



ALERC

Association of Local Environmental
Records Centres



Strategic Plan

2023 - 2027



Forward

The significance of the loss of the UK's biodiversity and its ability to help mitigate the impact of climate change is now widely acknowledged by politicians and the public alike. The UK 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) identified that high quality environmental data is required to understand the current state of the UK's natural environment and monitor its future recovery. Thus creating an urgent need to develop new systems that brings together modern data collection using IT and the data collection by volunteers and professionals.

Local Environmental Record Centres bring together habitat, sites (including non-statutory sites of local importance) and species data for the areas they cover. Some hold natural capital and other relevant environmental data sets to deliver geodiversity and green infrastructure services. A considerable amount of work is carried out in LERCs to ensure that the data held is up to date, accurate and robust.

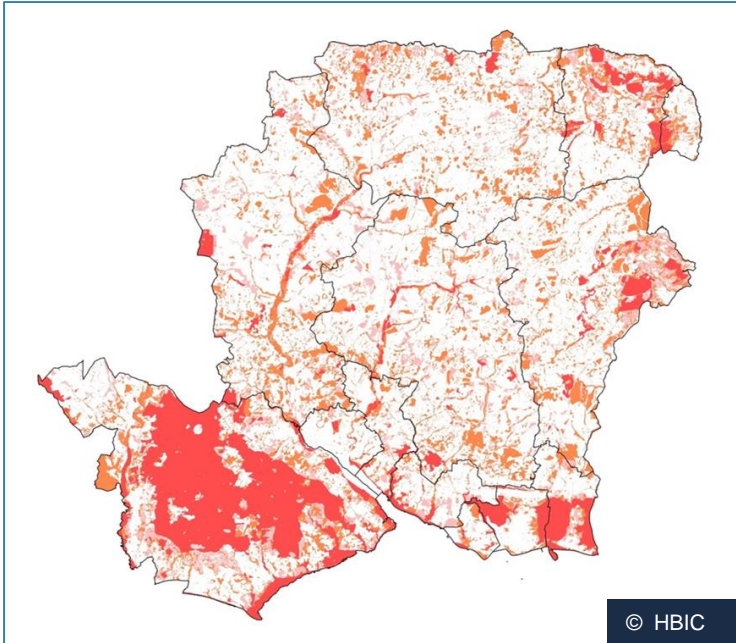
It remains clear to ALERC that the combined knowledge and information services provided by our Members is a critical resource that will contribute to the delivery of the biodiversity recovery strategies in all 4 countries of the UK. Considerable work has already been carried out at a government level in Scotland and England to understand how to improve data mobilisation from local to national datasets and vice-versa. ALERC and its Members have contributed to these discussions and it is obvious that ALERC and its Members have a key role to play.





ALERC Member Case Study

Ecological Network Mapping Hampshire Biological Information Centre (HBIC)



LERCs are more than data libraries. They work with their partners to use the data to enhance local decision making. In 2020 HBIC updated the Hampshire Ecological Network map to reflect changes in site designations, Priority habitat mapping, Brent Geese/Wader sites, and polygons that represent opportunity for habitat creation/expansion. The core network is shown in red and orange. The final map shows an increase in the full Hampshire ecological network of 9,000 ha taking the total to 153,000 ha (39% of Hampshire).

