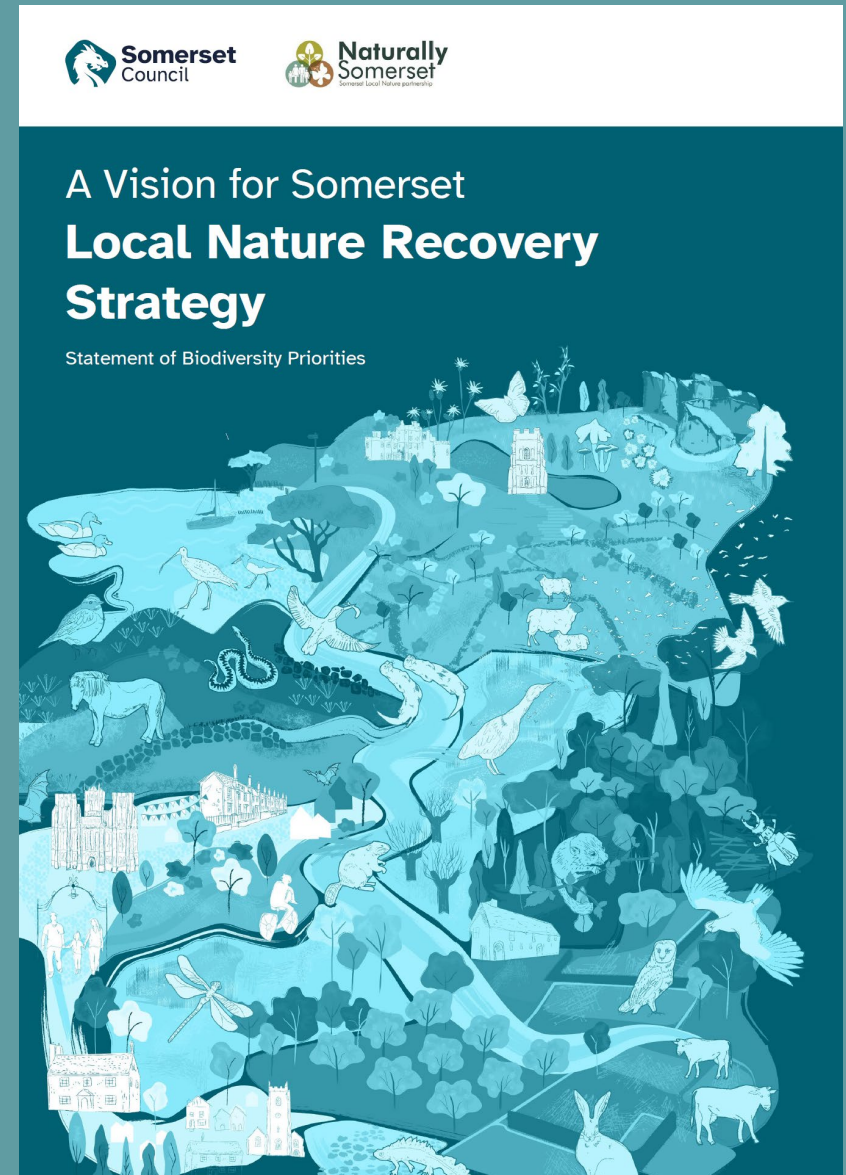
- LNRS gives clearer roles for communities and parish councils, with practical support and future toolkits.
- Promotes partnerships with schools for hands-on nature activities.
- Will provide simple, action-focused guidance and resources for local groups, including citizen science

- LNRS has been amended to make clearer that:
- it supports, not restricts, farmer access to schemes
 - it is strategic, non regulatory, and not tied to fixed timelines
 - engaging private finance will require clear governance and alignment with LNRS objectives.

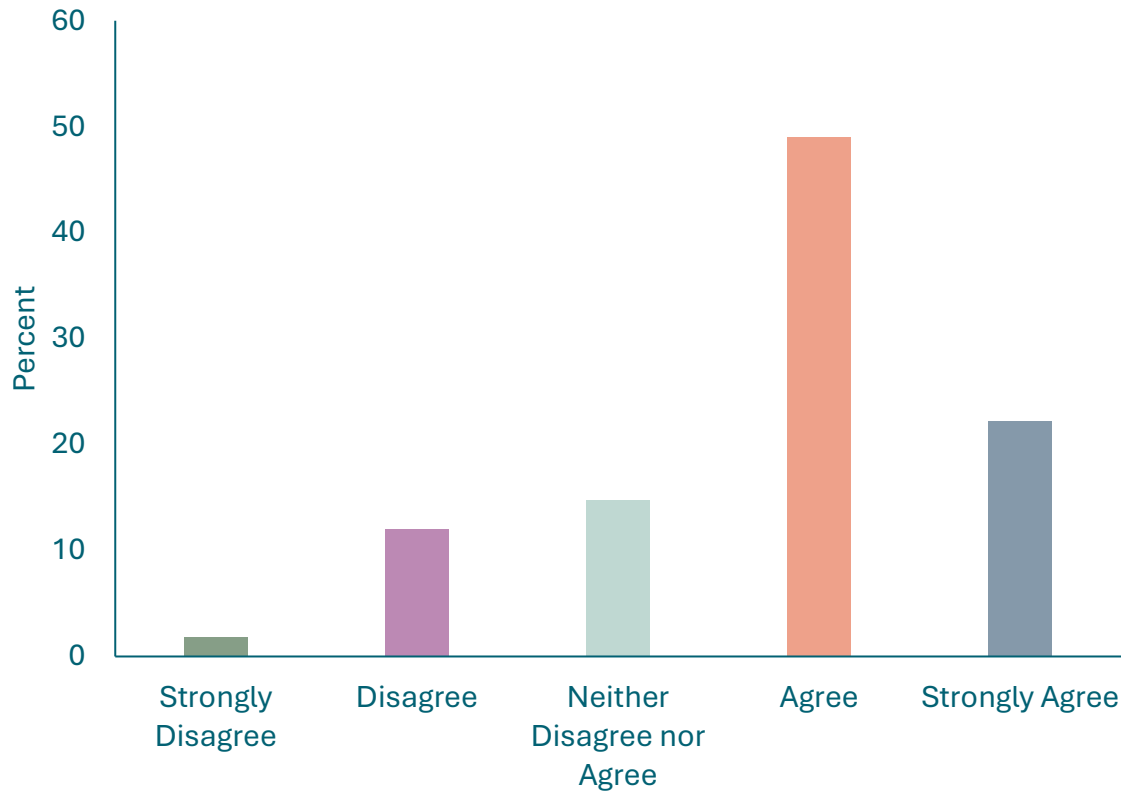


83.33%

of respondents wanted
to comment on the
draft Statement of
Biodiversity Priorities



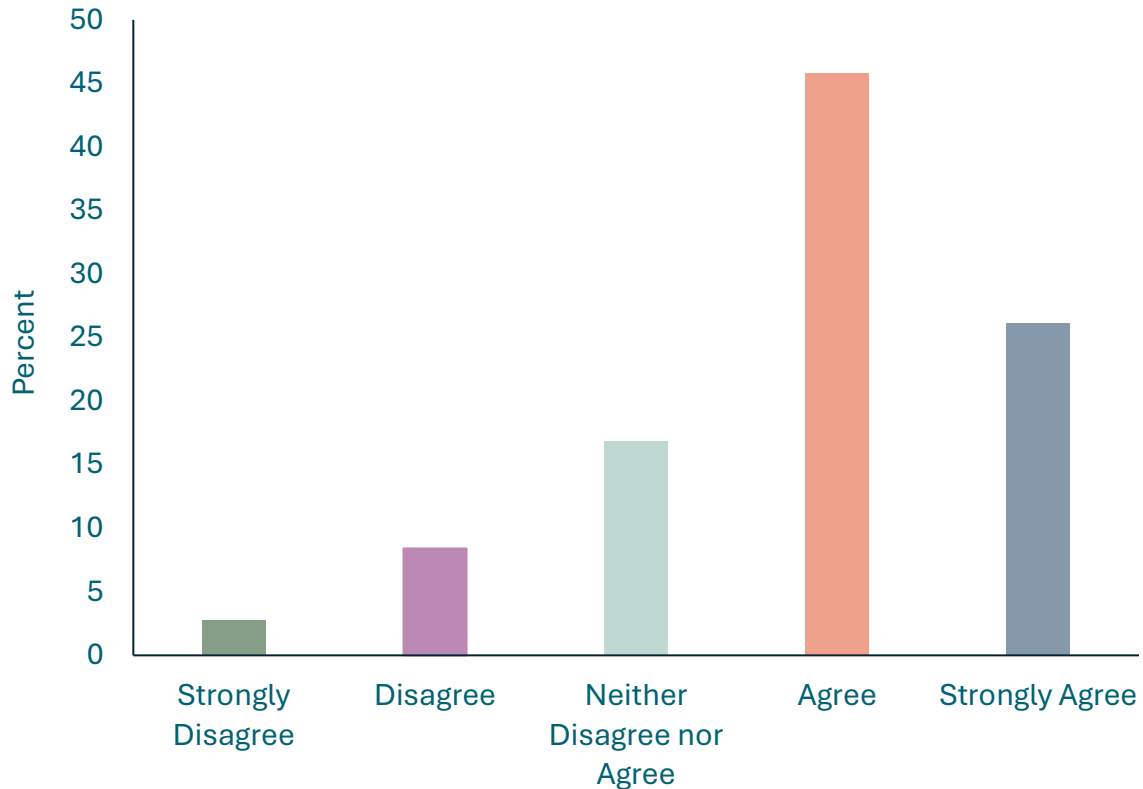
73.81% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the written Statement of Biodiversity Priorities is 'easy to read'



“Great photos and diagrams but way too many words, could be reduced to make it easier to navigate”

“The LNRS is quite long and sometimes hard to interpret on first reading it, I do feel this will put some people off, perhaps a brief outline of it could be produced”

