

Guidance, Application Process and Conditions of Funding

Please read these guidance notes carefully and refer to them when completing the application form.

1. Introduction

One of Westmorland and Furness Council's values is to be 'ecologically aware' providing leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero and be responsible for protecting and enhancing our natural environment, including species recovery. To help implement this value, the council has launched a new Nature Recovery Fund of £50,000 to partially or fully fund projects in Westmorland and Furness which will aid in the recovery of nature locally by benefitting the following:

- Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy¹ (LNRS) priority species;
- Pollinators; and/or
- Control or eradication of key invasive non-native species (INNS) listed in the LNRS.

1.1 The Cumbria LNRS

The Cumbria LNRS is an agreed set of priorities and measures for habitat management and creation, and the identification of the most suitable locations for these. It aims to restore Cumbria's biodiversity by drawing on existing data, strategies and guidance, alongside local knowledge, to ensure that nature recovery happens in a way that delivers maximum benefit. The LNRS identifies the key priorities and measures for nature recovery in Cumbria and shows the areas that are most suitable for these. Nature recovery in Cumbria is a collaborative effort, meaning that working alongside individuals, community groups and organisations will ensure the successful delivery of measures outlined in the LNRS.

For the purpose of this document, 'priority species' refers to all priority species listed in Appendix B of the Cumbria LNRS (see attached), and 'species assemblage' refers to any 'Habitat-based species assemblage' detailed in Table 37 of the Cumbria LNRS 'Statement of Biodiversity Priorities' (www.cumbrialnrs.org.uk/statement-biodiversity-priorities). Pollinators include all species which pollinate plants, including but not limited to bumblebees, solitary bees, wasps, hoverflies, moths, butterflies and beetles. INNS are those which have been introduced to Cumbria by human activity and negatively impact the environment, economy, or our health and way of life. Key INNS and the associated eradication or control actions that will be supported are listed in Appendix B (pages 30 and 31, see attached) of the Cumbria LNRS.

¹ Cumbria LNRS (www.cumbrialnrs.org.uk/statement-biodiversity-priorities)

2. Aim of the fund

The aim of the Nature Recovery Fund is to assist Westmorland and Furness to help deliver LNRS priority measures. The fund will support projects that:

- ✓ Restore, enhance, create or connect habitats to support pollinators or one or more LNRS priority species.
- ✓ Undertake other actions to support LNRS priority species or pollinators, such as baseline surveys, monitoring or reintroductions.
- ✓ Support the removal or control of key INNS listed in the Cumbria LNRS
- ✓ Conduct research on LNRS priority species recovery

3. What can be funded?

Funded activities must take place in Westmorland and Furness and include direct actions which support LNRS priority species recovery. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the type of activities which will be considered for funding:

Activities Categories

Category	Types of Activities Supported
Habitat enhancement, restoration and/or creation works	Enhancement or creation of habitats which will directly benefit pollinators, LNRS priority species and/or LNRS habitat-based species assemblages across Westmorland and Furness.
Purchase and installation of new infrastructure or equipment	Purchase and installation of infrastructure which directly supports pollinators, LNRS priority species and/or LNRS habitat-based species assemblages such as swift boxes, bat boxes, or trail cameras. Purchase of other equipment but only where it can be clearly demonstrated it will support species recovery through monitoring etc.
Surveys to inform delivery of species recovery measures and/or monitoring surveys to assess the effectiveness of interventions	Baseline surveys for pollinators, LNRS priority species, or LNRS habitat-based species assemblages to guide management interventions or monitoring surveys to assess the effectiveness of management or to gauge the size, health, distribution of species populations.

Category	Types of Activities Supported
Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)	Purchase of equipment which directly supports the control or removal of INNS, such as equipment used for direct removal/eradication, in line with the council's policies on invasive species ² .
Conservation translocations	Movement and release of species such as reintroduction of LNRS priority species to their former range(s), reinforcing existing populations, or helping species adapt to environmental changes.
Enabling activities which are required to get a capital asset to a useable/functioning state/condition	Repair of capital assets which are essential for the successful recovery of pollinators, priority species, or species assemblage(s), e.g. repair of bird boxes.
Research and Development	Activities that generate new knowledge or substantially improve existing conservation methods in relation to LNRS priority species or key INNS, such as habitat mapping, feasibility studies, development of new habitat management techniques, evaluation of the effectiveness of existing interventions or improving propagation techniques for plants.

