The 3 Ecological Network priority habitats as identified by Lancashire County Council are; Grassland Habitats, Wetland Habitats and Woodland Habitats.

The provision and enhancement of Ecological Networks forms part of Local Plan Review Preferred Options policies GI1, GI3 & SD1.

Ecological Networks contribute towards an important resource within the Borough, that of areas which allow nature to flourish. Ecological Networks are a collection of suitable habitat patches which are connected by movement corridors, allowing the Borough's wildlife to move between sites. The conservation and development of Ecological Networks is essential to retain and improve the biodiversity of the Borough. The conservation strategy of the Lancashire Ecological Networks will allow the function of the ecosystem to be maintained whilst also promoting land management strategies which limit the impacts of human activities on biodiversity¹.

Data has been provided with regard to both the Grassland and the Woodland habitat, but the Wetlands habitat information requires updating. Therefore the data used to produce the Ecological Network map for the Wetland and Heath habitat is currently awaiting further analysis and will be updated by Lancashire County Council in the future.

WLBC has produced 3 maps which shows the existing LNCS (Local Nature Conservation Sites) in relation to the Grassland, Woodland and Wetland ecological networks. These maps clarify that whilst there will no longer be a Local Nature Conservation Site designation within West Lancashire, the majority of previously protected sites are covered by the Ecological Networks Plan of the Borough, and are therefore afforded protection through Local Plan Policy and National Policy.

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¹ Lancashire Ecological Network Approach and Analysis (LWT & LERN)