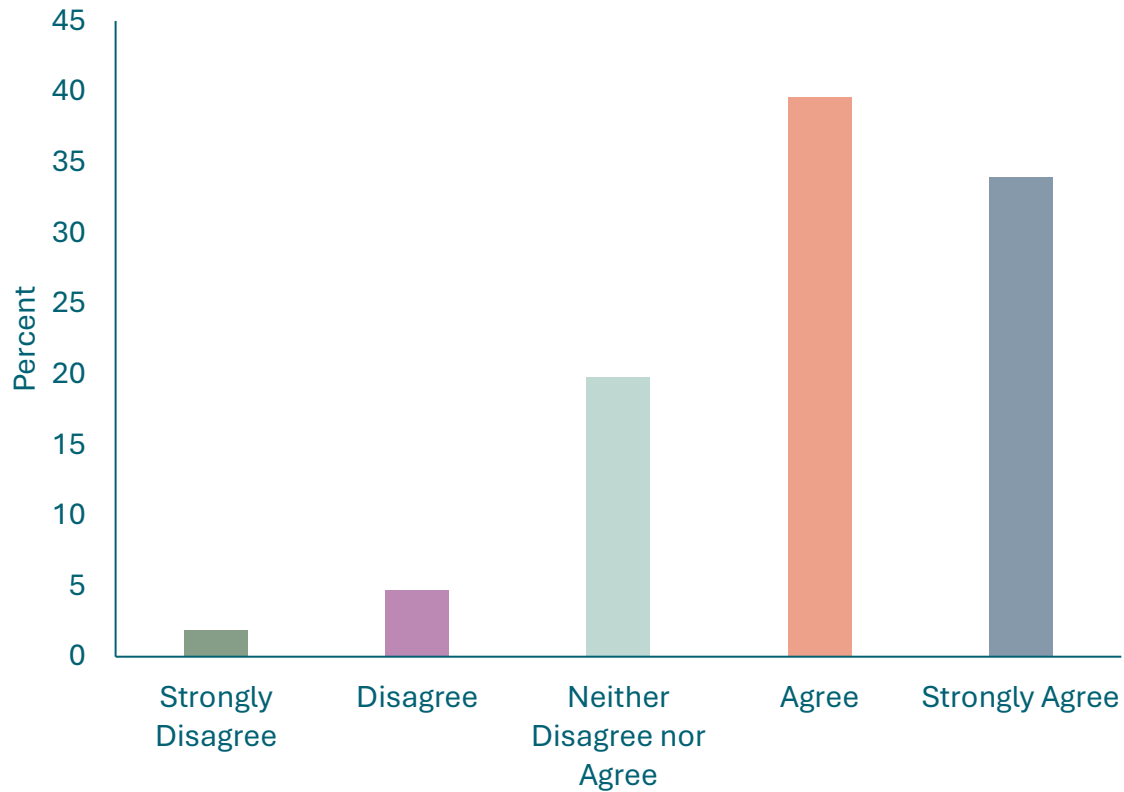
71.96% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the written Statement of Biodiversity Priorities is *'clearly laid out'*



"The plan is very well laid out and clear and there is a lot of interesting detail"

"Too complex in some areas to fully understand all of the issues and how this is all going to come together"

73.58% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the written Statement of Biodiversity Priorities is *'visually appealing'*



"Very beautiful examples, please retain these as they are so useful to show"

"I appreciate the inclusion of lots of photos in the case studies, making them more "real" and relevant"

Chapter 1: Introduction and Vision

Pages 6-19

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Introduction and Vision

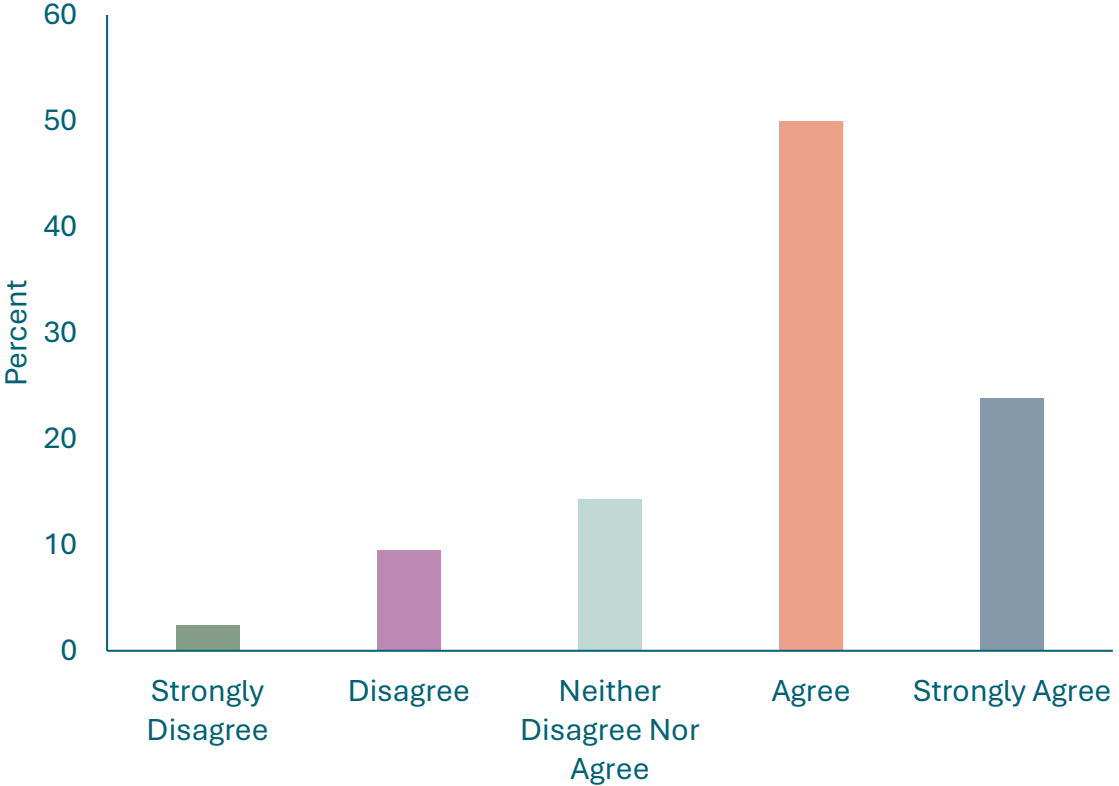
A vision for nature in Somerset

This chapter sets the scene for nature recovery in Somerset. It outlines the purpose and vision for collective action.

64.35%

of respondents wanted to
comment on Chapter 1:
Introduction and Vision

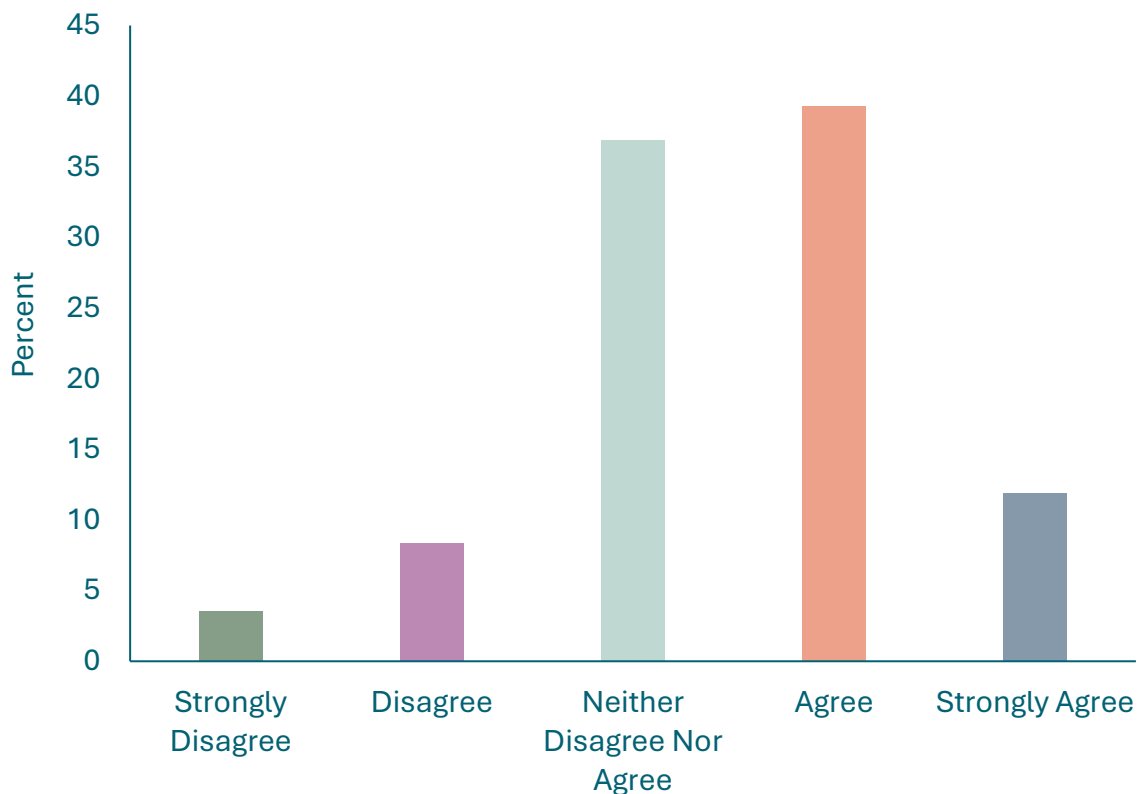
73.81% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they *'understood'* Chapter 1



“The Introduction and Vision are clear and positive”

“Overall, the very high-level introduction provides a good entry point”