- 3.1 Please note that the average level of grant is likely to be in the region of £5,000 - £20,000. Grants less than £5,000 will not be considered.
- 3.2 Projects that can demonstrate immediate deliverability against benefits for the environment could be eligible for higher grant value on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.3 If any activities funded by this grant involves work on land or assets, the organisation receiving the grant must own or operate the land or have landowners' permission.

4. What will not be funded?

4.1 The Nature Recovery Fund will not support:

- i. Projects that cannot demonstrate a clear benefit for nature recovery within the boundaries of Westmorland and Furness.
- ii. Activities which are for private gain.
- iii. General appeals or sponsorship.
- iv. Contingency funds, income deficits, bridging loans or security against a loan.

² Westmorland and Furness Council. 2025. *Grey Squirrel Policy*.
<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-03/Grey%20Squirrel%20Policy.pdf>



- v. Ordinary expenditure of the organisation or partnership including but not limited to operational running costs, maintenance costs (energy bills, insurance) or ongoing staffing costs. For the avoidance of doubt, these are costs that would be incurred regardless of whether the project was delivered or not.
- vi. Projects that do not demonstrate activities in any of the category presented in the Activities Categories table above.
- vii. Expenses related to training, workshops, conferences, or events
- viii. Land purchase or associated costs
- ix. General communications or engagement work

5. Criteria for funding

- 5.1 Applications to the Nature Recovery Fund are welcome from organisations or partnerships which can demonstrate a clear benefit for nature recovery within Westmorland and Furness's geographical footprint.
- 5.2 If applying as a partnership, the application should be made by a lead organisation on behalf of the partnership. The applicant must list all partners within the partnership.
- 5.3 The organisation leading the application, must:
- ✓ be non-profit making
 - ✓ have clear governance in operation
 - ✓ have annual account records and financial transparency:
 - Income below £25,000 – No external scrutiny required (unless the governing document specifies it).
 - Income £25,000–£250,000 – Independent examination required.
 - Income over £250,000 (with assets over £3.26m) – Audit required.
 - Income over £1 million – Full audit mandatory.
 - ✓ a bank or building society account in the name of your group or organisation with at least two unrelated signatories. (Please do not use any personal bank or credit card accounts to make purchases).
 - ✓ Have been operating for at least 12 months
- 5.4 All types of organisations or partnerships can apply for this funding; a partnership must consist of two or more organisations with an agreed governance structure and/or a constitution.
- 5.5 Lead organisations that are eligible to apply for this funding:
- ✓ Statutory agencies
 - ✓ Registered charitable organisations
 - ✓ National Park Authorities and AONB's



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- ✓ Representatives of farming groups / network and landowning interests.
- ✓ Research and educational institutions
- ✓ Voluntary and community groups
- ✓ Town and Parish Councils
- ✓ Non-governmental Organisations

5.6 We do not accept applications from:

- ✗ Individuals
- ✗ For-profit companies
- ✗ Groups that have no formal constitutions

5.7 Applications will be assessed on the basis of the ongoing or proposed work, using the following criteria:

- Clarity of the conservation objective: How well the objective is defined and communicated.
- Alignment with fund aims: How closely the proposed work supports one or more of the fund's core purposes.
- Funding need and value for money: Justification for financial support and cost-effectiveness.
- Feasibility and best practice: Likelihood of successful delivery using recognised conservation standards.
- Sustainability and long-term impact: Potential for lasting benefits beyond the project's duration.
- Demonstrate equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination.

5.8 Grants will not be awarded retrospectively (e.g., for work or equipment already purchased or events which have already taken place prior to being successful with the grant).