Our Vision

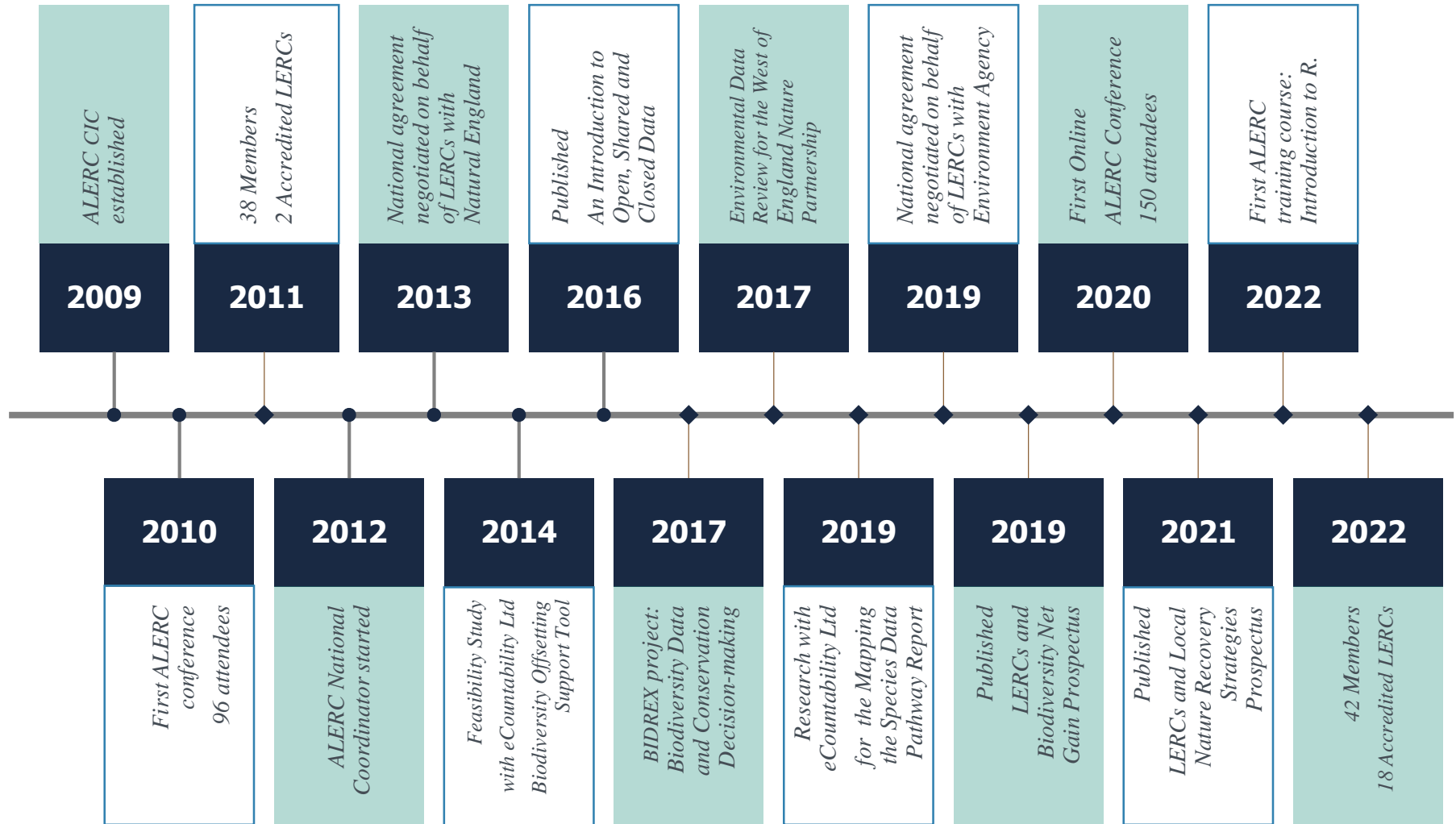
The role and importance of the services Local Environment Record Centres (LERCs) provide and their contribution to addressing the ecological and climate emergencies is widely recognised, fully appreciated and that they are sustainably funded, so that all decisions impacting on the UK's biodiversity are made using the best available evidence.

Our Mission

ALERC provides a voice for our Members across the UK, facilitates collaboration with them on behalf of our regional and national stakeholders, runs an LERC accreditation system to ensure common standards across our sector, and delivers professional development to our Members' employees.



ALERC Milestones





Our Goals

High quality environmental data and related added value services are fundamental to the delivery of the UK 25 Year Environment Plan. Our goal is to embed good practice and FAIR data principles into data collection, stewardship, sharing and utilisation of environmental data at all levels. Thus, ensuring decision makers have the information they need to make decisions that improve the UK's biodiversity and enable them to monitor progress towards the UK targets.

ALERC has 3 overarching goals for 2023-2027.

1. ALERC and its Members are valued nationally and locally as a critical partner in the national biodiversity dataflow.
2. ALERC supports a UK wide network of Accredited LERCs enabling them to thrive individually and as a network as essential biodiversity information service providers.
3. ALERC is a respected, recognised and well-run organisation.

