

Bracknell Forest Council Biodiversity Action Plan

2018-2023



Contents

Foreword	4
Background	6
Plan Aim	7
Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2023	8
Legislation and Policy	9
Local, National and International sites of significance	9
Local Partnership for Biodiversity Action	11
BAP Habitats	12
General Themes	14
Objectives for General Themes	15
Grassland Habitat Action Plan	18
Objectives for Grassland Themes	20
Woodland Habitat Action Plan	22
Objectives for Woodland Themes	24
Wetland Habitat Action Plan	26
Objectives for Wetland Themes	28
Heathland Habitat Action Plan	30
Objectives for Heathland Themes	32
Farmland Habitat Action Plan	34
Objectives for Farmland Themes	36
Urban Habitat Action Plan	40
Objectives for Urban Themes	40
References	42
Appendices	44
A1 Key to Abbreviations	44
A2 Bracknell Forest Borough Information	45
A3 Designations Map	47
A4 TVERC Habitat Mapping Update	48
A5 Species Selection	49
A6 Relevant Legislation, Policies and Plans	51

Foreword

The woodlands, parks, countryside and open spaces help make Bracknell Forest a place where families and individuals want to live and is something Bracknell Forest Council is committed to protecting and enhancing.

Bracknell Forest Council was the first local authority in Berkshire to publish a Local Biodiversity Action Plan demonstrating the commitment of both the Council and local people to lead nature conservation in the borough. We've achieved a great deal but there is much more to do. By building on partnerships within the community, we will ensure that our environment is cleaner, greener and biodiverse.

The variety of plants and animals around us make up the biodiversity of our borough.

This collection of species and habitats underpin the benefits that we gain from the natural environment such as clean air, flood control and food production. Contact with nature supports our physical and mental well-being and living in a place with such a wealth of wildlife is something we know residents of Bracknell Forest really value.

Whilst we face challenging times, this makes it all the more important that biodiversity is safeguarded. Therefore, the new plan for 2018 to 2023 marks our continuing commitment to biodiversity now. We want our residents to continue to enjoy the wonderful natural environment that Bracknell Forest offers. Our plan allows them to continue to do so but with the necessary protection in place to ensure our unique habitat is maintained and made more sustainable for the benefit of future generations.



Cllr Iain McCracken
*Executive Member for Leisure,
Corporate Services and Public
Protection*

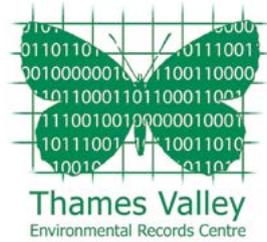
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain McCracken'.



Vincent Paliczka
*Director of Environment,
Culture and Communities*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Paliczka'.

This Biodiversity Action Plan involves the following organisations;



Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire



Bracknell Town Council



Binfield Badger Group



BRACKNELL FOREST
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Crowthorne Village
Action Group



Warfield Parish
Council



Binfield Parish
Council



Background

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) emerged as a consequence of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as part of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

In 1994, the government published the first UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP), last updated in 2007, which provided plans for conservation of UK's biological resources. To meet these targets, a network of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) at a county level was published.

In 2012 the UK BAP was replaced by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', as a result of new country-level and international requirements. Nevertheless, the lists of priority habitats and species still remain as an important reference source and have been subsequently used for the NERC Act 2006 priority lists.

Berkshire Local Nature Partnership Strategic Plan

The Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (formerly Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum) published a Strategic Plan in 2014. The partnership works within 29 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) that were identified as the focus areas in the county to direct conservation action as part of a landscape scale approach. The BOAs include approximately 85% of Berkshire's BAP Priority Habitats and represent the areas in which habitat creation and restoration will have the most positive impact.

In addition to the Berkshire Strategic Plan, action plans have also been created at many different levels and for specific organisations or subjects. Information is exchanged in both directions as targets are fed down for action to Bracknell Forest and achievements are fed up to the Berkshire level in reporting which guides future targets.

Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan

In April 1997, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, in partnership with Parish and Town Councils and local organisations, launched its first local Biodiversity Action Plan. Bracknell Forest was the first local authority in Berkshire to publish a Local BAP demonstrating the commitment of the council and local people to lead nature conservation in the borough. The BAP has changed over time to a more habitat-focused plan with BAP species acting as flagships to focus interest.

Plan Aim - to conserve and enhance biodiversity within Bracknell Forest Borough

Plan Objectives

This aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Targeted Monitoring – of priority species and habitats.
- Proactive Policies – to ensure important sites are protected and get the best result for biodiversity in the planning process.
- Positive Management – to maintain, restore and create key habitats for wildlife.
- Effective Communication – between partners, landowners and the public to raise awareness, influence actions, encourage partnerships and inform decisions.

Monitoring

Assessing the achievement of the targets set in the plan requires the gathering of detailed information with the help of all partners in the biodiversity action plan. In order to ensure that progress with the plan is achieved and can be reported all the targets use “SMART” criteria:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

The partner organisations and the nature partnership will produce a mid-term review to assess the progress of action towards the targets. The nature partnership will also aim to update progress at each of the six-monthly meetings. In the last half of the plan, a conference will be held to bring partners together and exchange information about action in the borough.

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) plays a key role in collating biological records across the three counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The centre provides data on species and habitats through a service level agreement with Bracknell Forest Council. In addition, TVERC also undertake surveys of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites (LGS) which is then assessed by an independent selection panel to review the designation of sites.

Delivery Plan

A detailed plan will be produced in the first year of the BAP to provide options for implementing each of the targets and to estimate the cost of achieving them in order that funding can be obtained.

Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2023

This plan builds on the approach of the last BAP 2012-2017 in response to changing priorities on a UK and Berkshire scale. In order to respond to these changes the plan is habitat focused with fewer BAP species to support the landscape scale approach. Full details of the species selection process can be found in Appendix A5.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is divided into 6 habitats and a general themes section. Naturally there is overlap between habitat types but where possible reference is made to the UK BAP habitat definitions to distinguish them.

Consultation

This plan has been adopted by Bracknell Forest Council following consultation with partner organisations, the Bracknell Nature Partnership and the public in order to reflect the views of the community. The results of this consultation are available online at <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wildlife/biodiversity-action-plan>.

The role of the BAP in Sustainable Development

With the adoption of the new Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP), housing provision will be made for at least an additional 12,060 homes in Bracknell Forest Borough for the period 2016/17 to 2033/34 (Policy LP2 – Provision of housing). The Borough does contain a number of physical and environmental constraints which influence the location of development; these include areas liable to flood, The Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) - these areas have special protection under European law - and the Metropolitan Green Belt (which covers approximately 35% of the Borough). Therefore, the plan heavily relies on greenfield land in order to help meet growth needs.

BFLP vision considers that valued countryside will be protected, and where development does happen it will be well designed and bring with it accessible high-quality open space. It considers that development in the Borough should achieve no net loss and wherever possible a net gain of biodiversity (Policy LP36 – Biodiversity). The BAP 2018-2023 will contribute to the BFLP in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the Borough in the following areas:

1. Addressing the impacts of the new developments at the landscape level. We will do this by assessing the habitat connectivity in Bracknell Forest Borough, and will help to better inform development decisions.
2. Developing a system for biodiversity accounting to achieve net gain in planning applications. As consequence of the possible inclusion of biodiversity net gain in the National Planning Policy Framework (Appendix A6), and the principles of natural capital and ecosystem services being adopted by the UK Government (and central to Defra's new 25-year environment plan (Appendix A6), efforts are underway to incorporate these ideas into the planning and development process in Bracknell Forest Council.
3. Adopting a green infrastructure strategy for Bracknell Forest Borough. This supports and complements the BFLP, which includes policies regarding green infrastructure and biodiversity (Policy LP38 - Green Infrastructure and Policy LP36 – Biodiversity).
4. To develop and secure biodiversity enhancement projects to be secured through s106 planning obligations from appropriate development.

Legislation and Policy

In this section, key legislation and policy relevant to the plan is referenced, more detailed information is available in the Appendix A6.

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, all Local Authorities have a statutory duty to conserve biodiversity. This plan fulfils part of the duty by setting out action for biodiversity in many areas of the council's work.

At a National level there have been many publications from central government which reflect a changing approach to biodiversity. The most relevant of these is

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services published in August 2011 which sets broad priorities for the conservation of biodiversity. The Bracknell Forest BAP aims to contribute towards this wider strategy by reporting to higher levels via the Berkshire Local Partnership Strategic Plan.

Links with other strategies

This plan aims to achieve objectives of the following council plans:

- Bracknell Forest Council Plan 2015-2019
- Bracknell Forest Council Plan 2019-2034 (once approved)
- Climate Change Action Plan (2016)
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012)
- Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2017-2027
- Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002)
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) (2008)
- Site Allocations Supplementary Planning Document (2013)
- Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2015)
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2018)

The plans and objectives of partner organisations have also been incorporated into this plan where available. A list of relevant policies at national and local levels is provided on Appendix A6.

Local, National and International sites of significance

A number of nature conservation designations exist in the UK, some of which are repeatedly mentioned throughout the BAP. Designated sites are areas of special importance for nature conservation due to their scarcity or their ecological significance and are protected to some degree by different statutory authorities. This table provides a summary of the significance of these sites to be used as reference to better understand this document; for more information see Appendix 2.

Designation	Significance	Designated by
Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	Areas which include important and rare habitats and species, protected from harmful development through the planning system	Local government authorities
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	This designation provides statutory protection for the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features	Statutory country nature conservation agencies (for England, Natural England)
Special Protection Area (SPA)	SPAs are areas of the most important habitat for rare (listed on Annex I to the European Commission Birds Directive) and migratory birds within the European Union	UK Government
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety within the European Union of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the European Commission Habitats Directive	UK Government

Source JNCC (2018.a)

Local Partnership for Biodiversity Action

Local people working together to achieve the goals of nature conservation in the borough are vital for the success of the Biodiversity Action Plan as we know from previous work. A full list of organisations involved in this plan is provided in Key to Abbreviations Appendix A1.

Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership

The implementation of the plan is overseen by the partnership, a group of local individuals and organisations with an interest in nature conservation. The review of old targets and creation of new targets within the new plan have been carried out with involvement from the members of the partnership.

Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (BLNP)

This is the nature partnership at a county level, with a common interest in the conservation and enjoyment of the natural environment of Berkshire. Members include government bodies, wildlife charities, local and national authorities and businesses. Further information about the BLNP is available on their website <http://berkshirelnp.org/>.

