Standard Contract for Goods and/or Services - Order Form

1. Purchase Order Number	**10070042830**	
2. Customer	**Natural England, Electra Way, Crewe Business Park, Crewe CW1 6GJ**	
3. Contractor(s)	**Bat Conservation Trust** registered in England and Wales under number 2712823 whose registered office is Studio 15 Cloisters House, Cloisters Business Centre, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG	
4. Defra Group Members	The following Defra Group members will receive the benefit of the Deliverables: Natural England	
5. The Agreement	This Order is part of the Agreement and is subject to the terms and conditions referenced at Appendix 1 and shall come into effect on the Start Date. Unless the context otherwise requires, capitalised expressions used in this Order have the same meanings as in the terms and conditions. The following documents are incorporated into the Agreement. If there is any conflict, the following order of precedence applies (in descending order): a) this Order; b) the terms and conditions at Appendix 1; and c) the remaining Appendices (if any) in equal order of precedence.	
6. Deliverables	**Applicable Deliverables**	**Goods Only:** ☒ **Services Only:** ☐ **Good and Services:** ☐
	Goods	The Goods are to be Delivered in accordance with the following instructions: **As set out below in Appendix 2 specifications** Delivery Address: **Natural England, Electra Way, Crewe Business Park, Crewe CW1 6GJ, 07765395206** Date of Delivery: 25/03/2025
	Services	**None**.
7. Start Date	*28/10/2024*	
8. Expiry Date	*25/03/2024*	

9. Charges	The Charges for the Goods and/or Services shall be as set out in Appendix 3 – Charges. The Charges are fixed for the duration of the Agreement.
10. Payment	Payments will be released as per the specification schedule in GBP – once on submission of draft report and then full amount after submission of final report. All payments are arranged via our SOP systems and the supplier can submit the full compliant invoice against which we will release partial payments.
11. Contractor's Liability Cap (Clause 13.2.1)	A sum equal to £5,000,000
12. Customer's Authorised Representative(s)	For general liaison your contact will continue to be Redacted under FOIA Section 40 Personal Information
13. Contractor's Authorised Representative	For general liaison your contact will continue to be Redacted under FOIA Section 40 Personal Information
14. Optional Intellectual Property Rights ("IPR") Clauses	The Customer has chosen Option B in respect of intellectual property rights provisions for the Agreement as set out in the terms and conditions. ***Option B: Customer ownership of all New IPR with limited Contractor rights to all New IPR in order to deliver the Agreement.***
15. Progress Meetings and Progress Reports	• The Contractor shall attend progress meetings with the Customer every month
16. Address for notices	**Customer:** **Contractor:** Redacted under FOIA Section 40 Personal Information
17. Key Personnel of the Contractor	**Key Personnel Role:** **Key Personnel Name:** **Contact Details:** Please see list of key personal for each strategy in appendix 2: production of strategies
18. Procedures and Policies	n/a
19. Special Terms	
20. Additional Insurance	
21. Further Data Protection Provisions	The further data protection provisions contained within Annex 4 of the terms and conditions are applicable to this Agreement where indicated below: **Yes:** ☐ **No:** ☒

Signed for and on behalf of the **Customer**	Signed for and on behalf of the **Contractor**

Redacted under FOIA Section 40 Personal Information

Appendix 1: Terms and Conditions

The Customer's Standard Good & Services Terms and Conditions which can be located on the Natural England Website and which are called 'Standard Goods & Services Terms and Conditions'

Appendix 2: Specification/Description

Annex1_specifications.docx

Redacted under FOIA Section 43 Commercial Information

Appendix 3: Charges

The total price for this contract is £25,407.00 exclusive of VAT. VAT will be charged at the rate of 20%. The Authority will raise a purchase order to cover the cost of the services and issue to the Supplier. The Supplier should submit an invoice once all the work has been completed.

Specification of Requirements

The Contracting Authority is Natural England. The Authority's priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information about the Authority can be found at: Natural England

Favourable Conservation Status Project

Natural England's Defining FCS project is defining minimum thresholds for FCS in England for a range of species and habitats. FCS definitions are published on the project's Access to Evidence webpage. They describe the long-term ambition for a species or habitat in England, wherever they occur, based on the best available ecological evidence.

Favourable Conservation Status strategies build on the definitions to set out Natural England's view of the objectives and actions needed to achieve Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for species and habitats in England. The project has developed a method for producing FCS strategies, which are intended to guide the work of conservation practitioners, particularly Natural England Area Teams but also external partners.

Requirement

Favourable Conservation Status is defined for habitats by three parameters: natural range and distribution, area, and structure and function, based on the best available evidence. A published Favourable Conservation Status definition exists for Grey Long eared and Bechsteins bats, however, significant changes may have occurred since the publication of the definition as new data has been published. A draft FCS definition is under review for Common Pippistrelle. These documents are evolving and continuously subject to review when new data or information becomes available.

The favourable conservation status strategies are based on the best available evidence and Natural England is seeking external support in the collation of the key evidence/production of a strategy draft relating to three bat species in England: Grey long eared bats, Bechsteins bats and Common Pippistrelle.