ALERC Member Case Study

Farmland Field Surveys Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC)



LERCs review the information they hold and develop mechanisms to fill the data gaps. This example shows GMLRC working with recorders and citizen scientists to survey farmland within the Greater Manchester Area.



Goal 1

ALERC and its Members are valued nationally and locally as a critical partner in the national biodiversity dataflow.

ALERC will achieve this by:

- Working with partner organisations and networks at a national level to ensure LERCs are involved in the implementation of country level initiatives.
- Developing national and regional relationships that mobilises and increases the use of local biodiversity, geological and green infrastructure² data and creates positive opportunities for LERCs to thrive.
- Promoting FAIR data principles for scientific data management and stewardship.





Goal 2

ALERC supports a UK wide network of Accredited LERCs enabling them to thrive individually and as a network as essential biodiversity information service providers.

ALERC will achieve this by:

- Supporting ALERC Members to become Accredited and that the value of Accreditation is understood and valued by partner organisations.
- Working to ensure a consistent approach to system and data standards across the ALERC network to improve data flow and quality.
- Providing training and support that responds to Members' needs and concerns.

ALERC Member Case Study

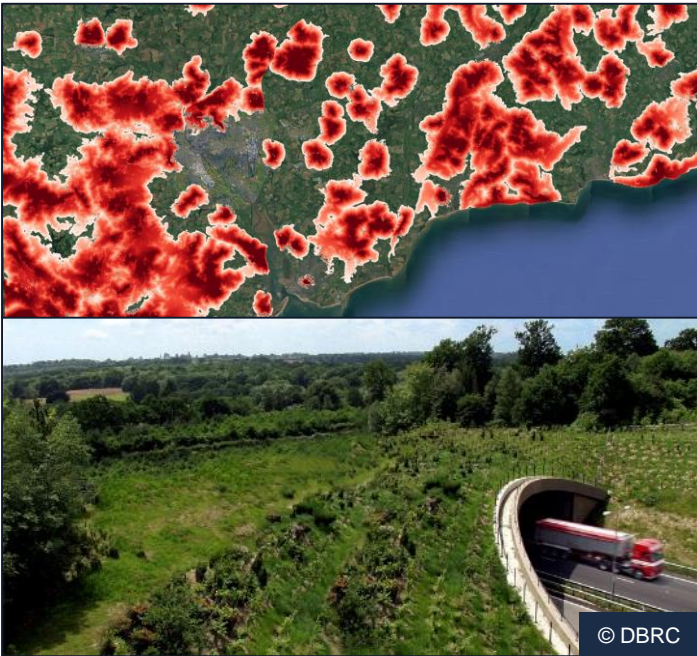
Species Identification Training
Environmental Record & Information Centre North East
(ERICNE)



Developing skills of local volunteers and citizen scientists is one way LERCs ensure the data they receives is reliable. In this example Pond Workshop volunteers are learning how to collect and identify pond dwelling plants and animals, as well as understanding how the ecological preferences of these species can indicate the health of the pond.

ALERC Member Case Study

Modelling species dispersal to reduce road mortality
Devon Biological Records Centre (DBRC)



DBRC is working with Highways England, Devon Wildlife Trust & Animex. It is using its data to model areas within the Devon road network where there is significant wildlife mortality due to pinch points in connectivity (where species move through the landscape). By using modelling techniques including Habitat Suitability Mapping, Landscape Fragmentation / Connectivity mapping, DBRC is helping to identify where interventions such as culverted underpasses, green bridges, tree planting, etc. can be installed to make the roads safer for wildlife.

Goal 3

ALERC is a respected, recognised and well-run organisation.

ALERC will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that it has the right governance, structure and systems in place to meet the needs of its Members and stakeholders.
- Becoming financially sustainable by developing services that generate income for ALERC and which ultimately benefits LERCs and the use of biodiversity data.

