

# **WEST SOMERSET LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**



**May 2008**

## Action plan name

West Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan

## Background

For each LBAP there are a number of actions that are cross cutting between all of the SAPs and HAPs and relate to the day-to-day functions of the West Somerset District Council, particularly in relation to development planning and policy.

The following actions are taken from the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy and detail how planning authorities should safeguard and seek to enhance biodiversity in their work. Many of these actions are simply what is necessary to comply with the law or guidelines, eg

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)
- EU Habitats Directive
- Planning Policy Statement 9

## Plan species and habitats

<b>District</b>	<b>LSP Date</b>	<b>HAPs &amp; SAPs</b>
County-wide	14 March	Ditches & Ponds (focusing on rare plants and invertebrates) Gardens & Urban Greenspace Hedgerows & Hedgerow Trees Roadside Verges & Green Lanes Traditional Orchards Water & Wetlands Wood Pasture, Parkland & Veteran Trees Bats Lapwing Otter
West Somerset District Council (WSDC)	14 March	Coastal & Marine Long-eared Owl Native Wildflowers of Arable Land Waxcaps Woodland

## **Proposed partners**

- The Local Authority – West Somerset District Council (WSDC)
- Somerset County Council (SCC)
- Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)
- Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC)
- Natural England (NE)
- The Environment Agency (EA)

## **Target description and target goals**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Target goal</b>
To fully comply with Planning Policy Statement 9 and its accompanying circular	Reduction in biodiversity loss from development and an increase in the number of significant developments where biodiversity is enhanced
Greater recognition of biodiversity and BAP criteria in the planning process	Fewer developments affecting Local Wildlife Sites and BAP priority habitats
Ensure that the achievement of the BAP is an aim in the Community Strategy	1 relevant aim in the Community Strategy
Greater recognition of Strategic Natures Areas (SNAs) and Nature Map	Incorporate SNAs and NatureMap as an integral component into the Local Development Framework (LDF) for consideration in planning proposals
More detailed survey information on the extent and quality of habitats within the county	Survey the extent and condition of priority habitats within SNAs, ensuring all areas close to towns are fully monitored

## **Key factors**

- Transfer of information (landowner details for SERC use, management plans etc).
- Training for staff involved in processing planning applications. Must understand the range of legislation and agreements that discourage or disallow development on certain habitats. In house Ecologists make this much easier.

<b>Action text</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Action start and end dates</b>	<b>Action goals</b>	<b>Key partners</b>
Support the work of the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership and the Biodiversity Coordinator	SCC	Ongoing	All partners regularly attend well facilitated meetings and along with other key stakeholders contribute to achieving targets within the Strategy and LBAPs	All Partners
Contribute to the production of Biodiversity Action Plans when they need to be reviewed	SERC	2011	LBAPs are reviewed and completed in consultation with all interested parties promptly	NE SWT SCC
Enter the output from LBAP actions to the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)	SERC	2008 and ongoing	Progress on all actions within the LBAP are entered into BARS	All partners
Retain or acquire in-house ecological expertise as a matter of priority in order to most effectively meet statutory obligations and imbed biodiversity across the whole authority	WSDC	By end of 2009	All local authorities to have in-house ecological expertise in place	SCC
Put in place measures necessary to adopt BioPlan, a tool that automatically searches all planning applications against biodiversity data	WSDC	By end of 2009	All local authorities have BioPlan operational	SERC SCC
Support the use of 1APP to search all planning applications in relation to Somerset LBAP species, and ensure that local customization takes all Somerset LBAP priority species into account	WSDC	2009	The 1 app system is in place and fully takes into account Somerset LBAP and priority species	SCC SWT SERC NE
Ensure that species protection legislation is effectively enforced	NE	By end of 2008	A procedure for passing on information about, and acting upon, wildlife crime is in place and made available to all partners	SWT RSPB SCC WSDC
Develop and support large-scale conservation projects (e.g. Mendip Hills, Blackdowns, Brue Valley) through the provision or funding of conservation work and advice to landowners	SWT	2012	A minimum of five landscape-scale conservation projects, at least one in each district, aimed at delivering BAP targets and helping wildlife to adapt to climate change have been established.	All partners
Develop an agreed vision for the wetlands of Somerset	EA	2010	1 Report on the agreed vision for Somerset's wetlands is completed	All partners
Develop a robust monitoring framework	WSDC	In place by end	WSDC can demonstrate their good	SERC