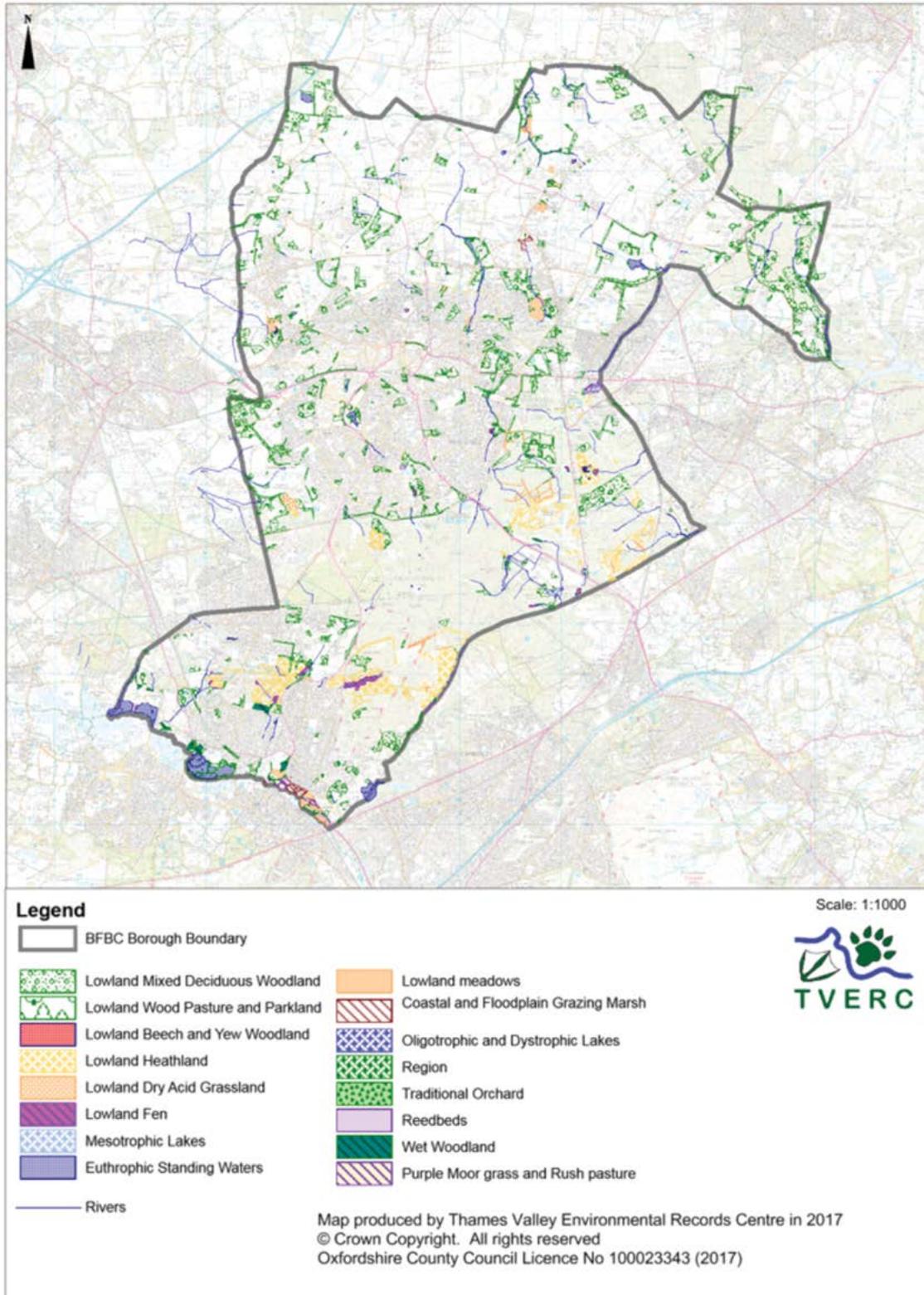
Bracknell Forest Council's role

The intention of the BAP is to focus action from the local partnership for its delivery. The council acts as a coordinator for the biodiversity action plan by hosting and chairing the Nature Partnership and reports on its progress. The BAP implements part of the statutory NERC duty that all local and public authorities have to conserve biodiversity and this includes other members of the nature partnership. The council also plays a central role in the local community through education, public open space, highways, social care and many other roles that provide opportunities for biodiversity. As a Unitary Authority, Bracknell Forest Council also has responsibility for the local planning process which plays a key role in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in planning policy (for a list of relevant planning policy see Appendix A6).

The Council will also develop biodiversity enhancement projects to increase the biodiversity capacity/gain throughout the Borough to be secured through s106 planning obligations (legal agreements between Local Authorities and developers) and other funding where appropriate.

BAP Habitats

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre was commissioned to update the habitat mapping information to provide a baseline for future conservation action. This is based on a range of information sources available (see Appendix A4) and shows the distribution of habitats of principal importance (BAP habitats) within the borough.





Forest Deer The Look Out, photo by Peter Edwards

General Themes

These are factors that influence the nature conservation of all species and habitats. By looking at the range of needs for people, the environment and biodiversity it's possible to achieve progress by combining these in a multi-functional approach to nature conservation.

General themes particularly relevant to Bracknell Forest are:

Information

The provision of up-to-date information is vital to enable the correct decisions and action to be taken. The collection of this information can involve many different people such as volunteer recorders, consultant ecologists, organisations, developers, landowners and the general public. This theme is covered by objective A, D, and G.

Strategic action

At a local level, the BAP benefits from targets and principles from other council strategies to deliver strategic biodiversity actions: the 'Play, Open Space and Sports study (POSS)', which recommended standards for Local Access to Nature, and the 'Plus One Principle', that ensures that the quality of existing recreational facilities and open space is progressively improved from its current assessed quality rating into the next quality category (for example from a 'Moderate' rating to 'Good'). In turn, the BAP helps meeting the Local Access to Nature POSS target through securing biodiversity enhancement projects throughout the borough through s106 planning obligation from development in line with the Development Plan. It also contributes to the 'Plus One Principle' by protecting, enhancing and delivering biodiversity features in open spaces.

At the landscape level, the achievements that conserve biodiversity at a local level also contribute towards efforts at a Berkshire level and in turn forms part of the UK advancement of nature conservation. Linking this plan with targets at a higher level will ensure that actions made in the borough are of most benefit to biodiversity by working across boundaries as part of the bigger picture. This theme is covered by objective B, C and F.



Multi-functional benefits and climate change

Ecosystem resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond to a disturbance by resisting damage and recovering quickly. Both biodiversity and habitat fragmentation are two characteristics of the ecosystems that affect their resilience. *Biodiversity* forms the basis of ecosystems and green spaces, providing a wide range of ecosystem services¹ on which all people depend for physical and mental well-being. Accumulating evidence on the benefits of biodiversity on public health has led to recognition of its value for the community. Habitat fragmentation makes habitats more vulnerable to winds, fires, drought or local extinction of wildlife.

Therefore, working on habitat connectivity and biodiversity conservation is essential to deliver multi-functional benefits and facing climate change. This theme is covered by objectives A, B, C, D, E and F.

Community

Local people play a key part in the achievements of the biodiversity action plan through practical volunteering, surveys and raising awareness. Within the community, local businesses, charities and landowners have different opportunities to conserve biodiversity. This theme is covered by objective D and F.

Objectives for General Themes

- (A) Survey designated sites² to monitor condition
- (B) Explore habitat connectivity through ecological networks of corridors
- (C) Contribute towards Berkshire biodiversity goals and work across administrative boundaries
- (D) Support surveying biodiversity to maintain up-to-date information
- (E) Integrate biodiversity within the planning process to achieve a net gain
- (F) Build on links between biodiversity, health, ecosystem services and climate change
- (G) Build awareness and engage the community in conserving biodiversity
- (H) Develop a system for reporting contributions towards BAP targets and show progress

¹Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food, water, timber, and fibre; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling (Assessment, M.E., 2005)

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Every LWS ² to be surveyed once every 10 years	2023	TVERC
A	ii) Develop a method to monitor surveying status, rate and total numbers of LWS ²	2019	BFC, TVERC
A	iii) 75% of LWS ² in positive management	2023	BFC, TVERC
B	i) Produce a detailed green corridor map for Bracknell Forest Borough	2019	BFC, TVERC
C	i) Achieve the Biodiversity Opportunity Area targets within Bracknell Forest	2021	BLNP, BBOWT, NE, BFC
C	ii) Where possible source seeds and plants locally or within England	Every year	WEG, BFC, Town & Parish Councils, Flora Locale, ELCG, WVTG, BFVTG, BHA, BFNHS
D	i) Engage the community to survey biodiversity and promote recording	Every year	BFC, TVERC, WEG, CE, DIO, ELCG, BFNHS
D	ii) Involve educational institutions in the monitoring of biodiversity as part of their students programs	Every year	BFC, TVERC
D	iii) Make biodiversity information accessible to the public, emphasizing the importance of the BAP habitats	2018	BFC, TVERC
E	i) Adopt a green infrastructure strategy for Bracknell Forest borough	2022	BFC, TVERC, NE
E	ii) Develop a system for biodiversity accounting to achieve net gain in planning applications	2019	TVERC, BFC, BLNP, NE
F	i) Address the deficit in the provision of 20ha of public accessible greenspace within 2km of residences, listed in Bracknell Green Infrastructure Review 2017	2020	BFC, TVERC
G	i) Hold at least 30 wildlife events within the borough each year	Every year	BFC, BBOWT, WEG, CE, DIO, ELCG, WIA
G	ii) Host at least 8000 volunteer hours of habitat management works each year	Every year	BFC, BBOWT, WEG, CE, BCV, HAWC, WMCV, WIA, BFNHS

G	iii) Promote a different habitat theme each year, to raise awareness and drive action for its conservation	Every year	BFNP, BFNHS, BBOWT, WEG, CE, BCV, HAWC, WMCV
H	i) Develop an online system for reporting contributions towards BAP targets	2018	BFC
H	ii) Create an online platform to show ongoing progress on BAP targets	2018	BFC

² LWS: Local Wildlife Site; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest (page 4 for more information on designated sites)



Wildflowers at Peacock Meadows

Grassland Habitat Action Plan

Associated Biodiversity Action Plan Species

These species have been identified to represent the habitat and will be used to promote and be included in projects to maintain, enhance and increase the grassland resource in the borough.



Bumblebees (*Bombus spp.*)

Status - Nine bumblebee species have been recorded within 10km radius around Bracknell, one of them (*Bombus subterraneus*) is a UK BAP species (NBN Atlas, 2018). Although many wild and food plants rely on bumblebee pollination, 24% of European bumblebee species are in decline, mainly due to agricultural intensification that leads to habitat loss and increased pesticide use (IUCN, 2014).

Habitat requirements - diversity of wildflower species for nectar and pollen and suitable nest sites e.g. mammal burrows, hedgerow base or grass tussocks.



Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*)

Status – Widely distributed across the UK but localised within the borough and reliant on protected sites.

Habitat requirements – damp grassland managed by cutting or grazing to prevent more vigorous plants from becoming dominant.



Devil's Bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*)

Status – This species has suffered declines in the UK reflecting the losses of grassland but is still widespread. Mainly found in the south of the borough in acid grassland.

Habitat requirements – grasslands with poor acidic soils often where grazing keeps grasses in check.

UKBAP (Priority) habitat equivalents:

- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland meadows
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

National Status

It has been estimated that from the 1930s to the 1980s, 97% of species-rich grasslands in England and Wales were lost. The lowland semi-grassland habitats recognised as priority habitats under the UK BAP have 73 BAP priority vertebrate and invertebrate species associated with them.