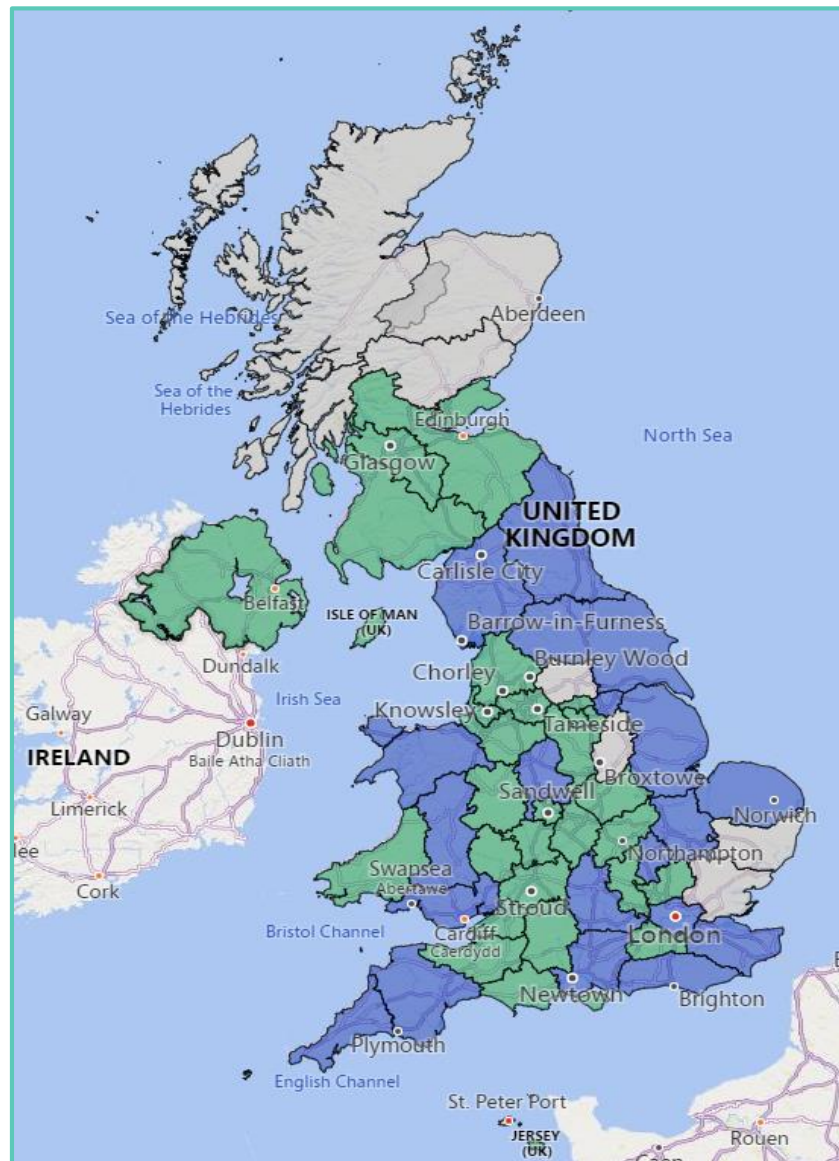


Local Environment Records Centres

Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs):

- Work with public, private and voluntary sector organisations and individuals on the collection and ongoing stewardship of data pertaining to species, habitats, geodiversity, green infrastructure and non-statutory sites in their area.
- Collate data and carry out quality checks in collaboration with a network of experts to ensure data is robust and useable.
- Provide accessible services to a range of private, public and voluntary sector stakeholders, as well as researchers and the general public
- Play a key role in local partnerships focusing on Local Nature Recovery.

Each LERC covers a defined geographical area. Some are independent non-profit organisation, whilst others are hosted by local authorities, wildlife trusts or other charitable body. Each has developed its operations in response to their local situation, making LERCs different from one and other, whilst retaining a shared mission. Thus creating a diverse network of organisations and individuals with environmental, ecological, IT and data management expertise. When shared across the network allows them to respond quickly to changing local and national data challenges that impact on their work.



LERC finder <https://www.alerc.org.uk/lerc-finder.html>



The Association of Local Environment Record Centres (ALERC) is an impartial, independent, Community Interest Company (CIC).

CIC Incorporation number:
06951023.

Registered Address:
ALERC
c/o NEYEDC
Unit 7 Hassacarr Close,
Dunnington,
East Riding of Yorkshire,
YO19 5SN.

Contact:
Email: national.coordinator@alerc.org.uk

Website:
www.alerc.org.uk

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