5.9 We are only able to accept one application per organisation or group.

5.10 It is unlikely that the Nature Recovery Fund will be able to provide grants for all potentially eligible applications. Therefore, we reserve the right to prioritise applications to achieve best value for money, such as projects which focus on species that have historically received less conservation action. We also reserve the right to decline applications which do not meet the stated criteria.

6. How your application is dealt with

6.1 On receipt of your application we will make an initial assessment. This will check that your organisation and project are eligible, and that all required supporting documentation has

been provided. We may contact you to obtain missing information, documentation or for clarification.

- 6.2 We aim to acknowledge receipt of your application within five working days. This will be by email unless no email address is provided, in which case a letter will be posted.
- 6.3 You may be contacted by an officer for further details and clarification if you have a large cash reserve that is not being used towards the project.
- 6.4 Eligible applications which are accompanied by the required supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Nature Recovery Fund Panel for consideration. The Grant Panel is made up of key officers within the council, they will assess and make recommendations to the Assistant Director for Climate and Natural Environments and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity. The Nature Recovery Fund Panel may request further information to answer queries and provide greater detail of your project or they may ask for a site visit where appropriate.
- 6.5 The Nature Recovery Fund Panel's recommendation may be to approve or reject the grant award. If a recommendation to award is made, this will include a recommended grant amount.
- 6.6 Applicants will be informed (usually by email) of the Nature Recovery Fund Panel's recommendation, within five working days of the meeting taking place.
- 6.7 Westmorland and Furness Council will consider recommendations from the Nature Recovery Fund Panel and will either agree or refuse applications. The Executive may also amend the level of grant.
- 6.8 Decisions taken by Executive are subject to a 'Scrutiny call-in' period of five working days from the decision notice being issued during which time a decision regarding an award could potentially be challenged. Therefore, it is not possible to confirm an award until the Scrutiny call-in period has ended.
- 6.9 Westmorland and Furness Council's Executive decision is final and cannot be changed (no appeals or discussions will be entered into).
- 6.10 We will aim to inform you of the outcome of your application within five working days of the Scrutiny call-in period ending. This will be by letter and if your application has been successful, we will arrange for the funds to be released.
- 6.11 Applicants who are unsuccessful will be notified by letter within two weeks of the end of the Scrutiny call-in period.
- 6.12 A Project Completion Form with final report will be completed and submitted by the applicant on completion of their project or event in order to draw down the final 25% payment.

7. Condition of funding

- 7.1 Payment of funding is subject to completion of such legal agreement as may be required by the Council, which may include specific terms relating to your project and / or the following general terms.

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- 7.2 Grants awarded must be spent on the purpose stated in the application. If for any reason your circumstances change or you wish to vary the way in which you spend your grant, you are required to contact us to request written permission to do so.
- 7.3 In the event of a group or Organisation ceasing to operate or failing to undertake or complete the project or event for which the grant was offered, or breaching these terms and conditions, Westmorland and Furness Council reserves the right to withhold payment, to reduce an award or seek its recovery.
- 7.4 Financial support provided by Westmorland and Furness Council should be acknowledged on all relevant printed publicity, on websites and in information given to the press. Relevant guidance will be provided to applicants at the time of a grant offer being made.
- 7.6 Your organisation must ensure that its project operates within the requirements of all legislation.
- 7.7 Your organisation should ensure equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination in the delivery of its project. Your commitment to this should be clearly identified in a written policy or statement that takes into account current legislation and good practice.
- 7.8 You will be required to inform the Council when your project has been completed and to submit a Project Completion Form, with a final report, within three months of completion (we will provide you with a template). You will also need to provide relevant invoices and a bank statement showing payments made. Organisations who do not complete and return a satisfactory Project Completion Form may be required to return their funding and will not be considered for future funding.
- 7.9 Where your organisation uses the grant to procure any part of the works or services covered by the grant, the procurement process used must be broadly comparable to those contained within the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (e.g. competitive process), as set out in the Council's Constitution which is available online (Westmorland and Furness Council Constitution or copy upon request).
- 7.10 The Council is under a legal obligation to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Decisions of the Council may be challenged by judicial review if the subsidy control rules are not followed or not followed completely. Grants may be suspended, and orders for damages or recovery of any unlawful subsidy made. The Council (and the grant recipient) may suffer reputational damage if an unlawful subsidy is made. As part of the application process, the Council may request from your organisation information about the levels of subsidies, including grant funding, that your organisation has received in recent years.
- 7.11 You will cooperate with the Council so as to allow the Council to discharge its duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR") and the Local Government Transparency Code ("Codes of Practice") under section 45 and 46 of the FOIA.
- 7.12 Westmorland and Furness Council accepts no liability for any consequences, whether direct or indirect, that may come about from your use of the Grant or from the Council's withdrawal of the Grant in accordance with these terms and conditions.