The requirement is to – using relevant literature, data, and expert knowledge – write strategy documents evaluating:

- the priority actions needed to achieve FCS
- the potential contribution of different places in England to FCS
- the achievability of FCS in a medium-term timeframe, including setting objectives

Favourable conservation status strategies should be guided by five key principles:

- An overall objective of guiding recovery
- Translation of national ambitions into place-based actions
- Working within a defined timeframe (e.g.25 years) that includes short term milestones to monitor progress towards FCS
- Ambitious targets, even where FCS may not be achievable within the timeframe, in which case time-specific objectives should be set

- More than ecology should be considered when assessing how to achieve targets such as social, economic and political factors

Gaps in the data available should be acknowledged and the potential implications of the lack of data stated.

The key points should be set out in the template provided by Natural England (Appendix 1). Within text references should be used to indicate the evidence sources.

The references should be listed in a format consistent with British Standards, with any links if Open Access.

Natural England's strategies for favourable conservation status are published on the Access to Evidence Catalogue under the Open Government Licence v3.0 for public sector information. We encourage our readers to use, and reuse, information subject to certain conditions. Therefore, you must ensure that full copyright information is included for any data, figures, photographs or maps used within your report and that Natural England has permission to use and publish this information. Metadata should be supplied for any derived data.

You may provide an initial view on favourable conservation status but the final strategy for favourable conservation status will be produced by Natural England.

The requirement includes the production of initial drafts for discussion with Natural England and the production of final drafts incorporating feedback from Natural England. We ask that there is regular contact with Natural England, including monthly meetings with natural England staff.

The Access to Evidence pages also provide a methodology document "Producing Favourable Conservation Status Strategies" which outlines our approach and methods for producing Favourable Conservation Status strategies. There are not yet any published Favourable Conservation Status strategies; an example draft strategy has been provided to show the level of detail required in the document (Appendix 2).

APPENDIX 1: Key messages template

[Guidance is in italics and highlighted in yellow throughout]

SPECIES:

AUTHOR/S:

Use within text references throughout and provide a full bibliography.

1. Introduction

2. Summary of Strategy

This section is a short summary of key points from the rest of the document.

2.1 Priority Actions

Once sections 3 to 5 are complete, summarise the following, in 4-6 bullet points:

- *The priority actions needed to achieve FCS (see section 4.1).*
- *Include an overarching perspective of where in England potential contributions to FCS could be made (from section 4.2).*

2.2 Achievability

State whether FCS is achievable within the timeframe of the strategy. Where this is not the case, briefly describe the why and provide the expected timeframe of long-term delivery (see section 5.1). Identify any key factors that are likely to impede progress towards FCS, such as a lack of delivery tools or external processes such as climate change (see sections 5.1 & 5.2).

In the below table, provide the favourable values for each parameter from the species' FCS definition document, the changes required to achieve these thresholds, and the time-specific objectives set out by this strategy (see section 5.3). Where FCS is achievable within the strategy, objectives should be favourable values.

Table 1: Example of objectives towards FCS

Favourable Conservation Status parameter	*Favourable Conservation Status*	*Change needed to achieve Favourable Conservation Status*	*Objective of Favourable Conservation Status strategy*
Natural range and distribution			
Population			
Habitat for the species			

3. Background

This section provides the necessary context for understanding the strategy. It should be a maximum of a page long. Please use in-text references to indicate sources throughout this document.

3.1 Species Background

Provide a succinct background to the species, avoiding information that is provided in its FCS definition. Focus on the species' current conservation status and the primary threats it faces. Highlight any significant changes in its status since the publication of its FCS definition

3.2 Related Species and Habitat

Highlight any other key species or habitats that may be influenced by the strategy. This strategy should aim to maximise synergies between different species and habitats. Advice on how to integrate delivery for species and habitats is provided in the Nature Networks Evidence Handbook and Generating more integrated biodiversity objectives – rationale, principles and practice (paying particular note to the appendices), and should be at the core of thinking around delivery of FCS.

4. Delivering FCS

This section outlines the objectives and actions necessary to achieve FCS for the species in England. It should be 2-3 pages long.

4.1 Priority actions

Describe the priority actions that are required to achieve FCS. These should be high-level strategic actions rather than detailed measures for individual sites and typically will need to be ambitious.

Consider a range of evidence when assessing the potential conservation actions the species requires. Natural England species specialists will be able to recommend relevant internal and external sources of evidence. The FCS definition for this species may point towards conservation priorities and, in such cases, can be used as starting points. It may be useful to refer to species recovery curves, where available, to assess the sequential actions needed for recovery. There may also be existing published conservation strategies or action plans for the species, which may be useful for initial reference. Authors may also consult Defining Favourable Conservation Status in England for advice on collating evidence.

4.2 Place-based delivery

Include a strategic breakdown of where potential contributions to FCS could be made. This should be provided in the table below alongside a short accompanying narrative to highlight any general patterns and key populations or regions.

It may be appropriate to prioritise geographically where conservation actions have the greatest potential to contribute towards FCS. This could mean focusing efforts on maintaining a population or area of habitat that contributes strongly to FCS, or restoring an extirpated population or area of degraded habitat with strong potential to contribute to FCS in the future.

The selected spatial scale should be appropriate for the species. For terrestrial species, a county- or National Character Area-scale focus will facilitate the link between FCS strategies and delivery. Geographical breakdowns are likely to be more challenging in marine environments. Where possible, marine strategies should quantify potential contributions to FCS at a regional scale. For strategies focused on coastal features, authors may prioritise FCS contributions by county or Area Team region. Potential contributions are indicative only and thus should be rounded appropriately.