that will enable reporting on the LDF Annual Monitoring Report indicator on Biodiversity and the Local Performance Indicator on Biodiversity (NI197)		of 2008	performance with biodiversity indicators	SCC
Include Local Biodiversity Action Plans within Sustainable Community Strategies	WSDC	By 2009	LBAPs included within Sustainable Community Strategies of WSDC	SWT SERC NE SCC
Prevent development that has an avoidable adverse impact on protected or priority species.	WSDC	2008	All planning decisions comply with the principles of PPS9 and the NERC Act	SCC NE SWT
Seek to secure compensatory measures for biodiversity loss in exceptional cases where biodiversity loss cannot be avoided.	WSDC	2008	All planning decisions comply with the principles of PPS9 and the NERC Act	SCC NE SWT EA
Promote habitat enhancement opportunities within development	WSDC	2010	Increase in number of substantive new developments that make a positive contribution to biodiversity	SCC SWT NE
Support the work of the Somerset Environmental Records Centre in identifying sites that fit the criteria for LWS	WSDC	Commencing 2008 and then ongoing	A comprehensive survey to identify all LWS is developed by SERC	NE SCC SWT SERC EA
Support the work of the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership in securing funding for the management of existing LWS	SWT	By 2018	95% of sites in positive	WSDC SCC NE
Give LWS and BAP-priority habitats protection within adopted proposals maps	WSDC	2008	All LWS and BAP Priority Habitats identified within proposals maps	SERC NE SCC SWT
Ensure that planning decisions do not compromise the biodiversity value of LWS and BAP-priority habitats	WSDC	Ongoing	Decrease in number of Local Sites damaged as a result of planning decisions	NE, SWT SERC
Declare suitable sites as Local Nature Reserves, and create management plans that focus on improving the biodiversity value of the site, wildlife interpretation and accessibility for all	SCC	2012	Statutory LNRs at a minimum of one hectare per thousand population	WSDC SERC
Ensure that funding the Local Area Agreement is adequately directed	SCC	2008	At least one biodiversity improvement target included in the forthcoming LAA	WSDC NE

towards biodiversity and that the links between other sectors are emphasised				SWT
Continue to support the Somerset Landscape Scheme Grant fund and help to ensure that it delivers benefits for wildlife	SCC	2010	Increase in area of priority habitat under agreement or under construction through Somerset Landscape Scheme	WSDC
Ensure that biodiversity news and events are given sufficient coverage within the local print, television and radio media and that messages are targeted at appropriate sections of the community	WSDC	Ongoing	The work of the partnership and/or biodiversity news is included within at least 1 article per month of the local newspaper, or a radio or television appearance	SERC NE SWT EA
Explore the opportunity to improve interpretation resources at sites attracting large numbers of visitors, or at those sites identified through survey, which represent key wildlife locations	WSDC	2008	10% Increase in number of wildlife sites with interpretation resources or events programmes	SCC NE SWT
Develop ideas about how best to promote and publicise the LBAPs and the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy	SCC	2008	1 marketing strategy is created to promote the newly revised LBAPs and The Biodiversity Strategy	SWT WSDC
Promote an annual "Somerset Wildlife Day" with associated media coverage	SWT	2010	One annual "Somerset Wildlife Day" takes place, and at least one takes place in each district	All partners
Support appropriate bids from environmental education centres and outreach programmes	SCC	2012	Where required, support is given to all appropriate bids from environmental education centres and outreach programmes	All partners
Support a targeted biodiversity-monitoring programme, coordinated through SERC	WSDC	2008	All partners to agree a SLA with SERC to provide a targeted biodiversity monitoring programme	All partners
Support a regular rolling monitoring programme of habitat mapping across Somerset through SERC	SCC	2011	Aerial photograph interpretation habitat mapping framework in place for all SNAs and all urban areas as a basis for all future fieldwork	All partners
Local Authorities to designate management plans for the benefit of biodiversity on all their land, surveying those of high wildlife value	SCC	2011	Management plans favouring wildlife created for all of the local authority land, to include surveys where identified (using existing survey data and aerial photo interpretation)	WSDC SERC

Incorporate Strategic Nature Area's into LDFs in accordance with the recommendations set out in 'South West Nature Map – A Planners Guide'	WSDC	By 2010	The LDF incorporates all Strategic Nature Area's.	NE SWT SCC
Planning authorities to look at habitat connectivity and providing high quality 'green infrastructure' within urban areas within the LDF	WSDC	2010	The LDF must include 1 green infrastructure component.	NE SWT SCC
Develop conservation projects that bring 'added value' to local communities e.g. marketing the link between local food products and an area managed for the benefit of wildlife, or developing traditional industry around woodland projects	SWT	By 2010	A minimum of two landscape-scale projects underway that contain a strong focus on local produce.	RSPB WSDC EA FWAG
Encourage local business to help deliver BAP targets through work on their land and by assisting funding of local biodiversity projects	SCC	By 2009	One marketing model produced to promote business sponsorship of BAP action	All partners
Maximise the linkages between Somerset's top natural attractions and existing local business e.g. local craft shops or pubs and restaurants selling local food	SWT	2010	Strong linkages made between a minimum of two important local wildlife site attractions and surrounding businesses	All partners
Ensure that the links between climate change strategies and biodiversity are created or maintained	SCC	By 2009	All climate change strategies are fully aligned with biodiversity strategies and wherever possible include action on wildlife adaptation	WSDC
Work with the Tourist Board and others to raise the profile of our major natural attractions	SCC	2010	One Somerset Green Tourism guide, focussed on visiting wildlife sites, produced and publicised	SWT RSPB WSDC