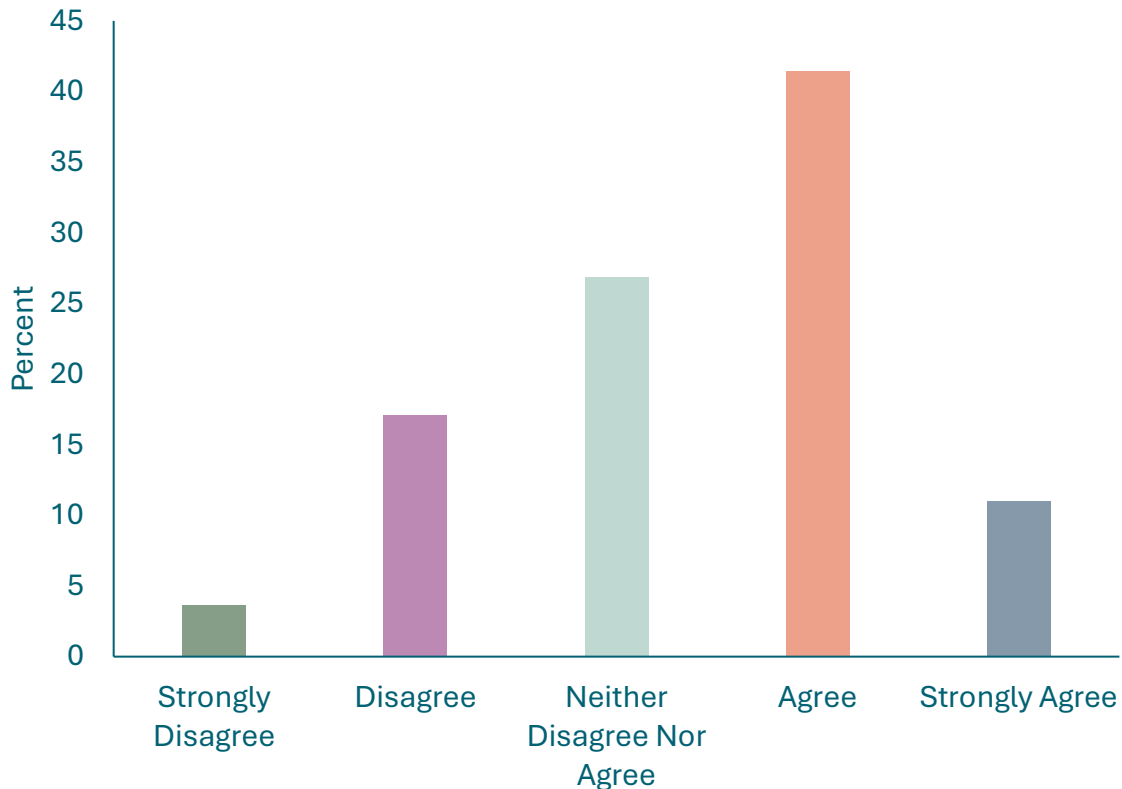
51.19% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the information in Chapter 1 is 'accurate', while **36.90%** remained neutral



“Some of the figures may be inaccurate. For example, 10% of Somerset is not woodland habitat, it is around 7-8%”

“The Forewords makes a statement regarding the depletion of England’s nature in comparison to other countries - the source of this data was not referenced”

52.44% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that after reading Chapter 1, they *'can use this information to help nature recovery'*, while **26.83%** remained neutral



“A lot of content to digest and decipher as a 'lay person'. Would help if simplified to a core vision with a few main actions”

“People need to understand that positive interventions and actions can produce really significant beneficial outcomes - and that really is what the LNRS is all about...”

Chapter 2: How to Use the LNRS

Pages 20-29

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How to use the LNRS

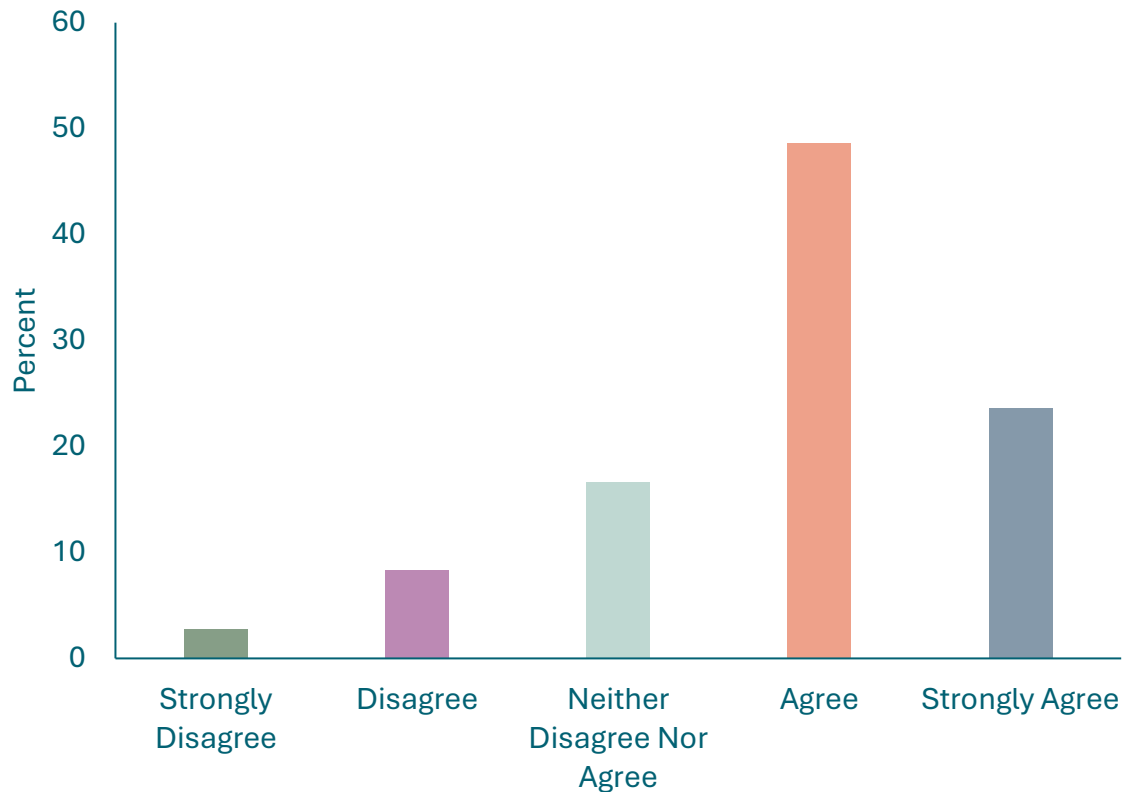
Using the strategy to inform nature recovery

This chapter explains the components of the LNRS, and how to use the potential measures and mapping to inform nature recovery

76.14%

of respondents
wanted to comment
on Chapter 2: How
to Use the LNRS

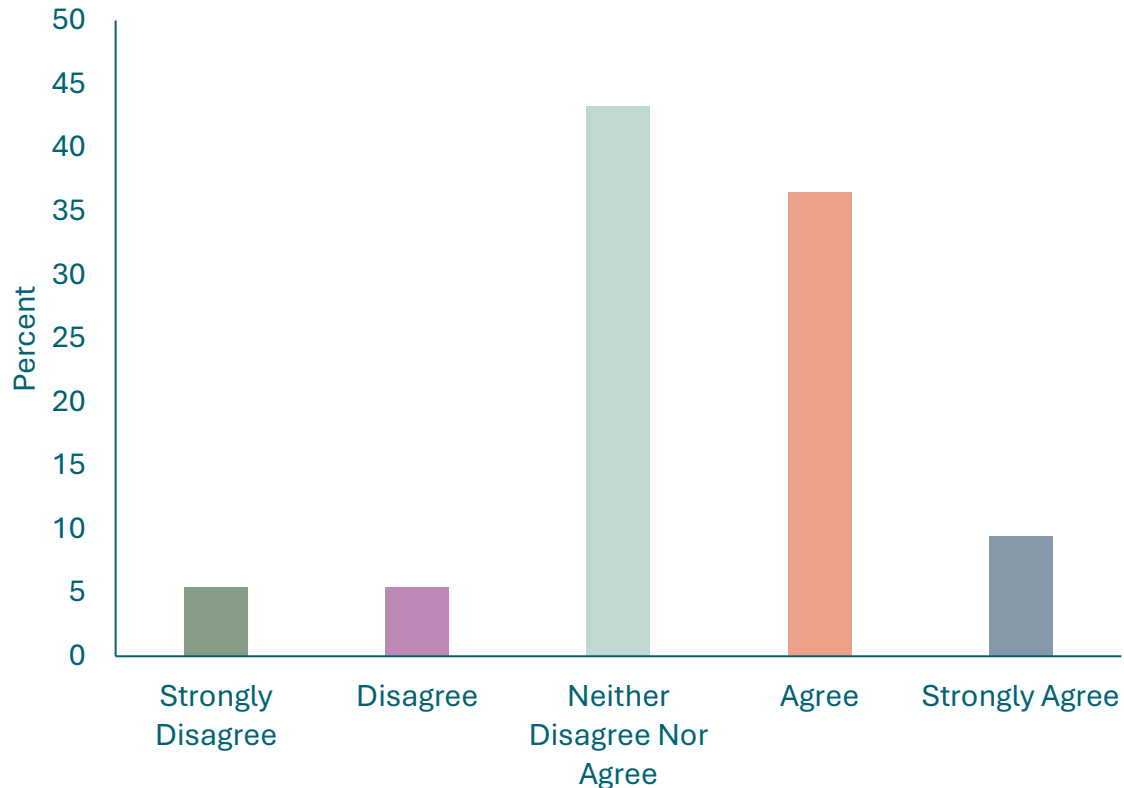
72.22% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they *'understand'* Chapter 2



“The ‘bigger, better, more and joined up’ needs further clarity and differentiation”

“I do like the clarity of what - and what not - the purpose of the LNRS is”