4.3 Role of protected sites

Quantify the potential contributions to FCS from protected sites, following the strategic principles of section 4.2. This should be provided in the table below alongside a short accompanying narrative to highlight any general patterns and key sites. This section is intended to assess the importance of the designated site network for achieving FCS and to identify any key sites with the potential to make strong contributions to FCS. Where possible, provide estimates for all individual protected sites where

the species is found (absolute values) and for the protected site network as a whole (absolute and proportional values). For terrestrial species, we recommend focusing on Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas. Do not differentiate between protected sites where the species is or is not designated.

4.3 Links to other strategies or action plans

Reference any important – particularly national – conservation strategies, action plans or other guidance for this species. Identify any links to this strategy that may be relevant to delivery.

5. Achievability of FCS

This section uses the available evidence to assess how to achieve FCS. From this assessment, it should be possible to develop time-bound objectives towards FCS and a recovery plan describing the conservation actions that should be prioritised to achieve FCS. This section should typically be around 2 pages long.

5.1 Assessing achievability

Assess the likelihood of achieving Favourable Conservation Status for the species, considering the following:

- *The current status of the species and the change in status required to meet FCS.*
- *The past impacts of conservation actions on the status of the species, which will reflect earlier societal choices and other factors that affect delivery.*
- *Other evidence of the efficacy of conservation actions.*
- *The availability of delivery tools and mechanisms to implement conservation actions, identifying where lack of delivery tools may constrain implementation of appropriate actions.*

Based on this assessment, state whether it is likely to be feasible to achieve FCS for each parameter within the timeframe of this strategy. Be aware of not constraining or overestimating the level of ambition based on historical delivery. Where FCS is not achievable with the timeframe of the strategy, indicate the expected long-term delivery of FCS.

5.2 External Factors

Discuss how any other external factors that may impede or facilitate progress towards FCS. Avoid duplicating information in FCS definition documents on analyses of current and past threats. In particular consider persistent threats and drivers, such as climate change or threats from stakeholders, which cannot be controlled without structural shifts in economic or social sectors and which may lead to future deterioration or improvement in the conservation status of the species.

Please refer to Natural England and RSPB's Climate Change Adaptation Manual for information on the predicted impacts of climate change on the species and potential adaptation options. If this information is not available for the species, Natural England climate change specialists can be approached to write an assessment for this strategy. Where appropriate, maps of potential climate change impacts or sensitivity should be included or referenced to

5.3 Objectives

Describe England-scale objectives for each parameter within the timeframe of the strategy. Objectives should be ambitious steps towards FCS or – if achievable within the timeframe of the strategy – FCS itself. Objectives must be specific, measurable, and achievable. When defining the objectives, consider the trajectory of expected delivery and define short-term milestones towards objectives (e.g., 5 years). For example, where a strategy uses habitat restoration, consider the time required to restore a particular habitat and for the return of any associated focal species. It also may be useful to provide a figure to represent the delivery of milestones and objectives over time.

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Outline a concise plan for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the strategy's objectives. This should describe the monitoring processes currently in place for the species, including the type of data collected and its frequency of collection. This plan may identify any gaps in existing monitoring, such as a lack of survey effort, and any additional monitoring needs.

Describe how monitoring data will be used to evaluate progress towards FCS objectives, for instance by describing any modelling required to quantify conservation status from monitoring data. It may be useful to refer to the approaches used to define favourable conservation status for this species.

References

[Include the list of references in this section and sort alphabetically by author]

APPENDIX 2: Example of FCS strategy for Little Tern

STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS IN ENGLAND

SPECIES: Little Tern (*Sternula albifrons*)

AUTHOR/S: >Insert name/s<

About the DFCS project

Natural England's Defining Favourable Conservation Status (DFCS) project is defining the minimum thresholds at which habitats and species in England can be considered to be thriving. Our Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) definitions are based on ecological evidence and the expertise of specialists. We are now also producing FCS strategies, which describe the objectives and actions required to achieve FCS.

We are doing this so that we can use "what good looks like" for species and habitats in England to guide ambitious decision making and actions that achieve and sustain thriving wildlife.

We are publishing FCS definitions and strategies so that you, our partners and decision-makers, can do your bit for nature, better.

As we publish more of our work, the format of our definitions and strategies may evolve, however the content will remain largely the same.

This strategy has been prepared using current data and evidence. It represents Natural England's view of how to achieve FCS based on the situation and best available information at the time of publication.

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Natural England's view on how to achieve Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for Little Tern in England. Please see the Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Little Tern for a description of how FCS has been defined for this species.

Favourable Conservation Status strategies are practical documents that describe the actions needed to deliver FCS in England and assess the likelihood of achieving FCS over a defined medium-term timeframe. Section 2 of this strategy provides a summary of the priority actions needed to deliver FCS and the likelihood of achieving FCS over the 25 years of this strategy. Section 3 sets out necessary background, summarising the historic and current conservation status of the species. Section 4 describes how FCS can be delivered, including priority conservation actions and a geographical breakdown of where contributions to FCS could be made across England. Section 5 assesses whether FCS is achievable within the 25 years of this strategy, identifying key constraints and providing time-specific objectives towards FCS. FCS strategies are living documents and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Further information on how to produce and use FCS strategies can be found in the accompanying guidance document Producing and using Favourable Conservation Status Strategies. Defining Favourable Conservation Status in England provides background to Natural England's approach for defining FCS.