Berkshire

Berkshire supports an estimated 229ha of lowland meadows and 109 ha of acid grassland (aerial photography, 2003). A survey of the county's neutral grassland in 1995 suggested that around 50% of the resource has been damaged or destroyed since the previous survey in 1984.

Bracknell Forest Borough's Grasslands

Grasslands in the borough generally reflect the underlying geology being neutral and more extensive in the north of the borough where agriculture is more prevalent. In the south of the borough, acid grasslands form mosaics with heathland.

In Bracknell Forest Borough, the total estimated area of grasslands mapped using aerial photography and available datasets (TVERC, 2018) were:

	Area (ha)
Acid grassland semi-improved	147
Acid grassland un-improved	11
Neutral grassland - semi improved	242
Neutral grassland - unimproved	28
Marshy grassland (inc. inundation)	12
Amenity grassland*	351
Improved grassland*	2003

*Those marked with an asterisk would not qualify as BAP habitat. However it provides a useful gauge of their extent in the borough. Most areas would require survey to confirm that they do support habitats within the UK BAP definition.

Threats

Species rich grasslands are sensitive to changes in a number of factors that affect the balance between wildflower and grass species. Grasslands are also particularly vulnerable as changes to their composition are not often obvious or well known. These include:

- Lack of management leading to scrub encroachment and invasion of coarse grasses which outcompete wildflower species
- Overgrazing, particularly by horses resulting in loss of species and trampling
- Conversion to arable fields
- Development resulting in permanent habitat loss
- Agricultural improvement through addition of fertiliser, reseeding or treatment with herbicide which removes wildflower species and replaces with coarse grasses

Opportunities

Enhancement of existing poor grasslands species within public open space and using agri-environmental schemes to secure funds for landowners.

Increasing the species diversity of the extensive horse paddocks in the borough.

Public interest in wildflowers and bees has increased support for grassland restoration in recent years.

Objectives for Grassland Themes

- (A) Understand the distribution and condition of grassland LWS² in the borough
- (B) All grassland SSSIs² and LWS² to be in favourable condition
- (C) Increase the area of grassland meeting LWS² selection criteria or BAP definition
- (D) Encourage better management and good practices of grassland for wildlife
- (E) Increase awareness of importance grassland for biodiversity

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Survey all LWS ² sites within last 10 years including BAP species	2020	BFC, TVERC
B	i) Maintain 95% SSSI ² grassland in favourable and recovering condition with 50% in favourable condition	2023	NE, BFC, BVCP, STC, BBOWT
B	ii) 60% of LWS ² grassland to be in positive management	2023	NE, BBOWT, BFC
C	i) Survey at least 5ha of potential BAP grassland sites to propose as LWS ²	2019	BFC, TVERC, NE
C	ii) Enhance or restore 10ha of grassland including BAP species	2019	BFC, Town & Parish Councils
D	i) Provide management guidance to all identified landowners	Every year	NE, BFC, BFH, Flora Locale, Town & Parish Councils
E	i) Hold a grassland event or publish article at least once a year to raise awareness as part of the 'Year of the grassland'	Every year	BFC, BBOWT, BFNHS

² LWS: Local Wildlife Site; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest (page 4 for more information on designated sites).



Bluebells at West Garden Copse

Woodland Habitat Action Plan

Associated Biodiversity Action Plan Species

These species have been identified to represent the habitat and will be used to promote and be included in projects to maintain, enhance and increase the woodland resource in the borough.



Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Status – UK BAP species, RSPB Amber list for conservation concern due to a decline in numbers over the last 25 years. Known to be present across the borough in low numbers.

Habitat requirements – Nests and feeds within woodland edge, hedges, orchards and gardens. Feeds on seeds, tree buds and berries.



Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*)

Status - a widespread but very localised species. Records in Britain have been steadily increasing but may be due to better identification.

Habitat requirements – Not well known, this species appears to tolerate the neutral and clay soils in the north of the borough and is most often found in ancient woods and hedgerows.



Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

Status – European protected species, UK BAP species previously in decline but increased by 28% since 1998 (BCT, 2016). Found throughout the borough but roosts are rarely identified.

Habitat requirements – dependent on tree cavities for roost sites and foraging over a large area of woodland and open habitats.



Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*)

Status – UK BAP species, historic declines due to loss of woodland but currently stable although nationally scarce (NE, 2016). National and local surveys have confirmed Bracknell Forest is within the UK stronghold.

Habitat requirements – Larvae require rotting dead wood, preferably partially buried and so this species relies on broadleaved woodland.

UKBAP (Priority) Habitat equivalents:

- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Wet woodland
- Wood-pasture and parkland
- Traditional orchards
- Hedgerows

National Status

Following long term declines in previous centuries, the area of woodland in the UK has increased from 1.2 million hectares in 1924 to 2.9 million hectares (13 % of the total land area in the UK) in 2010 (Forestry Commission, 2011). Ancient woodland is currently estimated at 561,774 hectares (Goldberg, Peterken & Kirby, 2011). The 2007 UKBAP review also concluded that trends for all woodland types were increasing.

Woodlands together with hedgerows, orchards and copses provide habitat corridors that connect wildlife across the landscape. Furthermore, the potential of woodlands to soak and store CO₂ is been increasingly recognised to be an important measure for fighting against climate change.

Berkshire

Woodlands represent the greatest area of any priority habitat in Berkshire. They cover 18,000 ha of which 9,160 ha (7% of the county) is priority BAP habitat (BNCF, 2005).

Bracknell Forest Borough's Woodlands

Woodland covers 20% of the area of Bracknell Forest. The most obvious woodland cover of Swinley Forest and Crowthorne Woods is now owned by the Crown Estate. This is predominantly coniferous plantation and falls within the east and south of the borough in Winkfield, Crowthorne and Sandhurst (see Heathland Habitat Action Plan for more information). In Bracknell Forest Borough, the total estimated area of woodland mapped using aerial photography and available datasets (TVERC, 2018) were:

	Area (ha)
Ancient woodland (overlaps with habitats below)	210
Broadleaved woodland and plantation (semi-natural)	839
Parkland and scattered trees	39
Mixed woodland (inc. plantation)*	776
Coniferous plantation*	1388

*Those marked with an asterisk would not qualify as BAP habitat. However, it provides a useful gauge of their extent in the borough. Most areas would require survey to confirm that they do support habitats within the UK BAP definition.

Traditional Orchards

The area of orchard habitat across England and Wales has declined by 90% since the 1950's with the majority of the loss attributed to neglect and development (PTES, 2018).

In Bracknell, up to 70 potential orchards cover an area of 11.56ha. Most of these are very small and are unlikely to have been commercial orchards and need to be verified on the ground. Three community orchards currently exist at Larks Hill, Lily Hill Park and Jealott's Hill Community Garden.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows have been subject to long term loss since World War II and as a result of the Common Agricultural Policy encouraging their removal to improve food production. A survey by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology revealed that between 1984 and 1990 hedgerow

length in England had declined by 23% (Barr and Gillespie, 2000). Today, hedges may support up to 80% of UK woodland birds, 50% of mammals and 30% of butterflies and associated habitats (ditches and banks) provide habitat for reptiles (RSPB, 2018).

It has not been possible to estimate hedgerow extent in Berkshire or Bracknell Forest due to the difficulties in identifying hedgerows from aerial photography. However, it is generally known from previous surveys that the northern parishes where agriculture is prominent hold the main resource for hedgerows.

Veteran Trees

A great deal of ancient trees are found within Windsor Forest, which is recognised as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC²) due to the value of the oak and beech woodland habitat, as they provide habitat for rare species such as the violet click beetle. Veterans have been identified by the Crown Estate within Windsor Forest but interest and recording has taken place across the borough. Over 400 individual trees have been recorded so far by groups based in Crowthorne, Warfield and Winkfield.

Threats

Woodland habitats in the borough are primarily threatened by isolation from other habitats and by proximity to urban development. Other threats include:

- Invasive non-native species e.g. Rhododendron and laurel
- Lack of management
- Degradation of habitat by human activity e.g. dumping, fires, recreation pressure
- Deer browsing
- Inappropriate management e.g. hedge cutting
- Removal of deadwood
- Development particularly for veteran trees and orchards
- Pollution

Opportunities

Woodlands can produce sustainable wood products enabling their management for profit and the Forestry Commission also provide woodland grants to help landowners survey and manage their woods. Acting as umbrella species consequence of their legal protection, the presence of badgers and their setts in some woodland areas have led to their designation as LWS². Interest in growing food has led to the successful establishment of community orchards and this could be expanded. The fortunes of hedgerows have seen a turnaround in recent years with new incentives available to farmers in order to replant boundaries.

Objectives for Woodland Themes

- (A) Understand the distribution and condition of BAP woodland and species
- (B) All woodland SSSIs² and LWS² to be in favourable management
- (C) Increase the area of woodland habitats meeting LWS² selection criteria or BAP definition
- (D) Understand the condition of hedgerows within the borough
- (E) Increase the length and number of hedgerows in the borough
- (F) Encourage appropriate management of hedgerows
- (G) Identify and protect veteran trees outside Windsor Forest

H) Increase deadwood resource for BAP species

I) Confirm and protect traditional orchard sites

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Survey all LWS ² sites within last 10 years including BAP species	2020	BFC, TVERC
A	ii) Undertake a bat survey to identify a different noctule site each year	Every year	BFC, BSBBG, BFNHS, BBOWT, BVCP, WEG
B	i) Maintain 95% of woodland SSSI ² in favourable and recovering condition with 80% in favourable condition	2023	NE, BFC, FC, CE
B	ii) 75% woodland LWS ² in positive management	2023	BFC, FC, NE, BCV
C	i) Increase area of BAP/LWS ² woodland habitats by 5ha	2020	BFC, FC, CE, Town & Parish Councils, JHF
C	ii) Enhance or restore 10ha of woodland habitats including BAP species	2020	HAWCs, BFC, FC, CE, Town & Parish Councils, BFNHS
D	i) Identify the hedgerows in the borough via aerial photography	2020	HAWCs, BFC, TVERC
D	ii) Survey 5km of hedgerow using DEFRA method and add to GIS map	2020	HAWCs, BFC, WEG, BFNHS
E	i) Plant 2km of native hedgerow including BAP species of UK or local origin	2020	HAWCs, BFC, Town & Parish Councils, BCV, JHF, WEG
F	i) Identify and provide management guidance to hedgerow landowners	2020	HAWCs, BFC, BBOWT, NE, JHF, Town & Parish Councils
G	i) Identify 800 veteran trees in more areas in the borough and transfer to GIS	2020	CE, WEG, WVTG, RMAS, BFVTG
G	ii) Publish a tree and woodland strategy for the borough	2018	BFC, Town & Parish Councils
H	i) All public woodland sites to have at least one standing deadwood tree and two loggeries	2020	HAWCs, BFC, Town & Parish Councils, BCV, WEG
H	ii) Install 30 bat boxes at sites with limited deadwood	2020	BFC, CE, FC, Town & Parish Councils, WEG
I	i) Survey 30 orchard sites to determine status	2020	HAWCs, WEG, WVTG, JHF, BFNHS

² LWS: Local Wildlife Site; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest (page 4 for more information on designated sites).