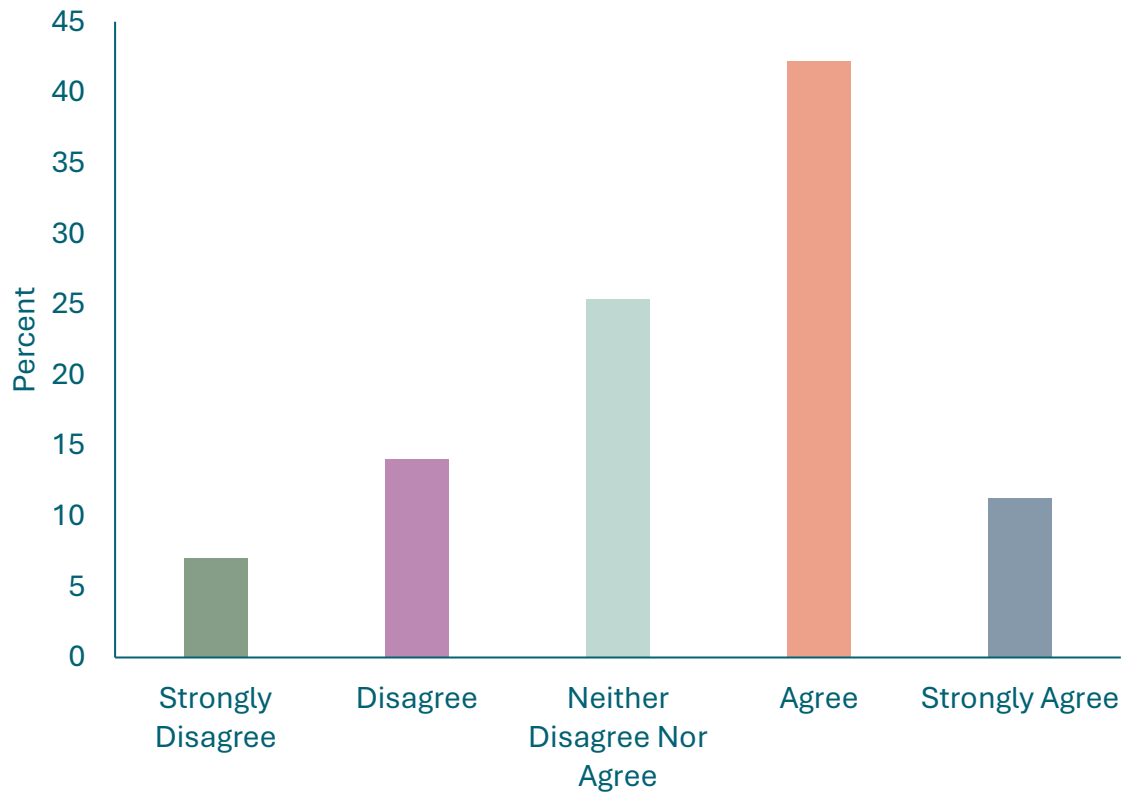
45.95% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the information in Chapter 2 is 'accurate', while **43.24%** remained neutral



“There was a rich depth of knowledge clearly used in the drafting of this”

“This is a very comprehensive evaluation of the areas of particular importance for biodiversity”

53.52% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that after reading Chapter 2, they *'can use this information to help nature recovery'*, while **25.35%** remained neutral



"This chapter really needs to signpost the various different user groups to the parts of the LNRS that will be of particular interest and relevance to them."

"Plans should leave room for wildness, not just managed projects. Flexibility and humility are essential."

Chapter 3: Somerset's Natural Environment

Pages 30-51

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Somerset's Natural Environment

A description of our strategy area and its biodiversity

This chapter provides a summary description of nature in Somerset. It describes the areas that are already playing an important role in nature recovery with spotlights on some of these key areas.

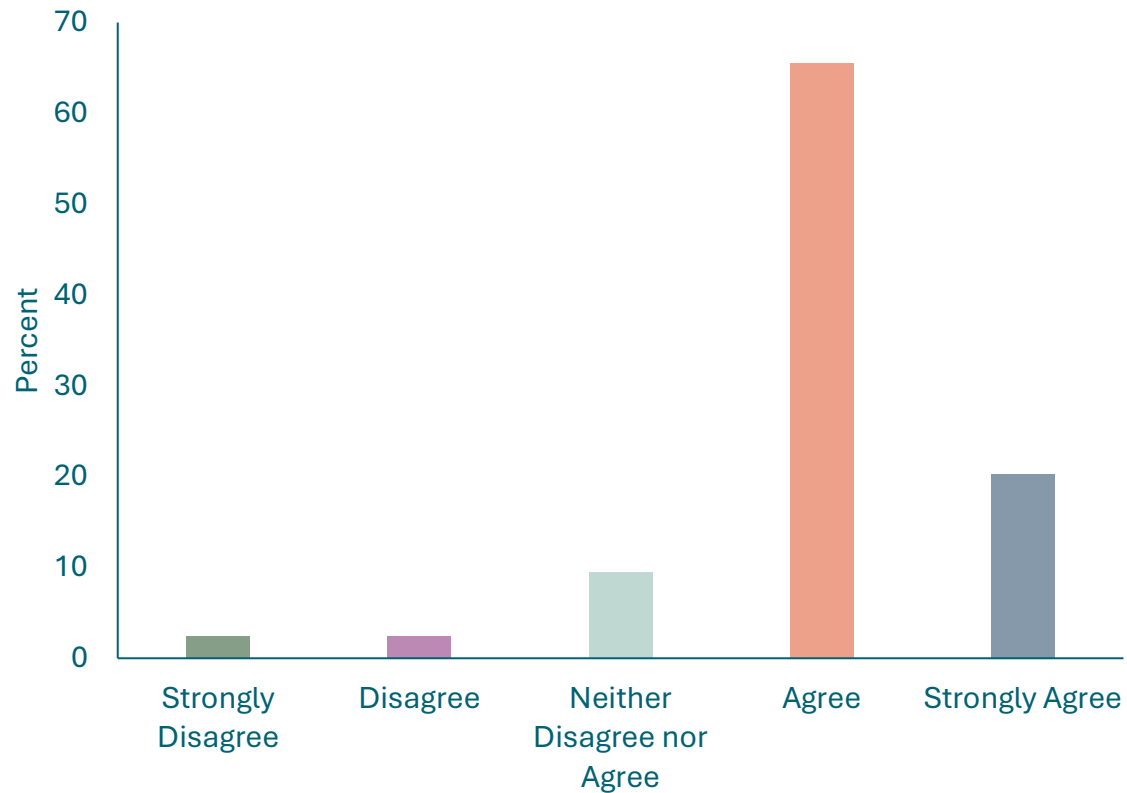


Large Blue, Somerset

85.90%

of respondents wanted to comment on Chapter 3: Somerset's Natural Environment

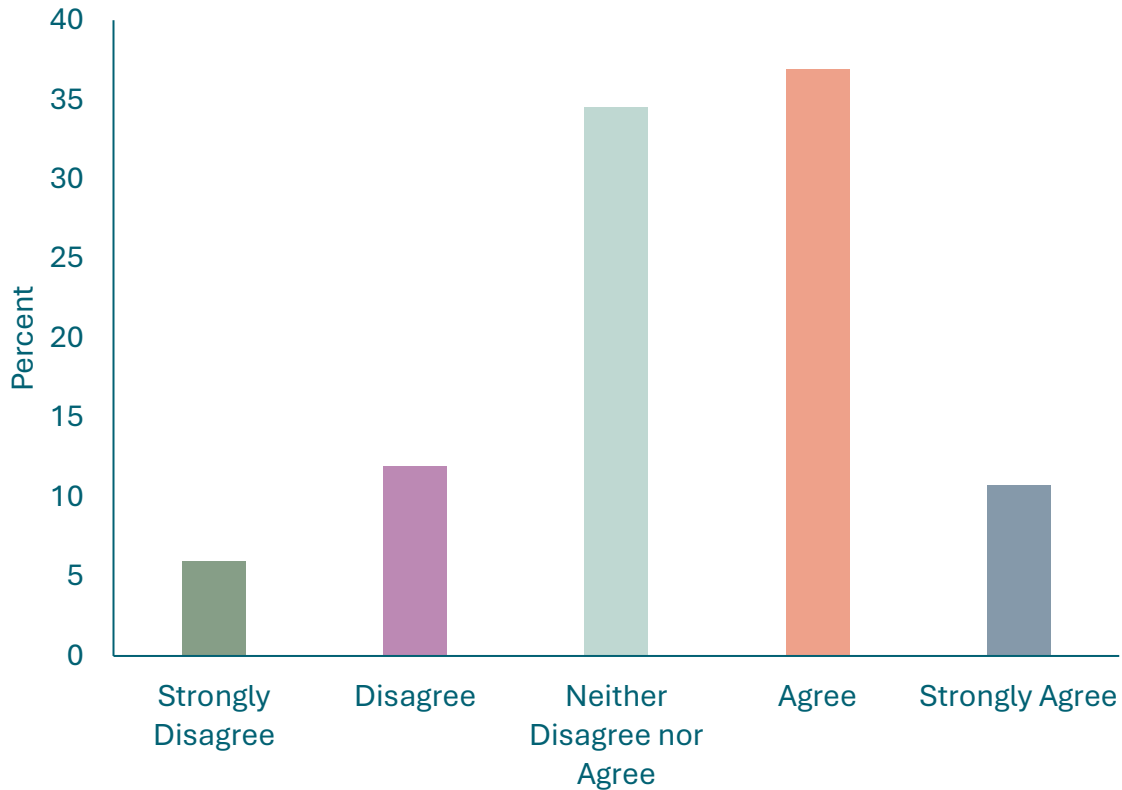
85.72% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they *'understand'* Chapter 3



“This is an excellent chapter and clearly summarizes the situation in a way that is easily understood.”