2. SUMMARY OF STRATEGY

2.1 Priority actions

Below are the high-level priority actions needed to achieve Favourable Conservation Status for Little Tern in England:

Implementation of enhanced beach-nesting bird protection schemes, to mitigate against disturbance by humans – especially those with dogs – and predation, is vital to increase breeding success and reverse population declines. Beach-nesting bird protection is required at all current and new sites. This will require long-term and predictable resourcing for wardening. Schemes must reduce the impacts of disturbance by dogs on beach-nesting birds.

Long-term restoration of naturally functioning coastal habitats to provide a larger area of sustainable breeding habitat. This relies on achieving FCS for coastal sand dunes and coastal vegetated shingle.

Targeted restoration, creation, and enhancement of breeding habitat to create a larger and more resilient network of nesting sites. It is important to reverse the current trend of fewer and larger colonies, which makes the population vulnerable to localised storms, tidal events, and opportunistic predation.

New breeding colonies need to be created at both former sites and new areas e.g., through the creation of new islands or spits. There is a particularly high potential for habitat restoration and creation in Essex and Kent, where much larger populations existed historically.

New breeding habitat must be created in the right locations. Site selection must account for the projected impacts of climate change, particularly sea level rise.

The above actions have the strongest potential to contribute to FCS in Cumbria, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, Norfolk, Northumberland, and Sussex.

2.2 Achievability

Significant progress towards Favourable Conservation Status can be achieved within the next 25 years. The actions required to recover the population are well understood and are likely to be effective if delivered at sufficient scale to influence the England population. However, Little Terns are currently declining, and it may take up to 10 years to halt this decline before population increases again due to the time taken for actions to have impact, particularly for sufficient recruitment of new birds into the breeding population. As such, it may take longer than 25 years to achieve FCS. The restoration and creation of sufficient breeding habitat to support the species, which relies on restoring dynamic coastal ecosystems, will also be a long-term process.

Lack of reliable and predictable funding for protection and wardening, and long-term delivery mechanisms to provide new safe nesting habitats, are barriers to achieving FCS in this species. Currently, funding for beach-nesting bird protection and wardening is short-term and unpredictable, with beach-nesting bird protection relying heavily on RSPB wardening and volunteers. Delivering effective beach-nesting bird protection requires more sustainable and predictable funding rather than significant additional funding. Nesting habitat restoration and creation are also currently delivered opportunistically through mechanisms such as planning mitigation funding and managed realignments.

Despite the constraints, it will be possible to make significant steps towards FCS over the next 25 years due to the coordinated approach and volunteer effort established during the EU LIFE+ funded Little Tern Recovery Project (2014-18).cli Over the next 25 years, it should be possible to halt and reverse the current population decline by expanding best practice management to more colonies, and through targeted habitat management to increase the number of breeding colonies. This strategy's 25-year objectives towards FCS are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Objectives towards Favourable Conservation Status for Little Tern.

Favourable Conservation Status parameter	**Favourable Conservation Status**	**Change needed to achieve Favourable Conservation Status**	**Objective of Favourable Conservation Status strategy**
Natural range and distribution	The number of colonies at the time of the 1968-72 Breeding Atlas (Sharrock, 1976).	Maintain current range and increase the distribution by 40 10km squares to 80 10km squares in locations which will achieve distribution of the species throughout the range.	Increase the number of active colonies by 20. This should be reviewed by 2030.
Population	The population size of the mid-late 1980s, approximately 2,000 pairs.	Increase the population by 996 breeding pairs, from 1,004 to 2,000.	1,200 breeding pairs by 2030 1,500 breeding pairs by 2048
Habitat for the species	242 km^2 of breeding habitat with enhanced management to address issues of predation, recreational disturbance and habitat loss caused by coastal squeeze	Increase the area of available breeding habitat by 109 km^2, from 133km^2 to 242 km^2.	Create/restore 20 new areas of breeding habitat, each capable of supporting >10 pairs. Beach-nesting bird protection is required at all new

			and restored breeding habitat.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Species background

Little Tern is at unfavourable conservation status in England. In recent decades, there has been a reduction in the number of colonies, a loss of range and, in general, there are poor levels of productivity.

The UK Little Tern population is currently estimated to be around 1,004 pairs (New Seabird Atlas ref). Although widely scattered around the UK, the population is concentrated around the coasts of East Anglia, the south-east and north-east of England, and north Wales. Despite three decades of conservation effort, Little Terns in England declined by 32% between 2000 and 2018 (and in the UK by 26% over this period) (New Seabird Atlas ref).

The decline has been attributed to reductions in breeding success rather than to emigration or changes in adult survival. A primary factor contributing to the low breeding success is human disturbance, largely through recreational activity, although many sites are now wardened or fenced off, which helps manage disturbance. Other contributing factors include loss of nests due to bad weather, habitat loss/change (natural and due to man-influenced coastal squeeze), predation of chicks and eggs, and food shortages.

3.2 Related species and habitats

In the UK, Little Terns nest exclusively on the coast in well-camouflaged shallow scrapes on sand and shingle beaches, spits, or inshore islets. These scarce shingle and dune coastal habitats are protected and may also be designated features on protected sites. See also the Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Coastal Sand Dunes.