Englemere Pond

Wetland Habitat Action Plan

Associated Biodiversity Action Plan Species

These species have been identified to represent the habitat and will be used to promote and be included in projects to maintain, enhance and increase the wetland resource in the borough.



Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

Status – UK BAP species, protected at European and National levels by the Habitats Directive and Wildlife Countryside Act 1981 respectively (NE, 2008.a). Found across the borough where ponds exist.

Habitat requirement – Ponds without fish, little shade, aquatic plants and preferably as part of a group of breeding sites linked by a range of terrestrial habitats.



Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*)

Status – UK BAP species, under threat from habitat deterioration, man-made barriers to movement and stocking of waters. Limited to the Wish Stream and possibly the River Blackwater.

Habitat requirements – Unpolluted, free flowing rivers and streams with gravel beds for spawning and aquatic plants providing invertebrate prey.



Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Status – RSPB Amber list species of conservation concern due to declines in the last 25 years. Found across the borough at lakes, rivers and streams.

Habitat requirements – feeds on small freshwater fish using overhanging trees as hunting perches. Nests in secluded earth banks which may be more limiting.

UKBAP Habitat equivalents:

- Eutrophic standing waters
- Mesotrophic lakes
- Ponds Rivers
- Lowland fens
- Lowland raised bog
- Reedbeds

National Status

England has approximately 6,000 lakes over one hectare in size (NE, 2008.b), covering approximately 50,000 ha. A high proportion of the resource is eutrophic (approximately 60% by area), with mesotrophic and oligotrophic lakes each accounting for approximately 20%. There are estimated to be around 231,000 lowland ponds in England and Wales (Haines-young et al. 2000). Between 1990 and 2008 the percentage of English rivers of good biological quality in England rose from 55 to 72%. Similarly, rivers of good chemical quality rose from 55 to 79% in the same period (DEFRA, 2009).

The 2007 UKBAP review estimated that lowland fen covers 25,785 hectares, lowland raised bog covers 53,347 hectares and both are declining. Reedbeds were estimated at 7770 hectares not including Scotland and are increasing.

Berkshire

Berkshire supports an estimated 1525ha of lakes, 108ha fen and 40ha of reedbed (aerial photography, 2003). It has not been possible as yet to measure other habitats.

Bracknell Forest Borough's Wetlands

Many areas in the north of the borough were historically dug for clay to make bricks which created many ponds in Binfield, Warfield and Winkfield. Two main rivers flow through Bracknell Forest, namely The Cut which is a tributary of the River Thames which flows through the northern parishes, partly fed by the Bull Brook stream. Along the southern boundary of Sandhurst flows the River Blackwater, a tributary of the River Loddon which is partly fed by the Wish Stream.

Along the River Blackwater, extensive gravel extraction has created a series of large lakes with varying conditions for biodiversity. Wetland habitats are focused around these areas but not limited entirely to them.

In Bracknell Forest Borough, the total estimated area of wetland mapped using aerial photography and available datasets (TVERC, 2018) were:

	Area (ha)
Eutrophic ³ and mesotrophic ⁴ standing waters	85
Ponds	5.5 (129No.)
Rivers	3.8
Lowland fens	11

Most areas would require survey to confirm that they do support habitats within the UK BAP definition. However, it provides a useful gauge of their extent in the borough.

³ Waterbodies with a high level of nutrients

⁴ Waterbodies with a moderate level of nutrients

Threats

The borough's rivers and lakes are threatened by activities within their floodplains whilst ponds and wetland associated habitats are more prone to lack of management. The key issues are:

- Nutrient enrichment and pollution from run-off
- Inappropriate management of waterside vegetation
- Invasion of alien species
- Artificial structures or alterations
- Formalisation of natural water bodies
- Effects of hydrology from surrounding land use
- Climate change and water shortage

Opportunities

The functions that wetlands perform in flood alleviation provide key opportunities for the creation of new habitats. In addition, the Water Framework Directive now imposes statutory duties on the Environment Agency and Local Authorities to improve water quality of rivers and promote sustainable drainage systems.

Objectives for Wetland Themes

- (A) Understand the distribution and trends in BAP species
- (B) Understand the condition of SSSI² and LWS² in the borough
- (C) Understand the condition of ponds in the borough
- (D) Increase the number of ponds in the borough
- (E) Increase the area of wetland habitats in positive management in the borough
- (F) Enhance the habitat corridor of rivers and streams
- (G) Help the Rivers Blackwater and The Cut achieve good ecological potential by 2027
- (H) Waterside vegetation to be managed appropriately for biodiversity
- (I) Identify and protect reedbeds in the borough

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Monitor BAP species trends every five years	2021	BFC, RMAS, EA, BTO, BRAG
B	i) Survey all LWS ² sites within last 10 years including BAP species	2021	BFC, TVERC
B	ii) Understand the condition of SSSI wetlands in the borough	2021	BFC, TVERC
C	i) Survey 30 ponds for BAP species	2021	BFBC, BRAG, WEG, TVERC, JHF, WIA
D	i) Create 5 new ponds	2021	BFC, BBOWT, Town & Parish Councils, BRAG, DIO, CE, BCV, JHF
E	i) Restore or enhance 5 ponds	2021	BFC, BBOWT, Town & Parish Councils, BRAG, DIO, CE, BCV, JHF, WMCV, WIA
E	ii) Maintain 75% wetland LWS ² in positive management	2023	BFC, Moor Green Lakes, WIA
F, G	ii) Restore or enhance 2km of river or stream habitat	2021	EA, RMAS, BFC, BVCP, WIA
H	i) Improve wetland habitats through partnership with fishing clubs at two sites.	2021	EA, TW, BVCP, BFC
H	ii) Make guidance available to all identified riverside landowners	2021	BFC, EA, TW, BVCP, DIO, BRAG, WIA
I	i) Identify and survey reedbeds outside designated sites	2021	BFC, TVERC, Town & Parish Councils

²LWS: Local Wildlife Site; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest (page 4 for more information on designated sites)



Heathland near Sandhurst Royal Military Academy

Heathland Habitat Action Plan

Associated Biodiversity Action Plan Species

These species have been identified to represent the habitat and will be used to promote and be included in projects to maintain, enhance and increase the heathland resource in the borough.



Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*)



Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*)



Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*)

Status – Special Protection Area (SPA)² birds, protected species at European and National levels, these species are declining at a European level and this partly reflects the decline in heathland. In the borough, these species are confined to heathland and young plantation areas in the south of the borough.

Habitat requirements – Dartford warblers prefer long heather and gorse bushes to forage and nest. Nightjars prefer more open heath and will nest and forage in early plantation. Woodlarks require occasional trees for territorial song and display whilst nesting in heath and early plantation. All three species nest on or very near the ground.



Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly (*Somatochlora metallica*)

Status – Nationally scarce located in discrete areas of southeast England and Scotland. Thought to be stable in the borough.

Habitat requirements – acidic ponds and lakes preferably with some overhanging vegetation or trees.



Silver-studded Blue (*Plebejus argus*)

Status – UK BAP species, declines linked to the loss of heathland in past but can respond rapidly when suitable habitat becomes available.

Habitat requirements – short sunny heathland sites sheltered by scrub and colonies of black ants which care for the caterpillars.

UK BAP Habitat equivalents

- Lowland heathland
- Lowland raised bog

National Status

The UK supports 20% of the lowland heath in Europe but it is estimated that English lowland heathland has declined by more than 80% since 1800 (JNCC, 2018.b). Dry and wet heaths are listed under Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive in recognition of the extensive losses of this habitat throughout Europe.

Berkshire

In Berkshire, 98% of heathland has been lost since 1761. Only 300ha remained in the county in the early 1990s. However, this has now increased to an estimated 442ha of lowland heathland (aerial photography, 2003).

Bracknell Forest Borough's Heathlands

Bracknell Forest holds a relatively high proportion of the county's heathland resource. The extent of heathland has increased since 1999, when Bracknell Forest held 149ha. This is partially as a result of better recording but also due to the efforts of previous biodiversity action plans.

The underlying geology in Crowthorne and Sandhurst provide the conditions for heathland to form. It forms a patchwork interspersed with large areas of forestry and development. Forestry can provide benefits for biodiversity through rotational management of land providing a range of niches which in Bracknell Forest borough mainly support heathland habitats and species. Bogs form a specialised habitat within heathland areas where waterlogging areas form wet heathland, ponds and true bog areas. A series of ponds have also been created since 2009 in Crowthorne Woods providing valuable bog and acidic pond habitat.

In Bracknell Forest Borough, the total estimated area of heathland mapped using aerial photography and available datasets (TVERC, 2018) were:

	Area (ha)
Dry heathland	125
Wet heathland (including bogs)	68

Threats

The majority of heathland in the borough falls within areas designated as SSSI2, although some small patches still exist which need to be protected. A number of threats remain even within protected sites:

Lack of or inappropriate management

- Change in ground water levels affecting bogs
- Nutrient enrichment e.g. dog fouling, air pollution, agricultural runoff
- Fire and dumping
- Disturbance of key species e.g. ground nesting birds

Opportunities

Because heathland is such a rare and valuable habitat it does qualify for protection and agri-environmental schemes to support landowners. In addition, the public greatly value heathland sites for recreation which provides an opportunity for education.

Objectives for Heathland Themes

- A Monitor BAP species and adapt habitat management
- B Maintain all heathland and bogs within existing designated sites²
- C Increase area of heathland
- D Maximise the biodiversity value of forestry
- E Manage public access to protect sensitive habitats and species
- F Increase public understanding of heathland importance and sensitive species

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Monitor BAP species for trends and distribution	Every year	Bird survey volunteers, RSPB, BTO, BOC, CE, DIO, NE, BDS, BBOWT
B	i) Maintain 95% heathland and bog SSSI ² in favourable and recovering condition with 30% in favourable condition	2023	BFC, BBOWT, CE, DIO, NE
B	ii) 70% of LWS ² to be in positive management	2023	BFC, BBOWT, CE
B	iii) Maintain or restore all heathland with a varied structure within existing SSSI ² and LWS ² (162ha)	2022	CE, MOD, NE, BFC, BBOWT
C	i) Create 20ha of new heathland	2022	NE, TVERC, BFC, DIO, BBOWT
C	ii) Create 5 new bogs or ponds within heathland	2022	FC, CE, BBOWT, DIO, RMAS
D	i) Publish a review on the biodiversity value of commercial forestry and conifers in the borough	2022	CE, BFC
E	i) Review access patterns on two designated sites to protect sensitive habitats and species	2022	NE, BBOWT, BFC, DIO, CE, FC, TBHP
E	ii) Access management works carried out at two sites	2022	CE, MOD, NE, BFC, BBOWT, FC

²LWS: Local Wildlife Site; SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest (page 4 for more information on designated sites).