“Although the Lawson ‘bigger, better, and joined-up’ are mentioned, its not clear how much effort would go to the ‘joining up’ and its not clear what (if anything) that is limited to”

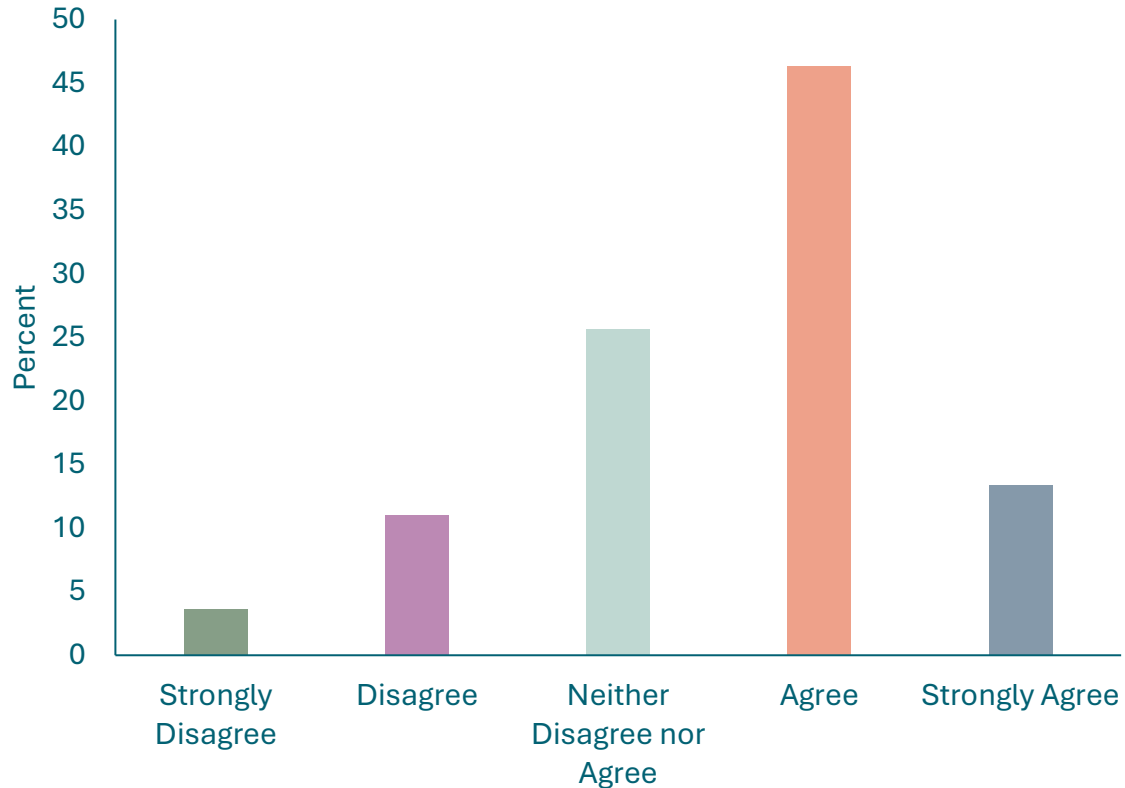
47.61% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the information in Chapter 3 is *'accurate'*, while **34.52%** remained neutral



“There are some habitats not included which should be worthy of consideration. These are often “heritage” sites which include former quarries and orchards”

“The Strategy Area Description does not include Wood Pasture and Parkland, a landscape type listed by Natural England as having high potential for rich biodiversity.”

59.75% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that after reading Chapter 3, they *'can use this information to help nature recovery'*, while **25.61%** remained neutral



"Although it's helpful to categorise landscapes, many areas fit into more than one category"

"While woodland and tree planting is perceived as of high importance, there is much more to effective management of trees and woodlands than just planting them. Aftercare to ensure establishment and that woodland areas provide maximum biodiversity benefits"

Chapter 4: Opportunities for Nature Recovery

Pages 56-115

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Opportunities for Nature Recovery

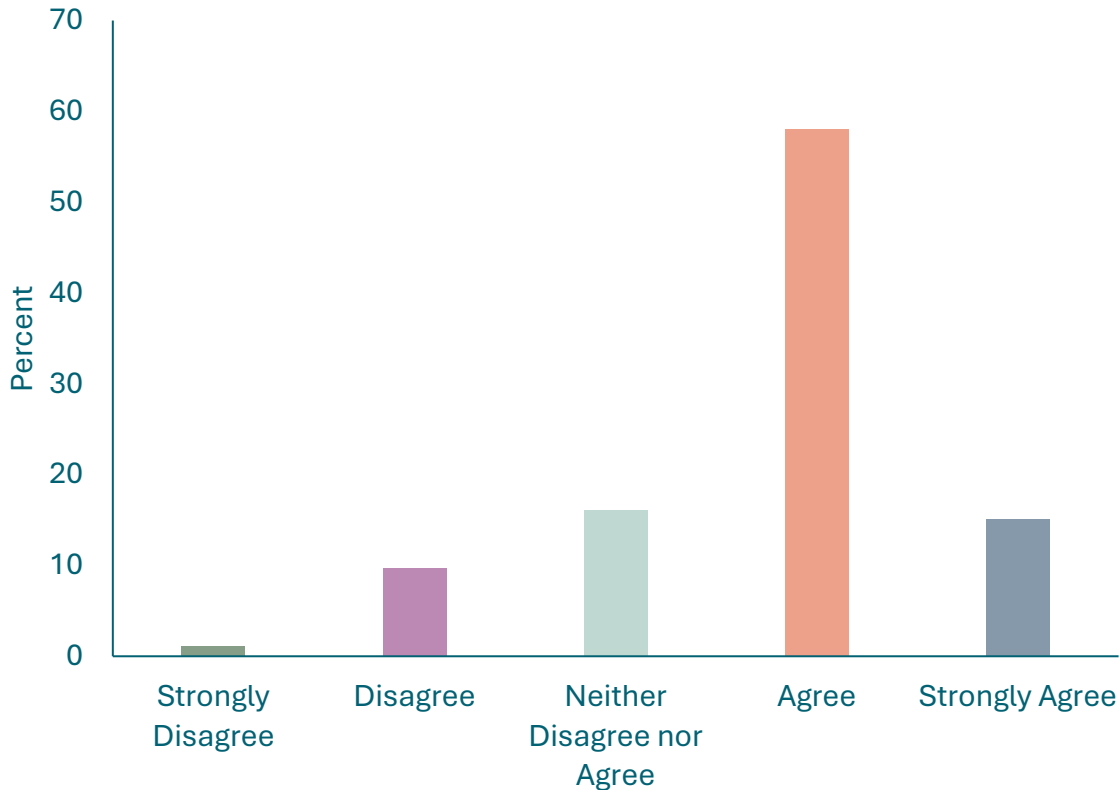
Habitat and species priority outcomes and measures

This chapter outlines the priorities for each habitat type, focusing on creating more extensive, improved habitats to better connect our landscapes in Somerset. It details the measures needed to achieve these goals, as well as those targeted for specific species.

89.77%

of respondents wanted to comment on Chapter 4: Opportunities for Nature Recovery

73.11% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the *'measures are written clearly enough to fully understand the nature recovery actions being recommended'*

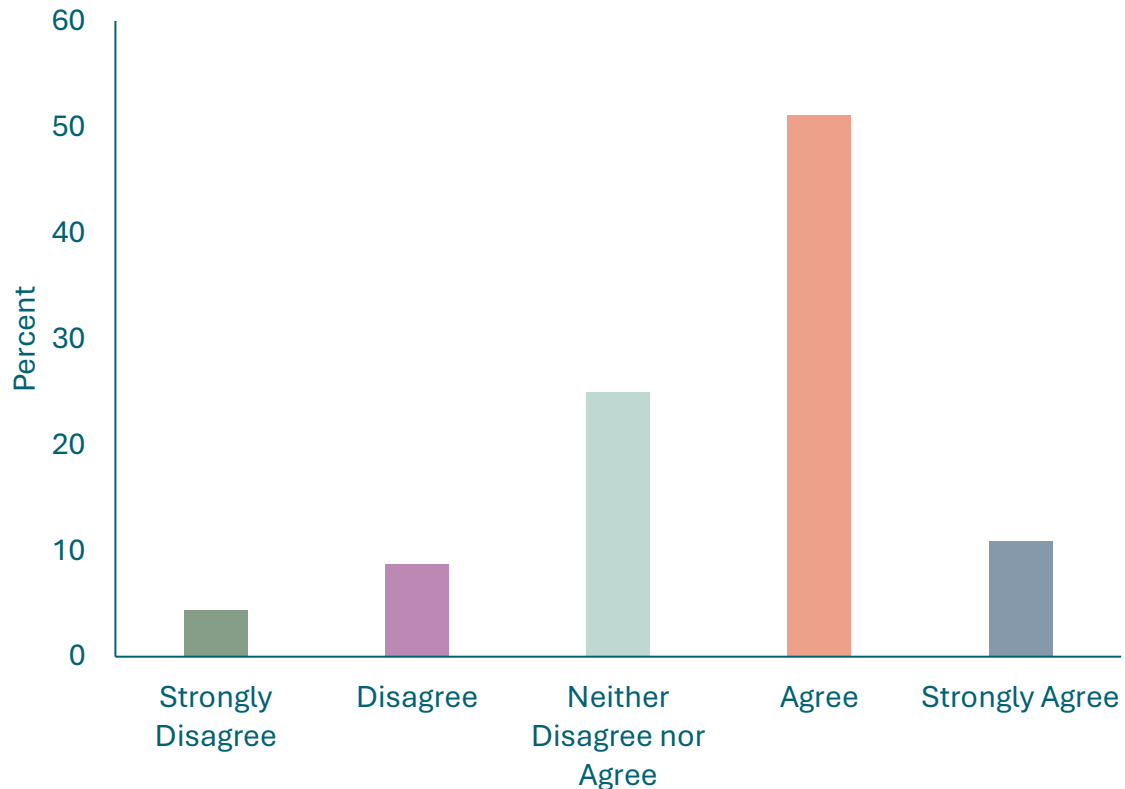


"The link between the measures and the supported taxa is not always apparent"

"Establish information trips and sessions for all age groups to find out how both nature and local services work in practice"

"Needs to be accessible more broadly if the aim is for broad uptake and interest"

61.96% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that *‘the “potential measures”* reflect important measures for nature recovery in Somerset, while **25.00%** remained neutral



“Freshwater FW1 is a vitally important priority, which should be expanded and identified as Riparian Corridors”

“Identify key connective hedgerows that link adjacent hedgerows with neighbouring land to establish connected, nectar rich corridors”

Chapter 4.3 J: Target Species & Species Assemblages

Pages 116-131

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LNRS Targeted Species and Species Assemblages

Species abundance and diversity are crucial indicators of the health of the natural environment. The habitat outcomes and measures described above will benefit many species in Somerset. It will also help contribute to the national species extinction risk targets (as outlined in Appendix 4). However, **some key species will require more targeted actions to improve their chances of survival, beyond those provided in the habitat measures.**

The measures outlined below provide specific actions to aid in the recovery and enhancement of the LNRS Priority Species Shortlist. These actions will help to deliver an increase in the geographical distribution and abundance of the LNRS Target Species and Species Assemblages.