Delivery for Little Terns is likely to have benefits for other breeding bird species, including other terns, gulls, ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) and oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*). Predator management may have limited, localised impacts on populations of potential predators.

4. DELIVERING FCS

4.1 Priority actions

Achieving Favourable Conservation Status for Little Tern in England requires range restoration, an increase in the number of colonies within the current and restored range, and an increase in the size of the population. The priority actions needed to achieve these ambitions are discussed below.

Enhanced beach-nesting bird protection

Little Terns are heavily dependent on conservation management, particularly predator control, management of disturbance, and habitat improvement. Colony abandonment and breeding failure as a direct or indirect effect of anthropogenic disturbance is a particular issue. Breeding success of more than 0.70 fledged chicks per breeding pair is required to halt – and ultimately reverse – the current population decline (JNCC 2016). To achieve this will require the implementation of enhanced beach-nesting bird protection schemes at current and new nesting sites to mitigate against disturbance by humans, especially those with dogs.

Many Little Tern colonies are now wardened and fenced off, which has greatly helped to manage disturbance, but resourcing of this protection has been variable and uncertain. Achieving the population increase needed to deliver FCS will require these protection schemes to be enhanced, through increased and more reliable funding to include – as a minimum – wardening, rope perimeter fences with appropriate signage to reduce human disturbance, measures to reduce the effects of disturbance by dogs on beach-nesting birds, and barriers to reduce mammalian predation such as electric fences or nest cages. These measures should be put in place early in the season. If resources are limited, enhanced management will need to be prioritised at the 10 most important colonies in England. When these top sites are performing well, they will provide a supply of birds to spread into other areas.

There is currently a new beach-nesting bird project in development funded through NE and RSPB's 'Action for Birds in England' programme which looks to identify and set up the best practice management at the most important sites for three target species: Little Tern, ringed plover, and oystercatcher. The long-term funding of this project is essential to deliver FCS for Little tern.

Restoration and creation of breeding habitat

Little Terns have very specific breeding habitat requirements, needing sand or shingle beaches or islands free from human disturbance and mammalian and seabird predation. Achieving FCS for Little Tern will require increasing the area of breeding habitat for this species through long-term restoration of coastal ecosystems and targeted habitat creation at existing and new breeding colonies.

Long-term restoration of breeding habitat

Large stretches of naturally functioning coast are more likely to provide a range of suitable nesting sites for Little Terns. Restoring naturally-functioning and dynamic coastal processes is vital to create sustainable areas of suitable habitat for this species in the long-term, necessary to achieve and sustain FCS for this species. This will depend on achieving FCS for coastal sand dunes and coastal vegetated shingle by restoring natural functioning of these habitats. However, in order to be of value to Little Terns, new breeding sites will have to be protected from disturbance and predation.

Coastal evolution and natural vegetation succession mean that some sites become less suitable for Little Terns over time whilst others become more suitable. Many Little Tern colonies face an increasing risk of being washed out due to rising sea-levels, and a reduction in size of breeding beaches due to beach scouring and dune encroachment. This risk is likely to increase unless natural coastal processes can be restored to allow foreshore and beaches to roll back and so adapt to rising sea-levels and increased storm events under climate change.

Information on coastal processes developed to support Shoreline Management Plans, such as whether coastlines are accreting or eroding, should be used to understand likely trends in suitability along the English coastline and to predict where suitable breeding sites are likely to exist in the future. Most Little Tern colonies currently occur in Special Protected Areas (SPAs) (Table 3). However, if the number of colonies increases and expands it will be necessary to review this series and to consider new notifications for established colonies, to maintain protection for the majority of the population.

Targeted restoration and creation of breeding habitat

As the restoration of dynamic coastal habitat is a long-term process, targeted habitat creation, restoration, and enhancement is needed to create a larger and more resilient network of nesting sites and thus to make progress towards FCS in the short- and medium-term. This is needed to reverse the current trend of fewer and larger colonies, which makes the population vulnerable to localised storms, tidal events, and opportunistic predation.

Breeding habitat needs to both be restored at former sites and created in new areas. Existing degraded habitat can be restored using a variety of micro-management techniques to make it suitable for nesting Little Terns (e.g., vegetation management through removal or burial, re-profiling). New breeding habitat must be created in the right locations, where there is strong potential to create viable new breeding colonies but currently insufficient habitat. This can be achieved by constructing offshore islands and spits, which lack mammalian predators and are often inaccessible to humans, or through strengthening and stabilising (or destabilising and creating more

dynamic) beaches e.g., through strategically placing dredged material as ‘beach recharge’ to create viable nesting habitats for terns.

It is important that habitat restoration and creation for Little Terns do not impede the natural functioning of coastal processes. Whilst the creation of islands and other habitats are important for achieving FCS for this species, it should not be seen as an alternative to protecting and maintaining naturally occurring islands and beaches. If any potential Little Tern habitat creation or enhancement sites are located within a SPA or Site of Special Scientific Interest for dune or shingle habitat features, it will be necessary to assess management proposals for terns against the conservation objectives for the habitat.

Once habitats are created or restored, actions may be needed to attract Little Terns to them. Terns can be attracted using decoys and recordings of courtship calls, increasing the likelihood of sites being colonised (Kotliar & Burger, 1984; Burger ,1988; Jeffries & Brunton, 2001; Colombé & Allcorn, 2003).