F	i) Produce a publication or site interpretation to raise awareness of heathland and forestry biodiversity	2022	BBOWT, BFC, CE, DIO
F	ii) Run at least five school sessions using the heathland information pack	2022	TBHP, BFC, BBOWT
F	iii) Run at least two heathland events each year to include BAP species information	Every year	BFC, BBOWT, BFNHS, BRAG



Hay harvesting at Bracknell Forest

Farmland Habitat Action Plan

Associated Biodiversity Action Plan Species

These species have been identified to represent farmland habitats and will be used to promote and be included in projects to maintain, enhance and increase farmland habitat resource in the borough. However, species representing other habitats will also be relevant.



Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Status – UKBAP species, RSPB red listed due to decline of over 50% in 25 years. Mainly found in the north of the borough, its numbers are declining (BOC, 2011).

Habitat requirements – Large pasture and arable fields with low intensity of cutting or other management.



Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Status – Nationally protected species, RSPB amber listed due to declines of 25-50% over 25 years. Trends since 1995 indicate an increase likely to be a result of targeted conservation effort.

Habitat requirements – tussocky grassland to provide mammal prey and undisturbed nest sites in farm buildings or tree cavities.

UKBAP Habitat equivalents

All terrestrial habitats have the potential to be part of farmland and therefore, there is a high level of overlap with other habitat action plans. However, arable field margins have been recognised as a specialised habitat in the 2007 UK BAP review. In the 2008 reporting round, the area of this habitat was estimated at 105, 216.7 hectares and increasing. There are over 58,000 voluntary agri-environment scheme agreements, covering over 6 million hectares - about 66% of agricultural land in England (Natural England, 2009).

Berkshire

Based on DEFRA Agricultural census 2010, the area of farmed land in Berkshire is 64,188ha.

Farmland in Bracknell Forest

The majority of this land use is spread across the north of the borough where soils are neutral and clay. In the 2006-2011 BAP review the total area of grassland in agri-environmental schemes was 218ha.

In Bracknell Forest Borough, the total estimated area of farmland provided by the DEFRA agricultural census 2010 was 1846 hectares within the borough, a decline of 26% since 2007 (this includes grazing of horses). Two categories of land use are provided;

	Area (ha)
Arable*	723
Grassland	1161

*2007 DEFRA data

Threats

Changes in the international food markets and government policy can dramatically influence how farmland is managed. Farmland biodiversity generally relies on less intensively managed habitats often around the edges of fields or uncultivated areas of a farm which can be vulnerable to the following:

- Intensification of crop production
- Market forces leading to changes in land use, such as development, urbanisation or land neglect
- Intensification of grazing
- Use of pesticides and fertilisers

Opportunities

Farmers are now recognised as key stewards of our countryside and many are keen to support wildlife provided it can be done whilst maintaining a livelihood. Agri-environment schemes provide financial incentives to improve the biodiversity on farmland.

Objectives for Farmland Themes

- (A) Understand the distribution of BAP farm habitats and species
- (B) Seek to increase populations of farmland birds
- (C) All farmland to be managed with nature conservation as an aim
- (D) Better public understanding of the role farmers have in supporting wildlife

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Survey BAP species across the borough to monitor trends	Every year	BTO, RSPB, BOC, JHF
A	ii) Monitor barn owl boxes once every 5 years	2023	BFC, BTO, RSPB, BOC, JHF
B	i) Promote wildlife projects and low intensity grazing to all known horse owners	2023	DEFRA, BFC, NE, Flora Locale
C	i) Review land use to identify farmland and pasture not within agri-environment schemes	2018	TVERC, BFC, DEFRA
C	ii) At least 60% of agricultural holdings entered into agro-environment schemes or habitat management plans	2023	BFC, BBOWT NE, DEFRA, LEAF, CFE, BTO, RSPB, BOC, JHF
D	i) Hold at least 1 farm visit events each year that include raising awareness of wildlife	Every year	JHF, LEAF



Roadside Nature Reserve in Bracknell

Urban Habitat Action Plan

Associated Biodiversity Action Plan Species

These species have been identified to represent urban habitats and will be used to promote and be included in projects to maintain, enhance and increase urban habitat resource in the borough. However, species representing other habitats will also be relevant.



Swift (*Apus apus*)

Status – RSPB amber list due to declines of 25-50% over 25 years. Declined by 63% in Berkshire between 1994 to 2011 (BOC, 2011).

Habitat requirements – nest in roof crevices of buildings and forage for insects at height.



Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

Status – UKBAP species, declined by 50% between 1990 and 2001 (PTES, 2011) thought to be a result of hedgerow loss and use of pesticides.

Habitat requirements – a mixture of rough grassland, hedgerows, gardens which provide invertebrate prey and shelter.



Cowslip (*Primula veris*)

Status – Widely distributed within the UK and the borough. Declined during the last century due to agricultural intensification.

Habitat requirements – meadows, pastures and grass banks preferably with low nutrients and cut after June.



UKBAP Habitat equivalents

All terrestrial habitats have the potential to be part of urban areas and therefore, there is a high level of overlap with other habitat action plans. However, open mosaic habitats on previously developed land have been recognised as a new specialised habitat in the 2007 UK BAP review.

Urban Habitats in Bracknell Forest

Land within the settlement boundary defined in the Proposals Map planning document covers 2621ha in the borough (BFC, 2002). The largest urban area of the borough is Bracknell Town whilst the town of Sandhurst and villages of Crowthorne, Binfield, Warfield and Winkfield also provide habitats for people and wildlife alike. All of the other habitats mentioned in this plan except farmland are found within urban areas. In addition, the following are just some of the many places that can be valuable for biodiversity:

- Parks and open spaces
- Verges adjacent to roads, railways, cycleways and footpaths
- Sports pitches and play areas
- Private gardens
- Golf courses
- Churchyards and cemeteries
- Buildings

It is also important that these features form part of green infrastructure to allow species to move and respond to change as part of climate change. Settlement areas are capable of supporting rare and declining species both within semi-natural habitats and the built environment. For example, swifts rely totally on buildings to provide their nest sites and are known to frequent Bracknell and Crowthorne.

Badgers in Bracknell Forest

Although badgers are not BAP species due to their widespread numbers in the UK, their populations are declining heavily in Bracknell Forest. Of the about 40 setts in Bracknell Forest it is estimated that between 50% and 75% are now disused, with the remaining ones often having less than 5 individuals.

The main threats are the high levels of human activity in the woodland, the roads leading to accidents and the development in all the surrounding fields. Also, badgers need a diverse range of habitats to forage on and wide corridors. The targets designed to protect this species will also benefit other urban fauna and habitats, hence there is a special consideration for badgers under this section.

Threats

Urban biodiversity can often be overlooked and is greatly affected by the following factors:

- Changes in management regime e.g. grass cutting
- Building maintenance and construction
- Development
- Invasive non-native species
- Isolation and fragmentation of habitats
- Persecution e.g. bats, snakes and stag beetles can be subject to persecution due to culturally inherited fears.

Opportunities

Engaging support for urban species can be very successful in emphasising the important link between people and nature at home at work and during leisure. Bracknell also takes part in the Britain in Bloom competition each year providing an opportunity to encourage wildlife in landscaping schemes.

As urban areas encompass many different people, in this action plan there is greater emphasis

on community involvement e.g. schools, religious groups and businesses. Green infrastructure is being recognised as of key importance in establishing a multi-functional network through urban areas for the wellbeing of people and biodiversity.

Objectives for Urban Themes

- (A) Protect and enhance significant areas⁵ of urban biodiversity as part of Green Infrastructure
- (B) Make provision for biodiversity within all urban greenspace
- (C) Make provision for biodiversity within new development
- (D) Create corridor opportunities
- (E) Increase area of private greenspace, allotments and gardens managed for wildlife

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	ACHIEVE BY	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
A	i) Plant or replace at least 50 large native urban trees	2022	BFC, BFH, Parish & Town Councils, WEG
A	ii) Manage at least 30% of grass verges as wildflower areas within settlement areas	2023	BFC, BTC, BFH
B	i) Identify, protect and increase swift nest sites by 30%	2018	BFC, Parish & Town Councils, BTO, RSPB, BVCP, BRP, WEG
B	ii) Create or enhance at least 5ha of wildflower areas within urban greenspaces	2019	BFC, BFH, Town & Parish Councils, BCV, BFNHS, BHA
B	iii) Enhance three places of worship for wildlife	2018	BFC, ELCG, Town & Parish Councils, BFNHS
B	vi) All public greenspace management plans to include biodiversity actions	Every year	BFC, Town & Parish Councils
B	v) Restore or enhance at least 6 school wildlife areas for use in lessons	2019	BFC, BBOWT, RHS, BCV, WIA
B	vi) Identify at least 10 active badger setts and create, enhance or protect adjacent areas suitable for foraging	2018	BFC, BBOWT

C	i) Planning permissions to include requirement for at least 100 new wildlife features (not mitigation) ⁶	Every year	BFC
C	ii) Planning permissions in areas with badger setts to ensure measures for badger protection	Every year	BFC, BBOWT
D	i) Explore corridor possibilities to link at least 5 significant areas ⁵ for urban biodiversity	2019	BFC, Parish & Town Councils
E	i) Undertake a public survey to identify gardens or allotments of high biodiversity value	2018	BFC, BTO, RSPB, BHA
E	ii) At least 100 gardens connected as part of Hedgehog Street	2019	BFH, BFNHS, BHA
E	iii) At least 10 private landowners to have enhanced their grounds for wildlife	2019	BTC
E	iv) All golf courses to identify areas of wildlife value	2018	BFC

⁵ Areas that deliver ecosystem services and provide biodiversity to urban spaces

⁶ Measures designed to maintain the environmental conditions that exist at the site. Under this target, planning permissions would need to enhance the environmental value of the borough rather than just mitigate their impacts.

References

Barr, C.J. and Gillespie, M. K. (2000). Estimating hedgerow length and pattern characteristics in Great Britain using Countryside Survey data. Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Journ. of Environmental Management Vol. 60, Iss. 1, 2000, p23–32

BCT (2016). Bat Conservation Trust - State of the UK's Bats. National Bat Monitoring Programme Annual Report 2016. www.bats.org.uk.

Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (2007). Report on the Species and Habitat Review. Report to the UK Biodiversity Partnership.

Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (2008). UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. (ed. Ant Maddock) 2008. (Updated July 2010) www.ukbap.org.uk/library/UKBAPPriorityHabitatDescriptionsRevised20100730.pdf

BNCF (2011). A guide to the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan. www.berksbap.org.

BNCF (2005). Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Woodland Habitat Action Plan. www.berksbap.org.uk/woodland.

BNCF (1999). A Framework for Biodiversity Action in Berkshire. ISBN 1-902-95500-5.