8. Delivery

- 8.1 By submitting an application to Westmorland and Furness Council, the organisation named in the applications agrees (if awarded a grant) to:
- Use the grant only for the activities described in the application and only for expenditure made after the date of the grant award.
 - Provide information and regular communication about their progress over the period of funding and its benefit on the natural environment and / or sustainability (every 3 months until end of the funding period and one final report at the end.
 - Act lawfully throughout in relation with best practices and guidance from any relevant regulators and follow any guidelines issued requiring a minimum of two signatories.
 - Hold the grant in a UK based bank account or building society account.

9. Subsidy Control

The organisation will be asked to comply with all rules under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the UK-EU TCA (the Subsidy Control Rules);

- Not take any action or fail to take any action that will cause the Council to be in breach of its obligations under the Subsidy Control Rules;
- Provide such reasonable assistance as is requested by the Council to enable the Council to comply with its obligations under the Subsidy Control Rules;
- Ensure the Grant is spent only to further the delivery of the project and return to the Council any unspent part of the Grant upon completion of the project.

Westmorland and Furness Council may withhold and/or require repayment of all or any part of the Grant together with interest from the date of payment if variation, repayment or recovery is required under or by virtue of the Subsidy Control Rules or by any court of relevant jurisdiction.

10. Additional Information

Existing nature recovery grants in Westmorland and Furness support various projects but have limited eligibility and scope. This new fund aims to fill those gaps by broadening who can apply, the types of projects supported, and the level of funding available. For those who may be unsuccessful in the Nature Recovery Fund, consider applying for these alternative fundings opportunities:

- Cumbria Community Foundation's Laidlaw Fund for the Environment – grants for volunteer-led, community, and charitable groups undertaking projects that benefit wildlife habitat protection and education of the natural environment in Carlisle and the surrounding area (**£500-1000**): [Cumbria Community Foundation - Connecting People Who Care With Causes That Matter](#)
- Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre's (CBDC) Small Grants Scheme – Small grants for biodiversity and geodiversity voluntary recording work in Cumbria (up to £500). Limited to

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any individual or recording group who has submitted records to CBDC in the last two years:

[Small Grants Scheme - Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre](#)

- The Ernest Cook Trust's Outdoor Learning Leader Grant – Supports charities and not for profit organisations who want to employ an Outdoor Learning Leader (salary and on-costs) (up to £20,000 per position per year for three years): [Apply Here – The Ernest Cook Trust](#)
- The Lake District Foundation – A wide range of projects are supported, including those focusing on environmental conservation and aligning with the organisation's mission (small and large sums awarded): [Apply for a Grant - The Lake District Foundation - Charity of the Lake District](#)
- Natural England's Species Recovery Programme – This fund supports the recovery of species listed in the Threatened Species Recovery Actions (TRSA) dataset. Several species overlap with those listed in the Cumbria LNRS; however, there are 18 species not listed in the TRSA dataset. Further, the minimum amount which can be applied for is £10,000, limiting the eligibility of smaller projects. As this is a nationwide funding opportunity, competition is higher for organisations in Westmorland and Furness: [Species Recovery Programme: call for ideas funding opportunity - GOV.UK](#)

Contact us

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