Habitat creation and restoration for Little Terns should be targeted in areas with the following properties:

Situated on the coast, with well-camouflaged shallow scrapes on naturally functioning shingle and sand beaches, spits or inshore islets with foreshores sparsely vegetated with typical coastal species. Where monitoring shows that vegetation cover alone is preventing nesting, then apply suitable management techniques at a scale that meets the needs of nesting colonies.

Situated above the highest spring tides so that they are not flooded during the breeding season and likely to remain so given the projected impacts of climate change.

With suitable topography for breeding Little Terns, that is away from high cliffs and dunes to allow good all-round vision.

Close to shallow, sheltered feeding areas with abundant food supply (a variety of small fish and marine invertebrates), ideally <1 km but to a maximum of 6.3 km from the nesting site. This will require assessments of prey population data (Gill, 2003) , field surveys of prey availability (Perrow *et al.*, 2003), or existing knowledge of use by other tern species.

Either isolated from human populations or where resources are available to manage recreational access and predation.

4.2 Place-based delivery

The county breakdown in Table 2 provides a guide to where potential contributions to Favourable Conservation Status of Little Tern could be prioritised across counties in

England over the course of this 25-year strategy. Potential contributions are indicative, based on the best available population data (historic and most recent counts), knowledge (on past and current management, current pressures and issues) and expert judgement of future prospects.

Numbers of breeding pairs have historically fluctuated across the breeding range, increasing at some locations while decreasing to zero at others. The range in historical breeding numbers, combined with information on potential habitat availability, gives an impression of what might be achievable in the future.

The strongest contributions to FCS can potentially be made Cumbria, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, Norfolk, Northumberland, and Sussex. There is a particularly high potential for habitat restoration and creation in counties such as Essex and Kent (i.e., the Thames and Essex estuaries), which historically held much larger populations than currently. Norfolk is the county with the largest population in England and has the potential to grow further with improved protection of existing colonies and creation of new safe nesting areas. There is potential for smaller population increases in various counties currently harbouring small populations, including Cheshire, Dorset, Durham, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire.

Table 2. County-specific historic and current Little Tern population data, and indications of where contributions to Favourable Conservation Status could be made. Data are numbers of breeding pairs. Potential contributions to FCS are indicative, based on expert judgement and current data.

County	**Historic population[1]**	**Current population - Seabird count 2018[2]**	**Current population - 2021-2022 newsletters[3]**	**Potential 25-yr contribution to FCS**	**Commentary of priority actions**
Cumbria	60-105	60	59 (2022)	110 (+50)	Various actions at different colonies, including improved protection of beach colonies e.g., Foulney,South Walney and the establishment of a larger area of safe nesting habitat at Hodbarrow lagoon.
Cleveland (Durham)		10	49 (2022)	60 (+40)	Better protection of beach nesting birds through planning mitigation projects
Dorset	30-120	37	43-49 (2022)	52 (+15)	Small increases at the only colony, Chesil.
Essex	163-370	41	23 (2022)	149 (+108)	High potential for habitat creation from beneficial use projects in Essex estuaries and Thames, and through large multipurpose coastal habitat creation schemes e.g., Wallasea. This is the county with greatest potential for

					habitat creation to benefit populations, though terns may take some time to increase and repopulate these sites. Also, improved protection of beach nesting birds including those on small islands through planning mitigation funding. Reaching the target assumes colonisation of recently created habitat at Wallasea, the creation of at least one more large scale managed realignment project with habitat for a significant little tern colony, and a pipeline of beneficial use opportunities providing opportunities within the Essex Estuaries.
Hampshire	82-245	66	17 (2022)	106 (+40)	Significant potential through new habitat creation schemes around Solent and Langstone Harbour – particularly through beneficial use projects and managed realignments. Improved protection of beach nesting birds funded through planning mitigation projects – extending current Bird Aware Solent service to the breeding season.
Kent	38-135	6	9 (2022)	46 (+40)	As in Essex, high potential for habitat creation through beneficial use and large multipurpose coastal habitat schemes. Also, improved protection of beach nesting birds including those on small islands through planning mitigation funding. This a priority for The Thames, Medway and Swale and also Dungeness/Rye Bay
Lincolnshire	46-156	22	17 (2022)	52 (+30)	New habitat creation opportunities through compensatory habitat delivery, and managed realignments. Improved protection of beach nesting birds through planning mitigation.
Norfolk	416-600	552	641 (2022)	692 (+140)	The county with most of Englands little terns and the largest England colonies. Must a priority for conservation and recovery. Increased and more secure funding of protection at current colonies e.g., Winterton, Blakeney, Scolt, Holme and Holkham should increase productivity at these

					key colonies which can fuel wider population increase . also need to create a new safe nesting site for little terns Better protection/management of Scrobie Sands if it continues to provide nesting opportunities above highest tides.
Northumberland	20-71	90	75 (2022)	140 (+50)	Improved funding and management of beach nesting colonies through Space for Shorebirds, the Northumberland County Council Coastal Mitigation Service, funded by house builder and tourism developer contributions through the planning system.
Suffolk	80-378	55	12 (2022)	115 (+60)	Better protection of beach nesting bird colonies in North Suffolk: Kessingland and satellite sites. Habitat creation at various coastal sites to create new and improved breeding opportunities. restoration at Orfordness.
E & W Sussex	12-132	32	40 (2022)	82 (+50)	Habitat enhancement at Pagham/Medmerry and Rye Harbour/Rye Bay. New beach bird protection at Pagham Harbour (already set up) and establish similar system for Rye Bay.
Yorkshire	4-68	33	39 (2022)	73 (+40)	New habitat creation opportunities through compensatory habitat delivery and managed realignments.
TOTAL	**1247-2087**	**1004**	**1034**	**1582 (+585)**	