BOC (2011). Berkshire Ornithological Club – The Birds of Berkshire Annual Report 2011

Crowley, P., Robinson, C. (2009). Berkshire Bird Index: Annual survey of Bird Populations in Berkshire. Berkshire Ornithological Club. www.berksoc.org.uk

DEFRA (2009). The Environment in your Pocket. www.defra.gov.uk

DEFRA (2010). Agricultural Census 2010. www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/landuselivestock/junesurvey/junesurveyresults

DEFRA (2011). Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. www.defra.gov.uk

Forestry Commission (2011). National Forest Inventory Woodland Area Statistics for Great Britain. National Forest Inventory. www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry

Goldberg, Peterken & Kirby (2011). Origin and evolution of the Ancient Woodland Inventory. British Wildlife Vol. 23, No. 2, pp90-96.

Haines-young, R.H. et al (2000). Accounting for nature: assessing habitats in the UK countryside, DETR, London ISBN 1 85112 460 8. www.countrysidesurvey.org.uk/archiveCS2000/report.htm

HM Government (2011). The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature. White paper. www.official-documents.gov.uk

IUCN (2014). International Union for Conservation of Nature - Bad news for Europe's

bumblebees. www.iucn.org

JNCC (2018.a). Protected areas designations directory. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1527>

JNCC (2018.b). Joint Nature Conservation Committee – UK Lowland Heathland Habitats. www.jncc.defra.gov.uk

Lawton, J.H., Brotherton, P.N.M., Brown, V.K., Elphick, C., Fitter, A.H., Forshaw, J., Haddow, R.W., Hilborne, S., Leafe, R.N., Mace, G.M., Southgate, M.P., Sutherland, W.J., Tew, T.E., Varley, J., & Wynne, G.R. (2010). Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network. Report to Defra. www.defra.gov.uk

Assessment, M. E. (2005). Ecosystems and Human Well-being. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis

NBN Atlas (2018). <https://nbnatlas.org/>

NE (2008.a). Natural England - Assessing population status of the great crested newt in Great Britain

NE (2008.b). Natural England State of the Environment. www.naturalengland.gov.uk

NE (2016). Natural England - A review of the status of the beetles of Great Britain: The stag beetles, dor beetles, dung beetles, chafers and their allies. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/>

PTES (2011). People's Trust for Endangered Species - State of Britain's Mammals. www.ptes.org

PTES (2018). People's Trust for Endangered Species – Traditional Orchard Decline. www.ptes.org.uk

RSPB (2009). Birds of Conservation Concern 3. www.rspb.org.uk.

RSPB (2018). Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – The value of hedgerows for wildlife. www.rspb.org.uk

TVERC (2017). Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre – Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan 2012-2017 review

TVERC (2018). Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre - Bracknell Habitat and Land Use Jan 2018

UK Local Issues Advisory Group (1996). Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans Guidance Note 4. The Local Government Management Board, London

UNEP-WCMC (2011). National Ecosystem Assessment <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org>.

Appendices

A1 Key to Abbreviations

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BEG	Binfield Environment Group
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
BSBBG	Berkshire and South Bucks Bat Group
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
BCV	Bracknell Conservation Volunteers
BDS	British Dragonfly Society
BFBC	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
BFLP	Bracknell Forest Local Plan
BFNP	Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership
BFH	Bracknell Forest Homes
BFNHS	Bracknell Forest Natural History Society
BFVTS	Bracknell Forest Veteran Tree Survey
BHA	Bracknell Horticultural Association
BLNP	Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
BOC	Berkshire Ornithological Club
BRAG	Berkshire Reptile and Amphibian Group
BTC	Bracknell Town Council
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BVCP	Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership
CVAG	Crowthorne Village Action Group
CE	Crown Estate
CFE	Campaign for the Farmed Environment
DEFRA	Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs
DIO	Defence Infrastructure Organisation
ELCG	Easthampstead Living Churchyard Group
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
HAWC	Hedgerow and Woodland Conservationists
JHF	Jealott's Hill Farm (Royal Farms)
LEAF	Linking Farming And Environment
LFCC	Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Consultative
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NE	Natural England
RHS	Royal Horticultural Society
RMAS	Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TBHP	Thames Basin Heaths Partnership (formerly Access Management and Monitoring Partnership)
STC	Sandhurst Town Council
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
TW	Thames Water
WEG	Warfield Environment Group
WIA	Wildlife in Ascot
WMCV	Windsor and Maidenhead Conservation Volunteers
WVTG	Winkfield Veteran Tree Group

A2 Bracknell Forest Borough Information

Total area – 10,981 hectares or 42 square miles.

Location of Bracknell Forest

The borough of Bracknell Forest is one of six unitary authorities within Berkshire. Parts of the borough border neighbouring boroughs such as Wokingham and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. The south of the borough also borders onto Hampshire and Surrey.

Towns and Parishes

There are two towns: Bracknell and Sandhurst and four parishes: Binfield, Warfield, Winkfield and Crowthorne. Each of these has a corresponding town or parish council.

Geology

The sandy Barton Beds, Bracklesham Beds and Bagshot Beds, towards the south of the Borough, create acidic soils mixed with gravels which support a landscape of heathland and conifer plantations. Towards the north, London Clay soils support traditional lowland agricultural landscape of woodland, open fields and hedgerows. This meets in the centre of the borough where Bracknell town holds a mixture of differing soils and may also have imported soil of chalk origin indicated by some of the plants found there.

Hydrology

Two rivers run through Bracknell Forest: the River Blackwater forms the Borough's southern boundary, and the River Cut meanders through the northern parishes. These receive water from small streams within the borough namely the Bull Brook in the north which feeds into The Cut and the Wish stream which flows into the River Blackwater.

Land cover

The built and developed proportion of the Borough amounts to about 35% of the land area. Extensive forests cover more than 20% of the total area, consisting principally of parts of Windsor Forest; predominantly conifer plantation owned and managed by the Crown Estate and Forestry Commission. Agricultural land covers 24% of the land, located mainly in the north of the Borough.

Designated Sites

Designated Sites are sites identified for their high nature conservation value such as SPA, SAC, SSSI and LWS. More than 20% of the Borough is recognised as being of a high wildlife value and protected by some form of designation (see map, Appendix A3). Table 1 below provides a summary of designated sites in the borough.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) - These are non-statutory sites of significant value for the conservation of wildlife designated against set criteria by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum in accordance with guidance from DEFRA in 2006. These sites represent local character and distinctiveness and have an important role to play in meeting local and national targets for biodiversity conservation. The purpose of their selection is to provide recognition of their value and to help conserve those features by affording a level of protection in the planning process. During the previous BAP period (2012-2017) the proportion of local sites in positive management has increased by 19% during the BAP period, and 71% of LWS are in positive management (TVERC, 2017).

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - This is the primary designation relating to wildlife habitats in England and Wales. These are areas of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological or physiological features, and are selected and monitored by Natural

England. The SSSIs are afforded special protection from development, and landowners are required to enter into management agreements to protect the interest for which the site was designated. The total number of SSSIs in favourable condition has increased by 6% from 13 to 15 during the previous BAP period (2017-2017) (TVERC,2017). The largest, Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods & Heaths SSSI was designated in 2001 to include the majority of the Swinley Forest, significantly increasing the area protected by SSSI status.

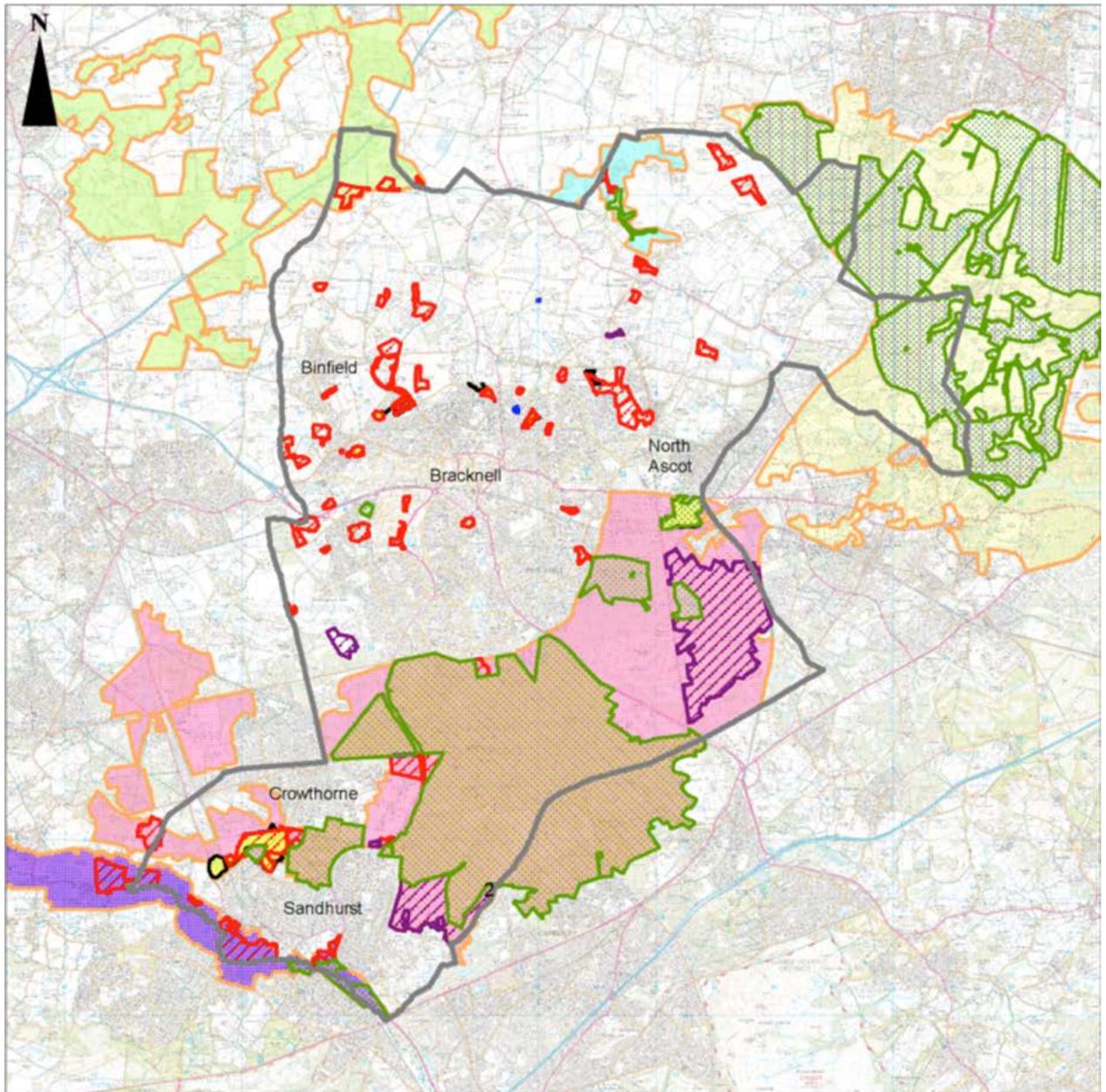
Special Protection Area (SPA) - As a member of the European Union, the UK Government is required under EC Directive 79/409 of the Conservation of Wild Birds (the ‘Birds Directive’), to take special measures to conserve the habitats of rare and migratory birds listed in Annex I of the Directive. The Government is required to designate the most suitable areas of such habitats as Special Protection Areas (SPA). The ‘Birds Directive’ also includes a requirement to conserve regular migrant species not listed in Annex I, and to pay particular attention to the protection of wetlands. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), 1356ha of which lie within Bracknell Forest Borough (Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths SSSI and the Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI) supports nationally important populations of Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark, all of which are Annex I species, and a small breeding population of Hobby, an important migratory species in a European context.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - The EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive) requires the UK Government to identify Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) to protect the habitats of those species listed in Annex II of the Directive. A part of The Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation lies within Bracknell Forest Borough. The site supports the Violet Click Beetle, an extremely rare species throughout the European range. The area is one of only four locations in the UK containing dry oak dominated woodland on acid sandy soils, which are of high value for their saproxylic invertebrates and lichens.