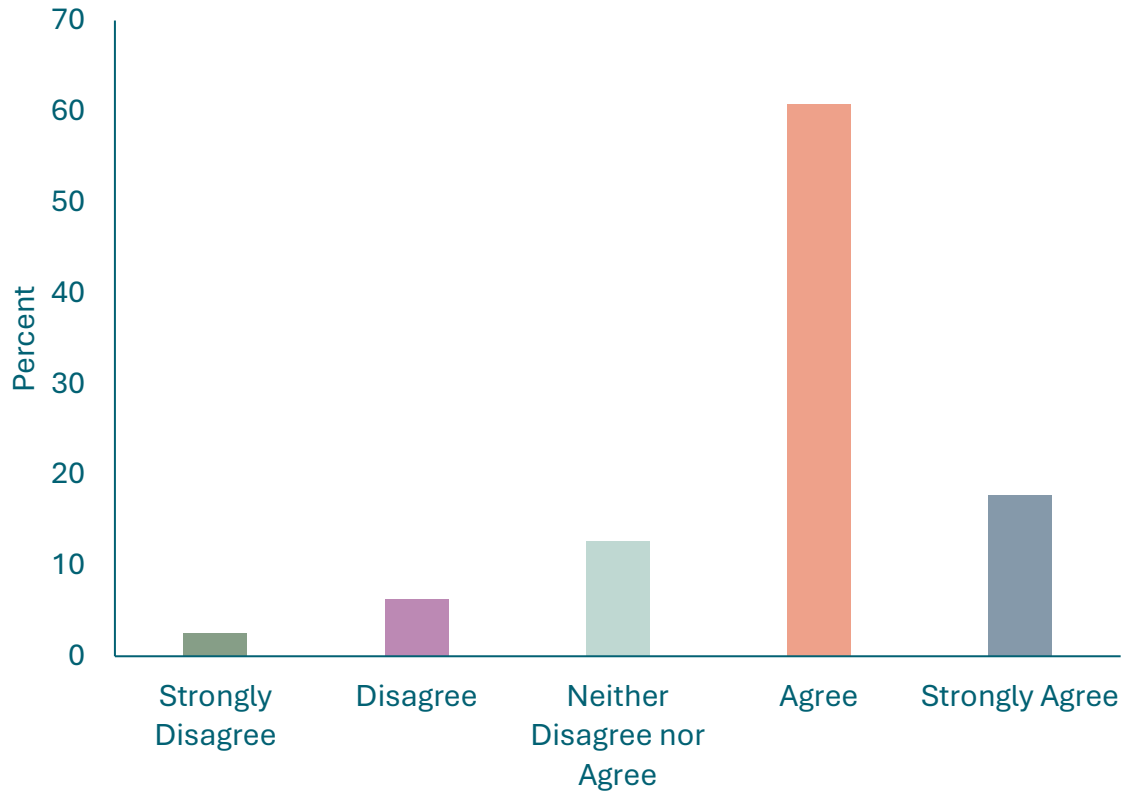
Appendix 5 outlines the approach followed to create this target list.

Plants		
Species / species assemblages	Species / assemblage overview	Habitat measures with direct support
 <p>S1 - Cheddar Pink Dianthus gratianopolitanus</p>	<p>Limestone grassland plant.</p> <p>Calcareous south-facing dry grassland with exposed rock / cliff faces.</p> <p>Declines due to overcollection, scrub and bracken encroachment as well as due to its restricted range within the UK</p>	G1, G2
 <p>S2 - Bare ground plant species assemblage Upright chickweed (<i>Moenchia erecta</i>) and chaffweed (<i>Centunculus minimus</i>)</p>	<p>Many habitat measures will target reduced grazing and increased species richness, but these rare plants need areas of low competition and open ground in order to survive.</p> <p>Upright chickweed is found in specific habitats like dry heath-grassland and sandy habitats such as sandy grassland and dunes.</p> <p>Chaffweed thrives in open, damp, and often disturbed habitats with bare or lightly disturbed soil. It grows in areas with low-growing vegetation, including grasslands and coastal habitats, where it can tolerate some disturbance and competition.</p>	C1, C3, MH1
 <p>S3 - Wall bedstraw <i>Galium parisiense</i></p>	<p>Thrives in dry, open habitats like old walls, pavements, and sand dunes. Intolerant of competition, susceptible to nutrient-enrichment, agricultural improvement and ancient walls being either restored or completely demolished.</p>	Fa1, G1, U2

66.34%

of respondents wanted to comment on Chapter 4.3 J: Target Species & Species Assemblages

After reviewing the 'Species Priorities List', **78.48%** of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they're *'happy that the information is shown clearly'*



"The Species Priorities List is clearly presented"

"Difficult to interpret which are target species and which are assemblages in 4.3j"

Chapter 5: Working Together

Pages 116-131

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Working Together

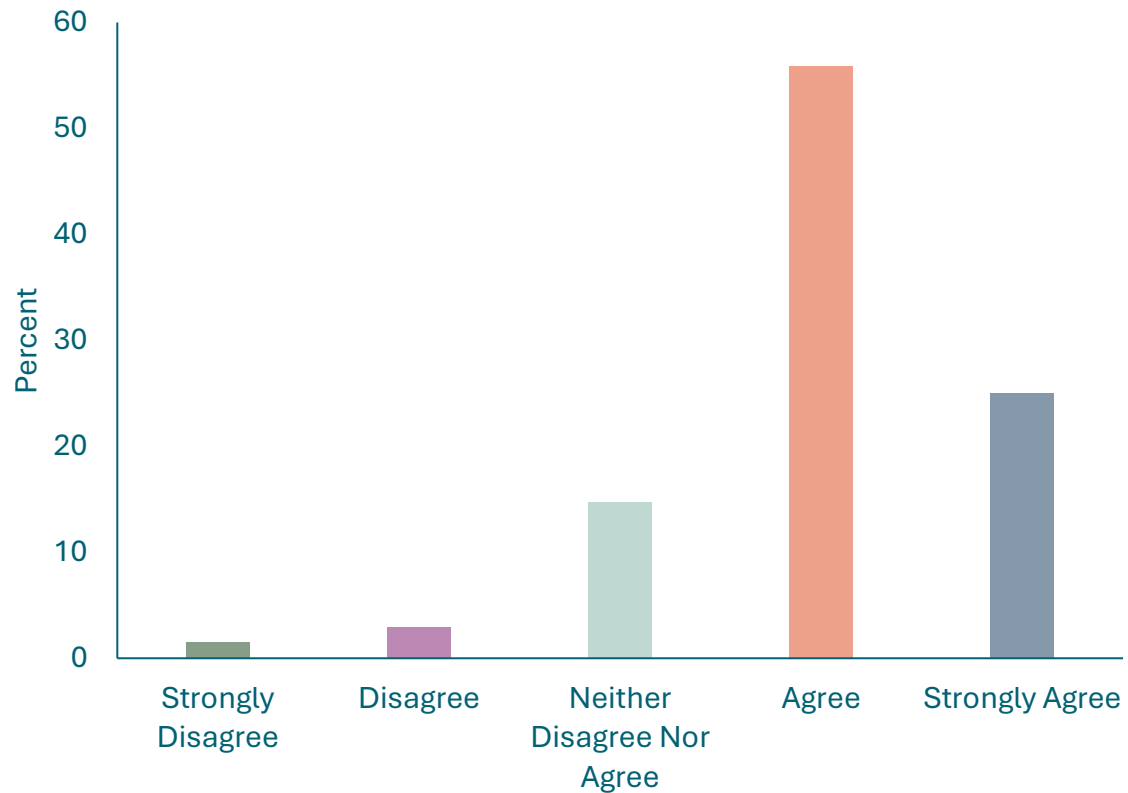
Everyone has their part to play in helping nature to recover and reverse the loss of biodiversity.

In this chapter, you'll discover ways to help nature recovery in Somerset. It includes guidance tailored for various users on effectively implementing the strategy, along with case studies that showcase inspiring stories of nature recovery in action.