[1] From Sharrock, 1976, Gibbons, Reid, & Chapman, 1993, Brown & Grice, 2005, Balmer, et al., 2013; [2] Add Seabird Count ref; [3] Add ref for counts from steering group newsletter

4.3 Role of protected sites

This breakdown by protected sites provides a guide to where potential contributions to Favourable Conservation Status of Little Tern could be prioritised across Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in England. Potential contributions are indicative.

Table 3. Estimated current and potential proportion of Little Tern population inside and outside Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Data are numbers of breeding pairs.

	Historic population -Seabird Count 2000[1]	Historic no. sites	Current population - Seabird Count 2018[2]	Current population- 2021-2022 newsletters[3]	Current no. sites	SACO population target[4]	Potential 25-yr contribution to FCS
Inside SPAs			*Absolute* (*Proportional* %)			**1511**	*Absolute* (*Proportional* %) total
Alde-Ore Estuary	88	2	0		0	48	20
Benacre to Easton Bavents	8	2	55		2	39	60
Blackwater Estuary	97	4	6		3	5	50
Chesil Beach and The Fleet	81	1	37		1	54	52
Chichester and Langstone Harbours	87	1	57		1	109	100
Colne Estuary	20	1	1		1	40	40
Dungeness to Pett Level	11	2	12		2	35	20
Foulness	3	1	0		0	31	50
Gibraltar Point	32	1	21		1	40	40
Great Yarmouth North Denes	239	2	133		2	277	150
Hamford Water	183	2	34		2	39	50
Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast	59	2	33		2	51	100
Lindisfarne	7	1	50		2	42	70
Medway Estuary and Marshes	14	1	0		1	24	30
Minsmere – Walberswick	19	3	0		3	32	50
Morecambe Bay	26	1	11		1	42	70
North Norfolk Coast	296	5	228		5	400	400
Northumberland Coast	43	1	40		1	40	60
Pagham Harbour	0		20		1	14	30

Solent and Southampton Water	42	3	9		3	49	50
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast	11	2	10		2	40	60
Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay						30	
The Wash						30	
Outside SPAs			*Absolute (Proportional %)*				*Absolute (Proportional %)*

[1] Add Seabird 2000 Count ref [2] Add Seabird 2018 Count ref; [3] Add ref for counts from steering group newsletter; [4] Population targets from Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives

4.4 Links to other strategies or action plans

For Little Tern:

Little Tern Species Recovery Plan (The EU LIFE Little Tern Recovery Project partnership, 2019)
The EU LIFE+ Nature Little Tern Recovery Project should be referred to for detailed advice, based on direct experience, when delivering for this species.
https://littleternproject.org.uk/documents/

For managing coastal processes to help provide and manage habitat suitable for Little Tern:

Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk: The evidence base for working with natural processes to reduce flood risk (EA, 2017).
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-natural-processes-to-reduce-flood-risk
Beach Management manual (EA 2010)

Guide to the management and restoration of coastal vegetated shingle:
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/84013?category=43007

Defra report on managing sand dunes for flood defence:
http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=FJPProjectView&Location=None&ProjectID=9051&FromSearch=Y&FieldOfStudy=12&SearchText=dunes&ShowDocuments=1&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10&FJP=1

Integration of habitats and species based on natural function (with coastal section and case study): http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5891570502467584

5. ACHIEVABILITY OF FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS

5.1 Assessing achievability

Significant progress towards Favourable Conservation Status can be achieved within the next 25 years. The actions required to recover the population are well understood and are likely to be effective if delivered at sufficient scale to influence the England population. However, Little Terns are currently declining, and it may take up to 10 years to halt this decline before population increases again due to the time taken for actions to have impact, particularly for sufficient recruitment of new birds into the breeding population. As such, it may take longer than 25 years to achieve FCS. . FCS is achievable in the long-term but will require more reliable and predictableresourcing, particular for beach-nesting bird protection and wardening.

Little Tern populations are declining and it may take up to 10 years to halt this decline, due to the time taken for sufficient recruitment of new birds into the breeding population. The population is predicted to stabilise if annual breeding success can be increased to 0.70 fledged chicks/breeding pair (JNCC 2016), which is considered achievable only with increased levels of resources for protection and targeted habitat management and creation. Wilson et al. (2020) used a simple population model to show that even if the elevated breeding success levels achieved by the EU LIFE+ funded Little Tern Recovery Project (2014 – 2019) were maintained, the projected population decline between 2020–2050 would only be slowed by 30%, so more needs to be done to achieve population stabilisation. Adequate resourcing of site protection/wardening schemes is essential to protect current colonies and boost productivity. In addition, it is necessary to create new safe nesting sites to replace those being lost or degraded through sea level rise, coastal erosion, habitat change, and incompatible levels of disturbance.