Table 1. Designated sites within Bracknell Forest Borough

Designation	No. sites	Area (ha)	Name/location
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	58	228.4	Various
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	9	1825	Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths Windsor Forest and Great Park Swinley Park Brick Pits Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths (Wildmoor Heath & Broadmoor Bottom) Englemere Pond Blackwater Valley (Shepherd Meadows) Chawridge Bourne Wellington College Bog Wykery Copse
Special Protection Area (SPA)	1	1333	Thames Basin Heaths
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	1	330	Windsor Forest and Great Park

A3 Designations Map



Scale: 1:1000

Legend

BFBC Borough Boundary

Special Protection Area (SPA)

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Local Wildlife Site (LWS)

Proposed Local Wildlife Site or Extension

Local Geological Site (LGS)

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Blackwater Valley

Chawridge Valley

Thames Basin Heaths

Waltham to Binfield Woodlands and Parklands

Windsor Great Park and Woodlands plus Silwood Park

Map produced by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre in 2017

© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Oxfordshire County Council Licence No 100023343 (2017)



A4 TVERC Habitat Mapping Update

The project aimed to carry out digital mapping of priority habitats and good quality grassland in Bracknell Forest, with particular reference to new digital aerial photos and Ordnance Survey digital data (referred to as MasterMap data). A team of TVERC staff worked from the specification agreed with BFC to tackle the following:

Digital habitat data checks and mapping on 48 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) surveyed since the 2005/06 mapping project and BBOWT reserves

Consolidation of mosaics of acid grassland/heathland within the overall dataset, derived from the recent Natural England-funded inventory update

A review of land parcels previously mapped as semi-improved grasslands, using the latest digital aerial photographs and DEFRA stewardship data

Checks on HLS options data aimed at maintenance of priority habitats

Reassessment of semi-natural broadleaved woodland digital land parcels which are not currently mapped as BAP priority habitat

The identification of major woodland management (such as restoration to broadleaved woodland) using aerial photography interpretation

Checks on areas of new development to identify priority habitat losses and gains

Report production and data analysis

The resultant digital mapped habitat and land use dataset created in MapInfo was analysed within Excel, following final verification of habitat determinations. The figures represent a refinement of the original mapped habitat resource, rather than the actual loss or gain of habitat through land management, etc.

A5 Species Selection

Three criteria for habitats & species were taken from the Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans Guidance Note 4 published by the UK Local Issues Advisory Group (1996) as follows:

- UK BAP species
- Significance of local resource in UK context
- Distinctiveness

In addition, to this the species were also rated on their ability to be representative of their habitat i.e. indicators of good habitat quality. However, particularly with plant and grassland species there is a need to select species that are distinctive and widespread in order to achieve benefit for the wider habitat. The majority of plant species on the UK BAP are very rare and difficult to identify which would not make them suitable as representative species. Therefore, a degree of common sense had to be used in order to choose species that best serve the conservation of the habitat and a broad range of other species. The remaining UKBAP criteria whilst valid were not considered to be feasible due to lack of data for all species and the time required.

Stage 1

UKBAP/NERC list – eliminate any species that has no current records within the borough using 10km squares. This left 243 species.

Stage 2

Any existing Bracknell Forest BAP species which are not UKBAP listed were added. It was felt that these species should be included in the process as they have a good existing record base and conservation interest having been established in previous plans.

Score each species first on proportion of national resource found within the borough. Obviously, the borough is very small compared with England so a relative scale was used to indicate how much this species was recorded in England compared with the borough from 1-5 (1 being lowest score for a very common species recorded in the borough). They were also scored for distinctiveness, this is particularly important for a Local Biodiversity Partnership which is trying to engage interest from local people so species that are easy to identify and generally appealing would have to be chosen. This left 96 species.

Stage 3

Each species was assigned a main habitat, for some species which is not always possible e.g. brilliant emerald dragonfly lives in ponds but only those in acid bog areas commonly found in heathland sites.

Stage 4

Therefore, at this stage an overall assessment was made of the remaining species grouped by habitat. Within each habitat, the list of species was considered against the existing BAP species in order of score bearing in mind factors such as the roles of difference species in guiding different areas of a habitat.

Grassland	Heathland	Woodland	Wetland	Farmland	Urban
Ragged Robin Devil's Bit Scabious Bumblebees	SPA Birds (3) Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly Silver-studded Blue	Stag Beetle Bullfinch Wild Service Tree Noctule	Great Crested Newt Brown Trout Kingfisher	Skylark Barn Owl	Swift Hedgehog Cowslip

Although the original intention had been to reduce the number of species, this proved very difficult due to the differing niches that each species has within a habitat. Therefore, it was considered more appropriate to choose species covering key aspects of habitat and better define their targets within habitat action plans.

A6 Relevant Legislation, Policies and Plans

LEGISLATION

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

It consolidates the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 with subsequent amendments. These regulations implement the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and impose duties in relation to European protected species.

Schedule 2 of the Regulations lists European protected species. These include bats and great crested newts. It is illegal to disturb, injure or kill individuals or to disturb or destroy the resting place or breeding site of such a species whether it is occupied or not.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

It provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40(1): “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for special consideration when implementing this duty.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

Schedule 1 birds: rare species afforded additional protection, which cannot be intentionally or recklessly disturbed when nesting.

Schedule 5 animals protected against killing and injury. Schedule 8 protected rare plants.

Part 1: All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird

intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built

intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (draft)

This document will replace the first National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, and it sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Of particular relevance are:

Theme 2

Achieving sustainable development, Objective c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy

Theme 11

Making effective use of land. Planning policies and decisions should: a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access; b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

Theme 13

Protecting Green Belt land

Theme 15

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland
 - d) minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality;
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate
-

Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System

This document covers a wide range of biodiversity issues including protected sites and protected species. Of particular relevance is:

The potential effects of a development, on habitats or species listed as priorities in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and by Local Biodiversity Partnerships, together with policies in the England Biodiversity Strategy, are capable of being a material consideration in the preparation of regional spatial strategies and local development documents and the making of planning decisions.

Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan 2019-2036

The Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan will set the long term spatial vision and development strategy for the borough. Once adopted, it will replace many of the saved policies in the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002) and the Core Strategy (2008).

Policy LP1 - Sustainable Development Principles

- iii) create a high quality built environment, enhance and maintain local character and landscapes, and reduce and prevent crime;
 - iv) protect and enhance the natural environment and heritage assets together with their settings;
 - v) minimise the use of natural resources, address the waste hierarchy and respond to climate change;
 - vi) include essential infrastructure, services and facilities required, and maintain the green infrastructure network;
-

Policy LP18 – Design

- iii. Retain and, where reasonable, enhance existing trees, important open areas, gaps in frontages, hedgerows, walls, fences, banks and other site features of landscape, ecological, heritage or amenity value;
-

Policy LP36 – Biodiversity

Development in the Borough should achieve no net loss and wherever possible a net gain of biodiversity

Policy LP38 - Green Infrastructure

The borough's green infrastructure network will be protected and enhanced.

Policy LP39 - Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area

New development which, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the ecological integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) without appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures will be refused. Where development is proposed that is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA it must be demonstrated that adequate measures will be put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Such measures must be agreed with the Council and Natural England.

Bracknell Forest Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2017 – 2026 Policy RoWIP 7

Sustainable Benefits - Manage a countryside and access network that delivers benefits to health and well-being, economy and biodiversity

Policy TP9 – Public Rights of Way

The Council will endeavour to manage the Public Rights of Way network as key infrastructure in support of recreation, travel, health and biodiversity. Alongside the policies set out within the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, this will be achieved through: [...] Seeking opportunities to benefit biodiversity, e.g. through the creation of green corridors.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Natural Environment White Paper: The Natural Choice (2011)

This document outlines the government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. It places the value of nature at the centre of environmental, economic and people's wellbeing decisions, by supporting and restoring the elements of natural networks, putting natural capital at the heart of a green economy, and reconnecting people and nature.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

Building on the Natural Environment White Paper, it sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy. Its main objectives are to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Theme 1. A more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea
Priority action 1.1: Establish more coherent and resilient ecological networks on land that safeguards ecosystem services for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Theme 2. Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy
Priority action 2.1: Work with the biodiversity partnership to engage significantly more people in biodiversity issues, increase awareness of the value of biodiversity and increase the number of people taking positive action.

Theme 3. Reducing environmental pressures
Priority action 3.3: Bring a greater proportion of our existing woodlands into sustainable management and expand the area of woodland in England.
Priority 3.6: Align measures to protect the water environment with action for biodiversity, including through the river basin planning approach under the EU Water Framework Directive

Theme 4. Improving our knowledge
Priority action 4.2: Put robust, reliable and more co-ordinated arrangements in place, to monitor changes in the state of biodiversity and also the flow of benefits and services it provides us, to ensure that we can assess the outcomes of this strategy.
Priority action 4.3: Improve public access to biodiversity data and other environmental information – putting power into the hands of people to act and hold others to account. Also communicate progress towards the outcomes and priorities of this strategy and make available information to support decision-making at a range of scales to help others contribute to the outcomes

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (Defra's environment plan 2018)

It details the plans to improve air and water quality and protect threatened wildlife. The aim is to achieve clean air, water, thriving plants and wildlife, reducing risk of harm from environmental hazards, using resources more sustainably and enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

BTO Strategy 2015-2020

The strategy comprises four strategic objectives to:

- Enable and deliver high-quality and relevant science.
- Share data, information and knowledge through excellent communications.
- Enthuse and encourage our people.
- Grow our financial independence.

Environment Agency. Creating a better place: Our ambition to 2020 (2018)

The Environment Agency will play a central role in delivering the Defra's 25-year plan. We will work to deliver all 10 of the goals it lays out: clean air; clean and plentiful water; thriving plants and wildlife; reducing risk of harm from environmental hazards; using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment; mitigating and adapting to climate change; minimising waste; managing exposure to chemicals; and enhancing biosecurity.