62.82%

of respondents
wanted to comment
on Chapter 5:
Working Together

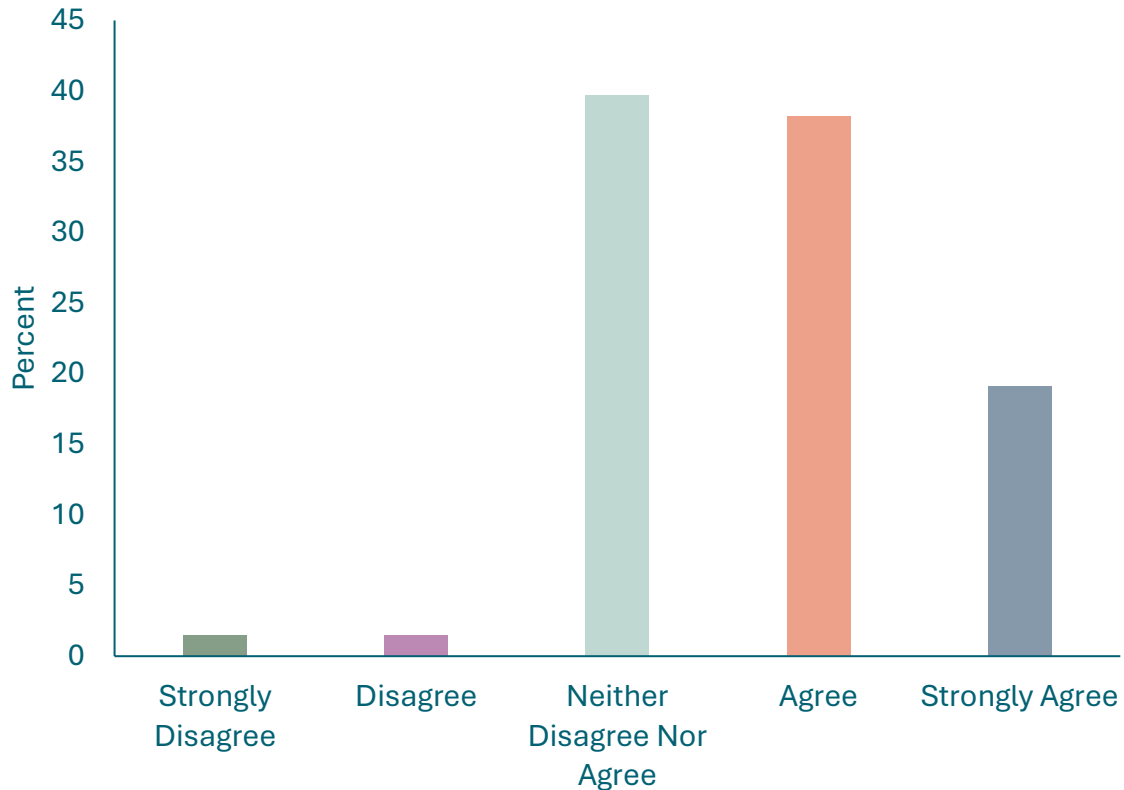
80.88% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they '*understand*' Chapter 5



"Its a pretty comprehensive 'call to arms'"

"The case studies are really useful"

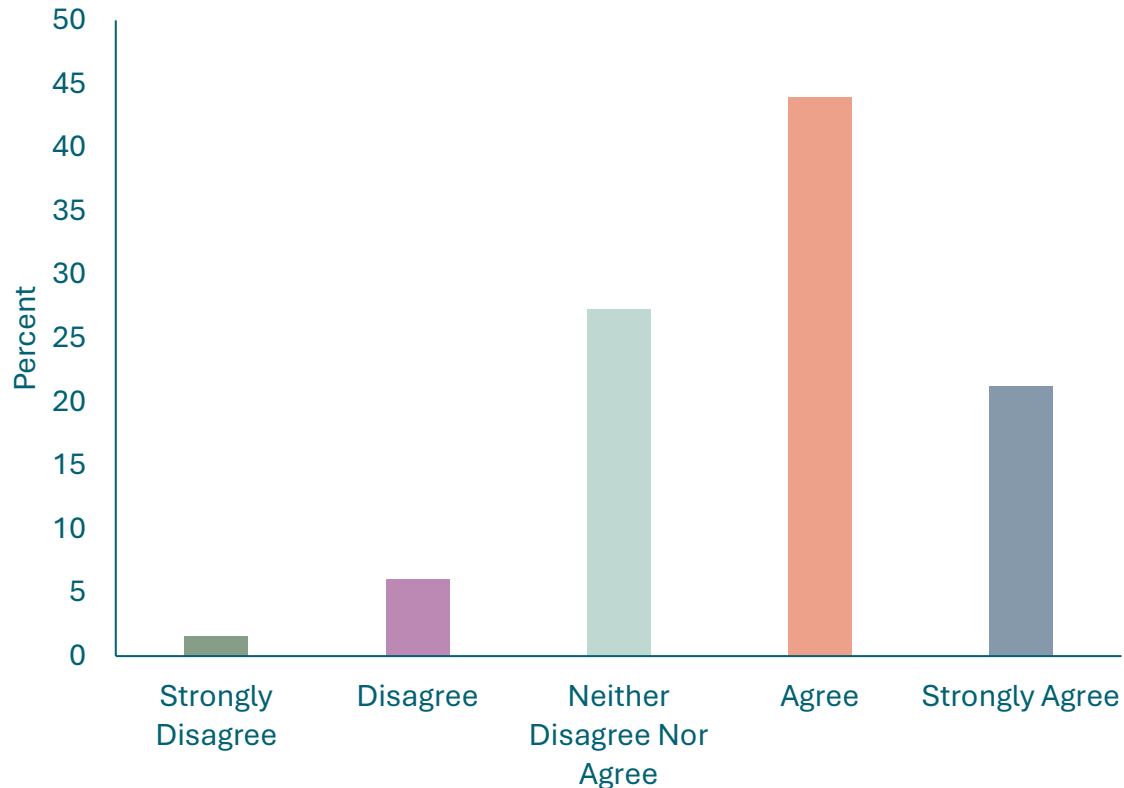
57.36% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the *'information is accurate'*, while **39.71%** remained neutral



“The LNRS needs closer collaboration and consultation with landowners/ farmers to truly reflect what's happening on the ground”

“The LNRS needs closer collaboration and consultation with landowners/farmers to truly reflect what's happening on the ground”

65.15% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they *'can use this information to help nature recovery'*, while **27.27%** remained neutral



"I have enjoyed reading all the plans and all the case studies for Somerset and feel very encouraged by the incredible work being done by so many people in the county to improve nature and biodiversity"

"This chapter is inspiring and shows great examples about what can be done. It also shows the need for communities and organisations to come together at every scale and combination to achieve more together"