Despite the need for a long-term focus, it will be possible to make significant steps towards FCS over the next 25 years due to the coordinated approach and volunteer effort established during the LIFE project and the resulting formation of the British Isles Little Tern Steering Group. This project provided increased resources between 2014-19 across the most important UK Little Tern SPAs to provide an enhanced warden scheme, predator management, habitat management and enhancement in existing colonies, and creation/restoration of habitat to support new colonies. Previously, actions had generally focused on single colonies with static site-based operations generally working in isolation from each other. The enhanced warden scheme under the project facilitated a move to partnership operations with several organisations working together across sites, sharing experience and resources. Overall, an estimated additional 1,785 chicks fledged due to the LIFE+ Little Tern Recovery Project, with a significant increase in productivity in smaller colonies.

Those that survive their first few years are expected to recruit back into the UK and Irish population, benefitting from the legacy of protection, habitat restoration and creation measures established as part of the project.

The Little Tern work is now evolving into a wider beach-nesting bird programme also including ringed plover and oystercatcher. Funding is being sought from NE to support this programme. Additional funding supports the programme coordination but also provides funding to the most important sites ensuring that they are all fully equipped and able to follow best practice methods. Volunteers play an increasingly important role but employed seasonal officers are essential at all sites. A lack of regular and reliable funding for site protection/wardening remains a major barriers to achieving FCS for Little Terns.

Currently, habitat restoration and creation are often delivered opportunistically through mechanisms such as planning mitigation funding and managed realignments,. There are likely to be new delivery opportunities in the future resulting from new UK environmental legislation, such as Biodiversity Net Gain to offset habitat loss from coastal developments and Environmental Land Management schemes, which may potentially be able support the development of predator proof fencing and new shingle islands. Delivering and maintaining FCS for Little Terns will require sustainable mechanisms that can provide long-term protection of colonies and restoration of naturally functioning breeding habitat. Achieving FCS for Little Tern requires the restoration . of dynamic coastal ecosystems to create a larger area of sustainable breeding habitat. This will be a long-term process; whilst this work is ongoing, intensive ongoing management will be required to slow population declines

5.2 External factors

Please refer to Natural England and RSPB's Climate Change Adaptation Manual for information on the predicted impacts of climate change on the species and potential adaptation options. If this information is not available for the species, Natural England climate change specialists can be approached to write an assessment for this strategy. Where appropriate, maps of potential climate change impacts or sensitivity should be included or referenced to.

Natural England and RSPB's Climate Change Adaptation Manual classes the climate change sensitivity of Little Tern as high. See the specific pages of the Manual for further details.

Little Terns nest in areas of sand and shingle close to the shoreline and are therefore vulnerable to dynamic coastal change and coastal squeeze. Consequently, they are being affected by climate change impacts such as sea level rise and increased summer storminess leading to more frequent inundation of nest sites. Any loss of habitat which leads to higher concentration on existing sites is likely to exacerbate existing pressures from predation and disturbance.

Climate change may create opportunities for populations to increase in more northerly areas, although this is dependent on the availability of suitable sand and shingle habitat and food sources. However, it is not clear that their northern range of this species is limited by climate, as there are large areas of apparently suitable habitat within their current range that is not used, likely due to other factors such as disturbance, and they already breed as far north as Orkney.

Climate envelope modelling suggests that Britain's climate will become more suitable for a range of southerly distributed seabirds, including the Little Tern, but this assumes no climate-induced effects on prey species such as sand eels. Although climate change could mean Little Terns may become more abundant in the north of their range, food availability could limit any potential expansion. Little Terns could be affected by the impact of rising sea temperatures on populations of sand eels and clupeid fish. Unlike other tern species, they habitually feed very close to their nesting sites during chick rearing. The ability to mitigate this is likely to be limited to creating and restoring sites where prey availability is sustained.

Future prospects for populations in England may be impacted by 'short stopping' of birds on migration, especially resulting from responses to climate change.

5.3 Objectives

5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Ongoing monitoring following the LIFE project will measure productivity at the most important sites until 2023, with reporting expected 2025.

Plans are to continue population and productivity monitoring at the Little Tern LIFE project sites for 5 years after the conclusion of the LIFE project, which would give 10 years of data and hopefully enough time for signs of a positive effect of these measures. The 10th year will be 2023. This would be analysed during 2024 and reported during 2025. It is also planned to review data from the colour ringing project at this time. From 2025 we would be able to reassess the targets in the action plan and in the FCS document.

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Descriptions of Tasks and / or Products	Cost per product / or Cost per Hour / Day (i.e. rate)	No of products / Hours / Days	Total Cost per Task
Redacted under FOIA Section 43 Commercial Information			
Total Overall Cost			£9,954.00

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Descriptions of Tasks and / or Products	Cost per product / or Cost per Hour / Day (i.e.	No of products / Hours / Days	Total Cost per Task
Redacted under FOIA Section 43 Commercial Information			
Total Overall Cost			£7,299.60

Please note that VAT will be applied to the above cost at 20%.

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Table 1: Commercial Response (to be completed by Supplier)

Descriptions of Tasks and / or Products	Cost per product / or Cost per Hour / Day (i.e. rate)	No of products / Hours / Days	Total Cost per Task
Redacted under FOIA Section 43 Commercial Information			

Descriptions of Tasks and / or Products	Cost per product / or Cost per Hour / Day (i.e. rate)	No of products / Hours / Days	Total Cost per Task
Redacted under FOIA Section 43 Commercial Information			
Total Overall Cost			£8,152.80