Flora Locale Business Plan 2011-2014

Strategic aims:

- To work with land owners and land managers in the public, charitable and private sectors to enable them to deliver large-scale good quality habitat restoration and conservation projects using native wild plants, shrubs and trees (and natural regeneration if appropriate).
 - To empower community groups and individuals to restore wild plant communities in the shared open spaces of village greens, urban parks and other pockets of community open space and gardens.
-

Ministry of Defence/Defence Infrastructure Organisation

MOD Biodiversity Targets

- To be an exemplar in the management of designated sites where compatible with military requirements;
 - To ensure natural environment requirements and best practice are fully integrated into the estate management;
 - To contribute, as appropriate, to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (and Country Biodiversity Strategies).
-

Natural England Strategic Direction 2014

Approach:

- Work at a landscape/larger scale to restore ecosystem function and develop ecological networks, with 'bigger, better, more and joined' habitat patches that will be as resilient as possible to climate change and other pressures;
 - Improve our understanding of the way that habitats and species contribute to landscape quality;
 - Promote and support more access to and engagement with the environment;
 - Enable people and communities to identify and act for the places and priorities that matter to them, and increase wider understanding of the natural environment and the benefits it brings.
-

Thames Water Biodiversity Action Plan

Part One: Action for land and water holdings

We will manage our land and water holdings to ensure conservation and, where possible, enhancement of plants and animals.

Part Two: Our activities and water management

We will plan and manage our activities in a way that ensures the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of biodiversity and the wider environment.

Part Three: Partners in biodiversity

We contribute to national, regional and local biodiversity initiatives by providing funding, technical expertise, staff volunteering, access to our land and ecological information, and by carrying out work to improve our sites for wildlife.

LOCAL STRATEGIES

Berkshire Amphibian & Reptile Group

B.R.A.G.'s aim is to try to help prevent the continuing decline of Berkshire's amphibians and reptiles, together with their habitats, by:

- Recording and monitoring amphibian and reptile populations around the county.
- Safeguarding important sites.
- Providing advice and information

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Strategic Plan 2016-2021

BBOWTs mission is to create a Living Landscape across our towns, cities and countryside and inspire our communities to act for nature, and in particular to lead the way for nature's recovery and connect people with nature, so that:

- Our soil and water resources are managed to create functioning ecosystems and wildlife-rich places.
- Local communities, decision-makers, landowners and businesses work with and for nature.
- People recognise their dependence upon nature and its value to their mental and physical wellbeing.

Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum Business Plan 2016-2021

Theme 1: Restore nature: creating more natural havens for wildlife across the three counties, especially land that is not currently protected by designation, to create more wildlife-rich ecological networks.

Theme 2: Get people involved: building on successful projects in Banbury, Oxford and West Berkshire, encourage more people and communities that are traditionally less engaged in the natural environment to discover nature where they live and feel the benefits of it through health and happiness.

Theme 3: Valuing nature's benefits: working with public health groups, local authorities and developers to create more natural green spaces in the built environment to benefit people's mental and physical health, and build a natural environment resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Theme 4: More strong partnerships: the Wildlife Trust is uniquely placed in the three counties to work with businesses and politicians to restore and recreate healthy natural environments enabling a vibrant economy underpinned by nature.

Theme 5: Build up our abilities: the Wildlife Trust is developing new income streams with a commercial approach to trading, ecological consultancy and land management, as well as giving practical support to our 130 staff, as well as the extraordinary 'army' of 1,450 enthusiastic and experienced volunteers and Trustees.

Berkshire and South Bucks Bat Group

To promote and further the conservation of bats and their habitats To raise awareness of bats and their conservation status

Blackwater Valley Countryside Strategy 2011-15

The specific aims of this Strategy are:-

Landscape

- To enhance the Valley's landscape to create a continuous area of naturalistic countryside and maintain the important open gap between urban areas.

Recreation

- To realise the full potential of the Blackwater Valley as an outdoor recreation resource, with an emphasis on providing freely accessible green space as an alternative recreational venue to the heathlands of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

Biodiversity

- To improve the Valley for wildlife by enhancing existing habitats, expanding the areas of ecological value by the creation of new habitats, and developing links between habitats.

River Blackwater

- To improve riparian habitat and the water quality of the River Blackwater and maximise the flood protection role of the river and its floodplain.

Community Empowerment

To maximise participation from all sections of the community in decision making and practical action.

Bracknell District Urban Wildlife Group

What do we do?

Discover what wildlife there is and where it is, and how best to encourage it.

Press for recognition of its value.

Watch out for threats it might face.

Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

Bracknell Forest Natural History aims to present and share information about the Natural World, to increase awareness of its importance and to work to increase the biodiversity of local wildlife habitats.

Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy 2015-2018

Vision

Bracknell Forest will have a reputation for its distinguished green landscape and contemporary, vibrant town centre. [...] Preserving our green heritage will be key to the future development of the area, integrating environmental concerns into all activities.

Priority 1.4. Raising awareness of climate change risks including heatwaves, drought, wildfires, storms and flooding and promote behaviour change to the Bracknell Forest Partnership and all sectors of the community.

Bracknell Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2012

Priorities:

3. Encourage the provision of new parks and open spaces to support achievement of sustainable development. Create links between existing parks and open spaces to extend green infrastructure networks.
6. Enhance the natural qualities of parks and open spaces. Protect and enhance biodiversity. Positively manage trees and woodlands, to include new planting to provide for future generations.
7. Identify opportunities to increase the positive role that parks and open spaces can contribute to climate change mitigation (e.g. tree planting as part of carbon sequestration). Implement appropriate measures in support of climate change adaptation (e.g. ponds and scrapes).

Bracknell Forest Council Climate Change Action Plan 2013- Updated 2016

Aims (among others):

To highlight and support complimentary strategies and plans in the Borough e.g. waste & recycling, transport, housing development, biodiversity, etc.

Theme 6 - Adaptation:

Action 3 Encourage public to have more environmentally friendly gardens

Action 6 Plan for impacts of climate change on species and habitat conservation and migration

Crown Estate Biodiversity Action Plan

The Crown Estate will fulfil its statutory obligations concerning the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of its function of managing the land and related rights and interests under its control.

Site Improvement Plan Windsor Forest and Great Park 2014

- 1 Forestry and woodland management. Investigate and implement management measures to promote veteran beech tree habitat.
 - 2 Forestry and woodland management. Investigate and implement management measures to promote veteran oak habitat.
 - 3 Invasive species. Maintain efforts to control known invasive/pest plant species.
 - 4 Disease. Survey for tree diseases.
 - 5 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. Establish a Site Nitrogen Action Plan.
-

Easthampstead Living Churchyard

- To protect this special area
 - To maintain, improve and record its biodiversity
 - To encourage others to appreciate and share this
-

Forestry Commission Thames Basin Forest Design Plan 2007-2037

Objectives:

- Contribute to stopping the long-term decline in the number of woodland birds by 2020.
 - Maintain SPA bird populations (nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler).
 - Bring into favourable condition, by 2010, 95% of all SSSIs where the Forestry Commission has statutory responsibilities.
-

Hedgerow and Woodland Conservationists

HAWCs aims to...

- Keep the ancient crafts of hedgelaying and coppicing alive.
 - Conserve and maintain hedgerows, woodlands, and rights of way for the benefit of the public and the wildlife which depends on them.
 - Educate the public in the principles and practice of nature conservation.
-

Loddon Catchment Biodiversity Strategy

Objectives of the Loddon Strategy

- Ensuring that key areas for biodiversity are adequately protected
- Creating stronger linkages between and around habitats to reduce fragmentation
- Influencing land use and planning to achieve sustainable development
- Providing conservation advice to landowners to enhance/restore habitats
- Working with communities on public land to enhance and restore habitats
- Conducting surveys on species and habitats where there is a lack of information to ensure that management decisions are based on the best available knowledge
- Monitoring species and habitats to ensure that management is maintaining them in favourable condition
- Raising awareness of the ecological value of the Loddon catchment with key sectors of the community
- Buying or leasing land to maintain and restore habitats where appropriate

Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Consultative

The three main objectives of the LFCC are:

- Represent fisheries, angling and conservation interests.
 - Work with others to protect and improve for future generations stillwaters, rivers and canal in the Loddon catchment.
 - Increase awareness of fisheries, angling and conservation through collection and sharing of best practice information.
-

Moor Green Lakes Group

Our aims are:

- to improve the Reserve for wildlife
 - record and monitor that wildlife
 - enhance the facilities of the Reserve for members of the Moor Green Lakes Group and other visitors.
-

Royal Horticultural Society Strategic objectives to 2013 It is our intention to:...

- Safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture for the benefit of future generations and the environment
 - Create world leading horticulture that inspires people to garden
 - Share and build expert knowledge
-

Sandhurst Town Council

Priorities include:

- To maintain the high quality environment both on the Memorial Park and beyond.
-

Warfield Environment Group

Aim: to encourage the community to take an interest in, protect and enhance the local environment and so to increase biodiversity in the area. We do this by involving individuals and organisations in a variety of projects and events covering conservation, surveying, recycling and litter clearance.

Wildlife in Ascot

Mission: taking responsibility for protecting and encouraging wildlife in Ascot.

Goals:

- to create good habitats and still have beautiful gardens.
- to have fun, get to know our neighbours and learn about the world on our doorstep.
- to manage the “Green corridors” in our area which we have succeeded in getting recognised in our neighbourhood plan.
- to improve the eco-system of our area by monitoring planning applications and raising concerns as necessary to try to ensure that future development does not have a negative impact on the environment and enhances habitats where possible.
- to implement the biodiversity projects identified in our Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan.

Winkfield Parish Council 3 year plan

(ii) The Environment in General

(a) The production of a 'Green Map' based on an Initiative started by BFC, it is intended to plot all areas of the Parish of Winkfield including:

- The Green Belt
- Settlements outside the Green Belt
- Conservation areas
- Footpaths and public rights of way
- Location of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), Woodland and Area Orders
- Veteran trees

We will then identify areas without adequate protection and take action to rectify.

(d) To consider holding an Annual Parish Environment Week - This proposal requires definition, time and resource. Whilst work might be started in 2010 in defining the requirement for such an event, the event itself is unlikely to happen before 2012.

(f) To work with BFC and local people to prevent the illegal felling of trees.

Photo Credits

Front cover habitat images (Rose Wicks); Kingfisher and Swift (Thinkstock photos)

General Themes top image (Peter Edwards)

Grassland Habitat top image (Marlies Boydell); Bumblebee (Thinkstock photo); Ragged Robin (Rose Wicks); Devil's Bit Scabious (uncredited)

Woodland Habitat top image (Rose Wicks); Bullfinch, Noctule Bat and Stag Beetle (Thinkstock photos); Wild Service Tree (uncredited)

Wetland Habitat top image (Rose Wicks); Great Crested Newt, Brown Trout and Kingfisher (Thinkstock photos)

Heathland Habitat top image (Marlies Boydell); Dartford Warbler (Thinkstock photos); Woodlark (David Rimes); Nightjar and Silver-studded Blue (Rob Solomon); Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly (Tim Caroen)

Farmland Habitat top image (Marie-Anne Phillips); Skylark (Rob Solomon); Barn Owl (Ascot Wildlife)

Urban Habitat top image (Marlies Boydell); Swift and Hedgehog (Thinkstock photos); Cowslip (Rose Wicks)

If you need this in an alternative format please contact the
Parks and Countryside Service on 01344 354441