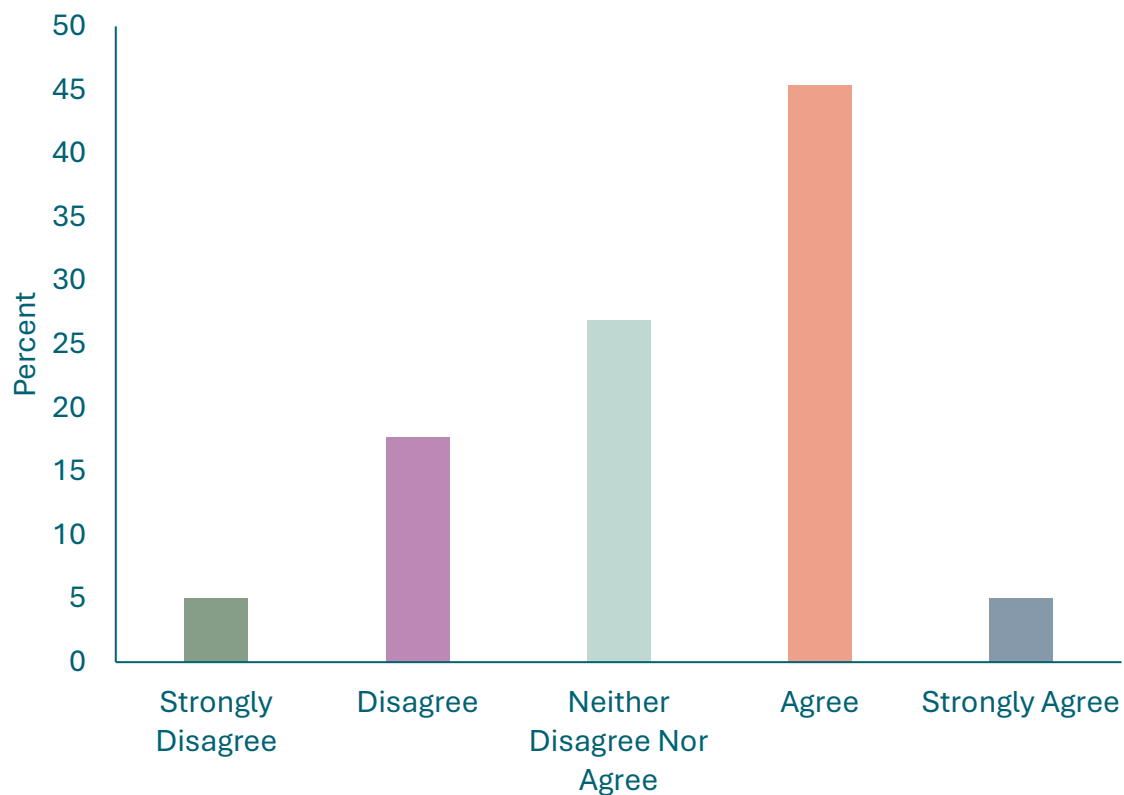
Mapping Comments

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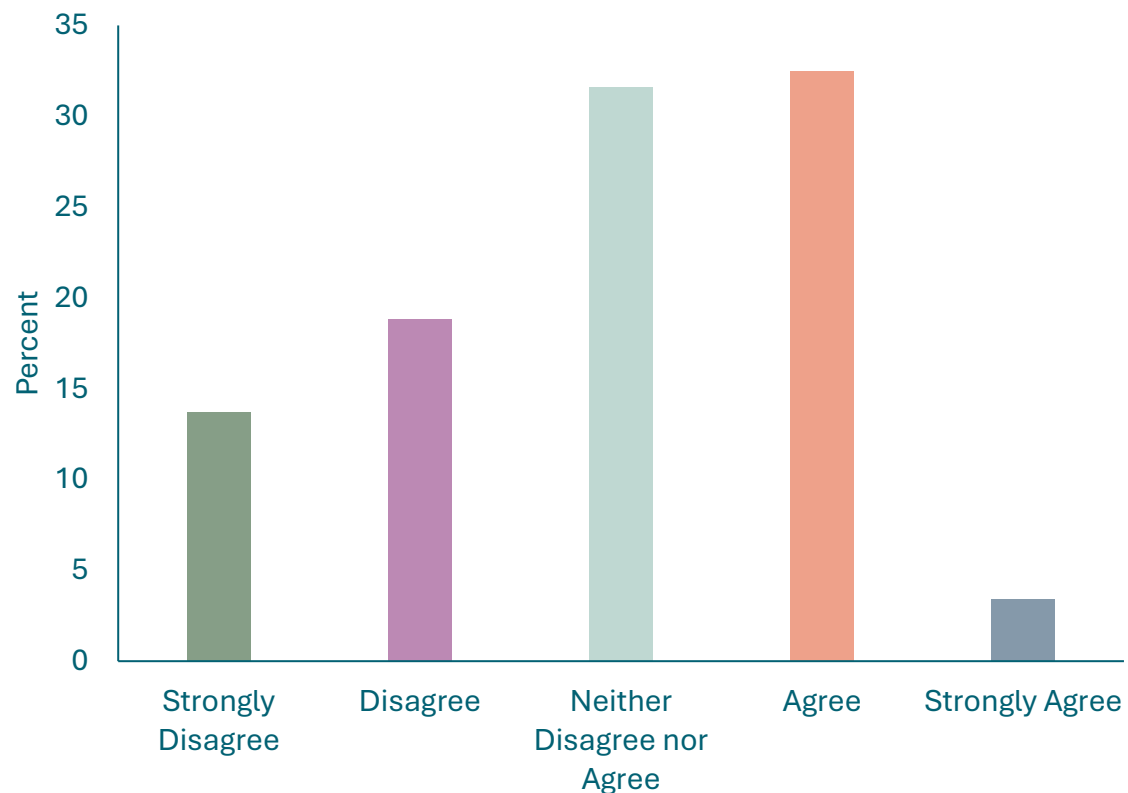
After looking at the online 'Somerset Nature Recovery Map' as a whole, **50.42%** of respondents either agree or strongly agree that it is 'understandable and useable', while **26.89%** remained neutral



"The contrast between the different areas on the map itself are difficult to distinguish as they are very similar colours and tones"

"I tried the interactive map and would like better instructions for people unused to this mapping"

After reviewing the ACBI Layer, to the best of their knowledge, **35.90%** of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they're *'happy that most areas selected are accurate as biodiversity opportunity areas'*, while **31.62%** remained neutral

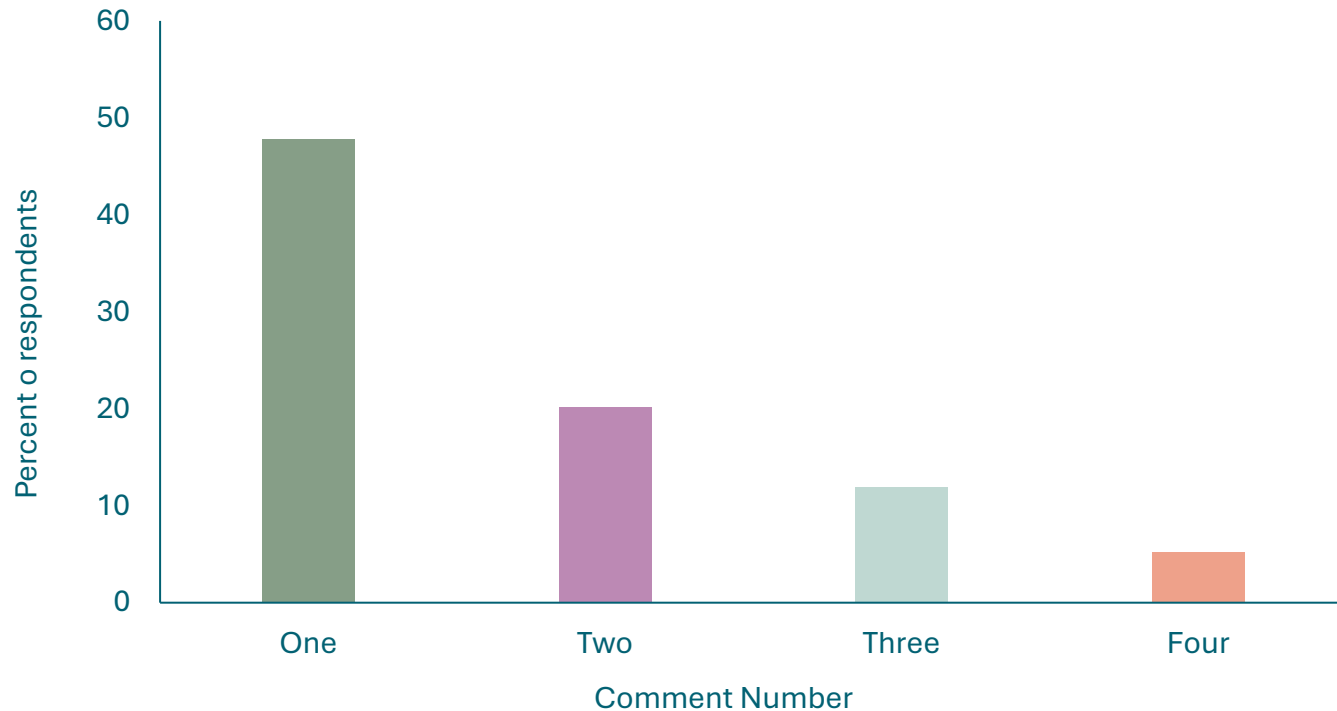


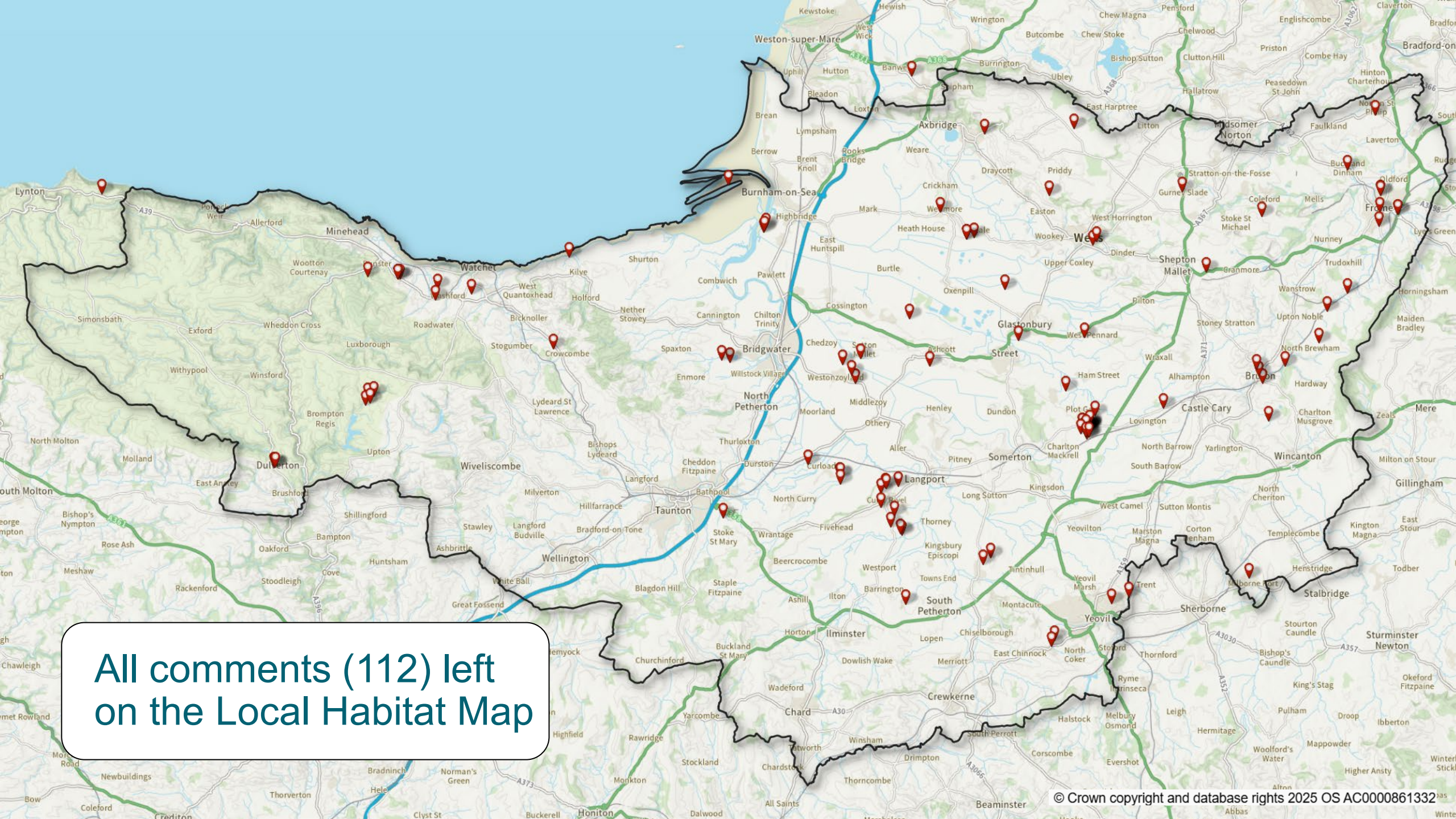
"The map allocates land with limited knowledge and as a result could mean inappropriate changes are made or more appropriate ones missed"

"Some Local Wildlife Sites have been omitted from the LNRS interactive map, and some sources have not been considered that could be incorporated into the Zone 2 and 3 (ACIB) such as the Natural England Open Mosaic Habitats (draft) inventory"

47.76%

of respondents wanted to comment on at least one element of the Local Habitat map that they felt was missing or wrongly identified





All comments (112) left
on the Local Habitat Map